



AGENDA

ELECTORAL AND BOUNDARY REVIEW COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 28 March 2023, at 1.00 pm
Council Chamber, Sessions House, County
Hall, Maidstone

Ask for: **Joel Cook**
Telephone: **03000 41692**

Membership (9)

Conservative (7): Mr G Cooke (Chairman), Mr A Kennedy (Vice-Chairman),
Mr N Baker, Mrs P T Cole, Mr D Jeffrey, Mr R C Love, OBE and
Mr R J Thomas

Labour (1) Dr L Sullivan

Green & Independent (1): Mr M Baldock

Liberal Democrat (1): Mr A J Hook

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

(During these items the meeting is likely to be open to the public)

- 1 Substitutes
- 2 Declarations of Interest on any items on this agenda
- 3 Minutes of the meeting held on 29 March 2022 (Pages 1 - 4)
- 4 Scale of Fees (Pages 5 - 10)

Benjamin Watts
General Counsel
03000 416814

Monday, 20 March 2023

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KENT COUNTY COUNCIL**ELECTORAL AND BOUNDARY REVIEW COMMITTEE**

MINUTES of a meeting of the Electoral and Boundary Review Committee held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Tuesday, 29 March 2022.

PRESENT: Mr N Baker, Mr M Baldock, Mrs P T Cole, Mr A J Hook, Mr D Jeffrey, Mr A Kennedy, Mr R C Love, OBE, Dr L Sullivan, Mr R J Thomas and Mr B J Sweetland

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr B Watts (General Counsel), Ms L Adam (Scrutiny Research Officer) and Mr J Cook (Democratic Services Manager)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS**2. Election of Vice-Chair**
(Item 2)

- 1) Mr Sweetland proposed and Mr Jeffrey seconded that Mr Andrew Kennedy be elected as Vice-Chair. No other nominations were received.

RESOLVED that Mr Kennedy be elected Vice-Chair.

3. Minutes of the meetings held on 18 March 2021 and 27 May 2021
(Item 4)

RESOLVED that the minutes were a correct record.

4. Review of the 2021 Election
(Item 5)

- 1) Mr Watts, provided an outline of the initial planning and preparations for the election which were undertaken during lockdown. He highlighted some of the key challenges, such as building closures and the use of various election venues as vaccination and testing centres limiting the options. He thanked District colleagues for working with KCC and for their flexibility during the delivery of the election. Mr Watts also thanked the KCC Corporate Management Team and their Directorate staff for their assistance through the election process, the joint working was a good example of the organisation pulling together to support key priorities.
- 2) Mr Watts highlighted the following key learning points:
 - It was important to recognise some of the challenges facing District and Borough teams at particular points in the process and this would be updated in the risk assessment for future elections.
 - Election template notices
 - Focused communication with local Returning Officers.

- 3) Responding to Member comments and questions, Mr Watts and Ms Adam (Deputy Returning Officer), providing the following information:
- In clarifying progress with managing outstanding spending returns, Ms Adam explained that KCC had made appropriate contact with the relevant individuals but liaised as necessary with the Electoral Commission. No further action was required on the part of KCC but Member concerns were noted and the Returning Officer would highlight the concerns about criminal offences to Kent Police via the Head of Paid Service's office and he would write to the Electoral Commission again to flag up the issue.
 - It was confirmed that Dartford Borough Council was the one late returning area in terms of submission of accounts but it was highlighted that this was expected due to additional election pressures as it was acting as the Policing Area Returning Officer District. Members commented that Dartford performed well in the circumstances, responding well to the particular challenges of managing County and Police and Crime Commissioner elections.
 - Social media impact was a mixed element, with some very positive engagement with the voting public in terms of promotion of the election and increased awareness, along with reports of misuse or problematic weaponization of social media during and after campaigns.
 - The role of current Members, including Dr Sullivan, was highlighted in supporting the 'become a councillor events' which provided an important insight into the role of elected Member for prospective candidates.
 - All Members expressed support and thanks for the hard work of Officers at both District and County authorities.
- 4) Members discussed the merits and disadvantages of a long term shift to increased online processing for election activity, with some Members supportive of enhanced online facilities and streamlining and others positive about the administrative aspects only being developed further for online use and the other activity continuing to require in person or written activity (e.g. voting, nominations for candidates). It was also noted that a reduction in the number of subscriber signatures to secure nomination for election should be maintained. Members also determined that a letter should be sent to the Electoral Commission outlining mixed views regarding the development of online election processes – with some support for expense recording and exploration of other options involving better use of online functionality but without commitment to change current processes.

