

By: Ben Watts, County Returning Officer

To: Electoral and Boundary Review Committee – 22 January 2021

Subject: County Scale of Election Fees and Expenses

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary This report updates the Committee on recent decisions regarding the County Scale of Election Fees & Expenses and asks the Committee to take a decision about the uprating for 2021/22.

1. Introduction

- (1) At its meeting on 8 March 2010, this Committee agreed that it would annually authorise and approve the County Scale of Fees and Expenses for Kent County Council elections. This is consistent with the powers delegated to the Committee by County Council and recorded in the Appendix of the Constitution.
- (2) Each year subsequently the County Scale of Fees and Expenses has been uplifted annually using the average NJC pay award for local government.

2. 2019/20 County Scale of Election Fees and Expenses

- (1) On 30 July 2018 the Committee agreed the 2019/20 County Scale of Election Fees and Expenses.
- (2) At KCC's Budget County Council meeting on 14 February 2019, Members agreed to *"meet the commitment that the lowest pay in the Kent Scheme matches the £9 per hour Foundation Living Wage from 1st April 2019."*
- (3) In light of this commitment, the County Scale of Fees and Expenses was reviewed by officers and it was proposed that Item 17 on the 2019/20 Scale of Fees was uplifted to meet the Foundation Living Wage (FLW) for 2019/20 using the urgent delegation provision in Appendix 2 Part 3 (Functions Delegated by the Council to Officers) in the version of the Constitution in use at the time:
 - Due to the need for the revised fee to be in place by 1 April 2019 for any potential KCC by-elections in 2019/20 and the importance of giving adequate notice to the districts so that they are able to use the revised fee for any potential by-election.
 - It not being possible to convene a meeting and consult with this Committee in advance of 1 April 2019.

- (4) In consultation with the Chair of the Committee, Graham Gibbens, Ben Watts as County Returning Officer on 12 March 2019 used the urgent decision provision in order to uplift Item 17 (For each Poll Clerk at the Polling Station) on the County Scale of Fees and Expenses to meet the Foundation Living Wage for the period 1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020.
- (5) The Committee was notified on 13 March 2019 via email about the use of the urgent delegation provision. There is a duty to formally report to the next meeting of the Committee all decisions made under conditions of urgency and the details provided above have been included for this purpose. The revised County Scale for 2019/20 is attached in Appendix 1.

3. 2020/21 County Scale of Election Fees and Expenses

- (1) The proposed County Scale of Election Fees and Expenses for 2020/21 is attached in Appendix 1. The County Scale has been uplifted by 2.75% using the NJC 2020/21 Pay Award published on 24 August 2020.
- (2) The Committee is therefore asked to retrospectively approve the County Scale of Election Fees and Expenses for 2020/21.

4. 2021/22 County Scale of Election Fees and Expenses

- (1) At the time of writing, the proposed NJC 2021/22 Pay Award has not been agreed or published. It is important for the County Scale of Election Fees and Expenses for 2021/22 to be updated as soon as possible to enable election staff to be recruited and given details of their remuneration for the KCC elections scheduled for Thursday 6 May 2021.
- (2) In the absence of the NJC 2021/22 Pay Award, it is proposed that the County Scale of Election Fees and Expenses for 2021/22 is uplifted by the percentage pay increase awarded to Kent Scheme staff agreed at Budget County Council on 11 February 2021.
- (3) The draft Budget 2020-21 proposes a *"2% award for most Kent Scheme staff subject to discussions with trade unions or subject to pay bargaining, the cost of maintaining the current differential between the lowest pay range (KR2/3) and Foundation Living Wage, and the increased cost of employer pension contributions following the 2019 actuarial review of the Pension Fund."*
- (4) An indicative County Scale of Election Fees and Expenses for 2021/22 is attached in Appendix 1 which has been uplifted by 2% based on the proposed pay award for most Kent Scheme staff in the draft Budget.
- (5) The Committee is therefore asked to approve and delegate to the County Returning Officer the uplifting of the County Scale of Election Fees and Expenses for 2021/22 by the percentage pay increase, if any, awarded to most Kent Scheme staff agreed at Budget County Council on 11 February 2021.

5. Recommendations

The Committee is invited to:

- (a) note the use of urgent delegation provisions to additionally uplift Item 17 (For each Poll Clerk at the Polling Station) on the County Scale of Fees and Expenses for 2019/20 in order to meet the Foundation Living Wage;
- (b) approve retrospectively the County Scale of Election Fees and Expenses for 2020/21;
- (c) approve and delegate to the County Returning Officer the uplifting of the County Scale of Election Fees and Expenses for 2021/22 by the percentage pay increase, if any, awarded to most Kent Scheme staff as part of the agreed 2021/22 Budget of Kent County Council; and
- (d) authorise the Monitoring Officer to implement the uplift following the agreement of the Kent County Council budget for 2021/22.

Background Documents

Kent County Council (2018) '*Electoral & Boundary Review Committee (30/08/18)*';

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=142&MId=8114&Ver=4>

Kent County Council (2019) '*Budget County Council (14/02/19)*';

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=113&MId=7893&Ver=4>

Kent County Council (2021) '*Draft Budget 2020-21(06/01/21)*';

https://www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0009/116856/Draft-budget-report-2021-22.pdf

National Joint Council for Local Government Services (2020) '*Local Government Services' Pay Award 2020-21*';

<https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/LGS%20Pay%202020-21.pdf>

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