

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

**EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM'S
REPORT TO**

Council
06 April 2022

Report Title: Local Elections Fees and Charges

Submitted by: Head of Legal and Governance Services/Monitoring Officer

Portfolios: One Council People and Partnerships

Ward(s) affected: ALL

Purpose of the Report

This report sets out the proposed fees paid to the Returning Officer and his staff employed to undertake various duties in connection with elections being held within the Borough on 5th May, 2022.

Recommendation

1. That the Council notes the proposed election fees for 2022/23, as set out in Appendix 1.

Reasons

In accordance with the Representation of the Peoples Act 1983 the cost of local elections are met from the local authority budgets. (See Appendix 1)

1. **Background**

- 1.1 Under section 35 (1) of the Representation of the People Act 1983, every county, district, unitary and metropolitan council in England is required to appoint an officer of the council to be the Returning Officer (RO) for the election of councillors to their local authority.

2. **Issues**

- 2.1 The RO has overall responsibility for the conduct of elections held within the Borough and although appointed by the Council, the role of RO is one of a personal nature and is distinct and separate from their duties as an employee of the Council. The RO plays a central role in the democratic process and in ensuring that the election is administered effectively and that, as a result, the experience of voters and those standing for election is a positive one.

The RO is responsible for:-

- the nomination process for candidates and political parties;
- provision and notification of polling stations;
- appointment of presiding officers and polling clerks;
- appropriate administration and security of polling stations;
- preparation of all ballot papers;

- the actual Count and Declaration of Results;
- issue, receipt and counting of postal ballot papers
- all candidates' election expenses return;
- presentation of final account and reclamation of funding from external body as prescribed.

2.2 In order to run a local election the Returning Officer in Newcastle-under-Lyme needs to employ and pay up to 350 additional staff with different levels of responsibility. It is important that this is done fairly and transparently.

2.3 Newcastle Borough Council has implemented a structure for staff payments for any scheduled or unscheduled local elections and neighbourhood planning referendums as set out in Appendix 1 which reflects practice in neighbouring authorities and the County Council.

3. **Proposal**

3.1 To inform members of the schedule of fees and charges as set out in appendix 1

4. **Reasons for Proposed Solution**

4.1 In order for the elections to be administered, election staff will need to be paid for the work that they undertake. Failure to agree a fees and charges structure could undermine the effective administration of elections and result in the RO not able to appoint the staff required to run the forthcoming local election which will expose the Council and RO to risk and liability.

5. **Options Considered**

5.1 Consideration has been given to the structure of fees and charges as proposed by the County Council.

6. **Legal and Statutory Implications**

6.1 Such implications are set out in this report.

7. **Equality Impact Assessment**

7.1 There is no relevance to equality

8. **Financial and Resource Implications**

8.1 Such implications are set out in appendix 1

9. **Major Risks**

9.1 Such implications are set out in paragraph 4.1

10. **UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG)**



11. **Key Decision Information**

11.1 N/A

12. **Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions**

N/A

13. **List of Appendices**

13.1 Appendix 1- Scale of Election Fees

14. **Background Papers**

N/A