RESOLVED that;

- The report be noted.
- The actions of the County Returning Officer in the 2021 KCC election be endorsed; and
- The praise for the election teams throughout Kent on their effective work in delivering the election be noted and endorsed.

5. Adjustments made to Scale of Fees 2021/22

(Item 6)

- 1) Ms Adam introduced the report, explaining the actions taken under delegated authority.

RESOLVED that the two minor adjustments made to the 2021/22 County Scale of Election Fees and Expenses, relating to standby fees and DRO payment for the management and conduct of the KCC election, made by the County Returning Office on 19 May 2021 under delegated authority, be noted.

6. Revised 2022/23 Kent Scale of Fees and Election Expenses

(Item 7)

Scale of fees 22/23

- 1) Ms Adam introduced the report and confirmed the specific proposal for a 3% uplift in line with Kent Scheme staff receiving a 'successful rating. She advised that this was proposed in the absence of the NJC award, which was usually used as the benchmark.
- 2) Ms Adam and Mr Watts responded to comments and questions from Members. Key points included; Clarifying postal spend costs and fair reimbursement for Districts in terms of the vital administrative activity they undertake. Mr Watts confirmed that postal vote arrangements for the 2025 election required careful consideration and this would be brought back to the Committee in due course.
- 3) Members suggested the merging of fee scales and further clarification on the scope for a better long term fee level link arrangements be explored, noting the potential future conflict or gaps around using the NJC pay award or KCC pay scheme. It was highlighted that Trade Union engagement and consultation was important in future arrangements. Mr Watts confirmed that this would be reviewed again in future in advance of the 2025 election.

RESOLVED that the County Scale of Election Fees and Expenses for 2022/23 including an additional uplift to Item 17 (For each Poll Clerk at the Polling Station) to ensure KCC meets its commitment to pay a minimum of £10.00 per hour, be approved.

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From: Ben Watts, County Returning Officer
To: Electoral & Boundary Review Committee, **x** March 2023
Subject: 2023/24 County Scale of Election Fees and Expenses
Status: Unrestricted

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 Appendix of the Constitution.
- b) Each year subsequently the KCC Scale of Fees has been uplifted annually using the average NJC pay award for local government. The 2021/22 and 2022/23 KCC Scale of Fees were an exception due to an absence of a Pay Award ahead of the Committee meeting to agree the KCC Scale of Fees.
- c) The proposed 2023/24 KCC Scale of Fees is attached in Appendix 1. The KCC Scale of Fees has a proposed uplift of 6.44% using the average equivalent percentage in the final 2023 NJC Pay Award offer.
- d) It is proposed that Items 13, 14, 15 & 16, which relate to Presiding Officers and Polling Station Inspectors, on the 2023/24 KCC Scale of Fees are additionally uplifted to the equivalent of a 10% increase from the 2022/23 figure to recognise their additional responsibilities relating to the new Voter ID requirements for upcoming elections.
- e) Further, there has historically been no distinction in the KCC Scale of Fees between Polling Station Inspectors working as part of a single or joint election as there has been for Presiding Officers and Poll Clerks. It is proposed that Item 16 is amended from 'Polling Station Inspector – for every 10 polling stations overseen' to 'Polling Station Inspector – single election' at £255.97 and a new Item 17 is inserted 'Polling Station Inspector – joint election' at 'Shared equally with other elections, up to a maximum of £157.23' to recognise the additional responsibilities when there are multiple elections. This mirrors the fee structure for Presiding Officers in Items 13 & 14 which are proposed to be uplifted by 10%.
- f) The KCC Scale of Fees will be kept under review, should there be any external factors which impact on Scale of Fees, the Committee will be updated.

2. Recommendation

The Electoral & Boundary Review Committee is asked to approve the proposed County Scale of Election Fees and Expenses for 2023/24.

