

From: Ben Watts, County Returning Officer

To: Electoral & Boundary Review Committee, 12 March 2025

Subject: 2025/26 County Scale of Election Fees and Expenses

Status: Unrestricted

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## **1. Introduction**

- a) 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 (KCC Scale of Fees). This is consistent with the powers delegated to the Committee by County Council and recorded in the Constitution.
- b) In January 2022, KCC received a request from the Kent Association of Electoral Registration Officers and Staff (Kent AEROS) for the KCC Scale of Fees to be merged with the Kent AEROS Scale of Fees for District/Borough and Parish Council elections and Neighbourhood Referendum (Kent AEROS Scale of Fees). KCC responded to say this would be something that it would be happy to explore ahead of the 2025 KCC election but it was currently prioritising the review and settlement of the KCC 2021 election claims.
- c) In the intervening period, the then Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has introduced a pay banding system for election staff at UK Parliamentary elections, Police and Crime Commissioner elections and national referenda. These are elections funded by the UK Government and claims relating to them are administered through the DLUHC's Elections Claims Unit.
- d) The KCC and the Kent AEROS Scales of Fees were broadly aligned to the DLUHC pay banding system for 2024/25.

## **2. Proposed Changes to KCC's Scale of Fees**

- a) In a meeting with the Kent AEROS in December 2024, as part of KCC's election preparations, it was raised that there were elements of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) [formerly known as DLUHC] 2025/26 Pay Bands that were not explicitly stated in the KCC Scale of Fees. These roles had previously been covered by the overarching heading of payments to the District/Borough Council for the use of Council staff in the conduct of the election. The Kent AEROS requested that we review and incorporate these in the next update to the Scale of Fees.
- b) This request has been actioned and a draft proposal for the 2025/26 KCC Scale of Fees is set out in Appendices 1 and 2.

- c) As with the 2024/25 KCC Scale of Fees, it is proposed that KCC adopt the MHCLG fees in their entirety except for Poll Clerks and Presiding Officer fees which are capped at the midpoint of the pay band for single elections. This is to safeguard against significant costs to KCC if all districts decided to implement the maximum amount payable for these roles in a single election.
- d) There is also a further exception to this, where the MHCLG fees include bookkeeping costs which KCC has previously taken the decision not to pay.
- e) The draft KCC Scale of Fees in Appendix 1 cover items not included in MHCLG's 2025/26 Pay Bands. These items are based on the then DLUHC's Expense Guidance for Returning Officers (February 2024). The additional payment to the District/Borough Council for the use of Council staff in the conduct of the election, which has previously been included in KCC's Scale of Fees, has been removed. This payment was designed to capture any incurred costs which did not fit under the heads before the specified roles in the 2024/25 MHCLG pay bands were implemented. Appendix 2 contains the MHCLG's 2025/26 Pay Bands in its entirety.
- f) The alignment to the MHCLG's 2025/26 Pay Bands, introduces an enhanced night rate for count and verification staff which was requested by this Committee in October 2024. It also includes a provision for:
  - Fringe areas to London, as defined by MHCLG, subject to the discretion of the CRO, to uplift each pay band by a maximum of 5%.
  - Holiday pay of up to 12.07% to be available for contracted hours of work
  - Core staff can claim overtime at their contracted rate where the tasks undertaken are part of their contracted duties and necessary. For all other staff, overtime where reasonably worked ..can be claimed up to 1.5x of the hourly daytime rate unless the overtime takes place on a Sunday or bank holiday in which case the uplift can be up to 2x the hourly daytime rate.
- g) MHCLG will update their pay bands on an annual basis to reflect changes to the national minimum wage and average public sector pay.
- h) All other costs listed in the 2025/26 KCC Scale of Fees are proposed to be reimbursed as actual costs or by a percentage increase relating to the Deputy Returning Officer Costs section. Historically, the KCC Scale of Fees has been uplifted annually using the average NJC pay award for local government. However, since 2021/22, the KCC Scale of Fees, have been uplifted using different methods due to an absence of an NJC pay award ahead of this Committee meeting to agree the KCC Scale of Fees. It is proposed that for the 2025/26 Scale of Fees, the Deputy Returning Officer Costs will be updated by 3% based on the increased uplift to grades KSF – KSR in the 2025/26 Kent Pay Scheme as agreed at Budget County Council on 13 February 2025.

### **3. Recommendation**

The Electoral & Boundary Review Committee is asked to approve the proposed County Scale of Election Fees and Expenses for 2025/26.

### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Proposed KCC Scale of Election Fees and Expenses 2025-26
- Appendix 2 – MCHLG's 2025/26 Pay Bands

### **Background Documents**

County Council, 13 February 2025

[Agenda for County Council on Thursday, 13th February, 2025, 9.30 am](#)

Electoral & Boundary Review Committee, 8 March 2010

[Agenda for Electoral and Boundary Review Committee on Monday, 8th March, 2010, 1.00 pm](#)

Electoral & Boundary Review Committee, 27 March 2024

[Agenda for Electoral and Boundary Review Committee on Wednesday, 27th March, 2024, 10.00 am](#)

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