Background Documents

Electoral & Boundary Review Committee, 8 March 2010

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=142&MId=3230&Ver=4>

National Joint Council for Local Government Services (2023) '*Local Government Pay 2023 (08/03/2023)*', [Joint Negotiating Committee for Local Authority \(seemp.co.uk\)](#)

3. Report Author and Relevant Director

Ben Watts, County Returning Officer

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Lizzy Adam, Deputy County Returning Officer

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**PROPOSED COUNTY SCALE OF FEES AND EXPENSES
2023/24**

1	Printing and publishing all notices, forms and other documents, providing stationery and sundries, and other miscellaneous expenditure including postage, telephone calls and faxes	Reasonable and appropriate cost
2	Stationery and equipment at each polling station, including depreciation	
3	Hire of any building or room for the purpose of the election and the expenses attending the use of any building or room, including temporary polling stations if necessary	
4	Fitting-up polling stations including the provision, transport and erection of voting compartments, the hire of necessary furniture (where this is not otherwise available) and the return to store afterwards	
5	Ballot Papers – provision and printing	
6	Register of Electors – purchase	
7	Printing or production of official poll cards and postal vote packs	
8	Delivery of official poll cards by hand	Second class postage rate
9	Travelling expenses to DRO's staff to make arrangements for the poll or otherwise in connection with the conduct of the election	45p per mile
10	Presiding Officer travelling expenses	£17.49 (see Note 2)
11	Poll Clerk travelling expenses	£9.86 (see Note 2)
12	Travelling expenses for staff in connection with the counting of votes, at the discretion of the DRO	£9.86(see Note 2)
13	One Presiding Officer at each Polling Station – single election	£255.97
14	One Presiding Officer at each Polling Station – joint election or difficult station due to local circumstances (at discretion of DRO).	Shared equally with other elections, up to a maximum of £157.23
15	Presiding Officer who acts as a supervisor in a Polling Place where there are a number of polling stations (additional).	£12.42

Appendix

16	Polling Station Inspector – single election	£255.97
17	Polling Station Inspector – joint election	Shared equally with other elections, up to a maximum of £157.23
18	For each Poll Clerk at a Polling Station – single election	£170.30
19	For each Poll Clerk at a Polling Station – joint election or difficult station due to local circumstances (at discretion of DRO).	Shared equally with other elections, up to a maximum of £92
20	For each training session provided by the DRO for Presiding Officers, Poll Clerks or count staff	£212.34
21	For each Presiding Officer and Poll Clerk attending training	£54.98
22	An allowance for each polling station to have available a mobile phone on polling day	£5
23	For the employment of persons in connection with the counting of the votes, clerical and other assistance required by the DRO – for each 1000 electors or part in a contested election	£173.30 for single Member Divisions £225.98 for two Member divisions
24	For the employment of persons in connection with the issue and opening of postal ballot papers – for each 100 postal voters or part	£84.93
25	For the recount of votes – for each 1000 electors or part	£9.97
26	Contested single election – payment to District/Borough Council for the use of Council staff in the conduct of the election – each 1000 electors or part	£134.23
27	Contested joint election – payment to District/Borough Council for the use of Council staff in the conduct of the election – for each 1000 electors or part	£67.11
28	Contested single election – payment to DRO for the management and conduct of the election – for each 1000 electors or part	£56.25
29	Contested joint election – payment to DRO for the management and conduct of the election – for each 1000 electors or part	Shared equally with other elections, up to a maximum of £38.85

Appendix

30	For each Counter attending training	£15
31	For each Count Supervisor and Count General Assistant attending training	£30
32	Reasonable refreshments for staff involved in the verification and count	Maximum £5 per head
33	Payment to District/Borough Council for the use of Council staff (including the provision of a DRO) at an uncontested election – for each 1000 electors or part	£37.03
34	Insurance in respect of employer's liability and for injury or damage to persons and property of third parties, and for such other risks as advised by the County Council's Finance Director and the insurer's to the County Council. Costs incurred by the County Returning Officer only.	Reasonable and appropriate cost.
35	Additional expenses (if any) involved in and about the conduct of the election including (a) professional, clerical and other assistance, (b) professional and legal advice, (c) additional costs associated with a recount of the votes and (d) other disbursements	Such amount as may be approved by the Electoral and Boundary Review Committee at the appropriate time.

Definitions:

1. Single Election means a poll for the County Council Elections only.
2. Joint Election means a poll that is conducted at the same time as the County Council poll, which could be a District or Parish election or by-election or a National poll, such as a Parliamentary election or a referendum.

Notes:

1. The fees are calculated on the number of local government electors on the register of electors and entitled to vote at the last day for publication of the notice of election.
2. Items **10,11 and 12**: variable mileage rates may be applied where fixed travel is considered inappropriate.

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