

ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION FUND – “PROMOTING PARTICIPATION” – APPOINTMENT OF WORKING PARTY

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Electoral Administration Act 2006 introduced, amongst other things, a new duty on the Electoral Registration Officer or Returning Officer to “encourage the participation by electors in the electoral process”.
- 1.2 The Ministry of Justice has established a fund to offset expenditure incurred by local authorities in carrying out this duty. The maximum amount that may be claimed from the fund is 6p per elector. For the current (2008/09) financial year, the amount that may be claimed is based on the electorate as at 1 December 2007 and, in the case of New Forest District, amounts to £8,448.

2. ACTIVITIES FOR CURRENT YEAR – SUGGESTED WORKING GROUP

- 2.1 The Ministry of Justice is not prescriptive about the nature of activities that may be undertaken with the available funding, and says that activities that are clearly designed proactively and specifically to encourage electors to register for and/or to vote at elections will be eligible. Excluded are:
 - (a) activities that are already statutory duties of the Electoral Registration or Returning Officer, for example undertaking the annual canvass, issue of statutory notices, or reimbursement of costs considered to be ordinary staff wages; and
 - (b) activities designed to encourage wider democratic participation outside elections.
- 2.2 It is suggested that a Working Party comprising members of both political groups be appointed with delegated authority to advise the Electoral Registration and Returning Officer on the activities to be undertaken with the available funding this year.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Expenditure on this initiative will be confined to £8,448, which (provided the Ministry of Justice’s guidelines are followed) will be reimbursed. Staff time will be met from existing resources.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL, CRIME & DISORDER AND EQUALITIES & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None.

5. RECOMMENDATION:

- 5.1 That a Working Group of a number to be determined by the Committee, to comprise members of both political groups represented on the Council, be established with delegated authority to advise the Electoral Registration and Returning Officer on the activities to be undertaken with funding available from the Electoral Participation Fund.
- 5.2 That the political groups appoint their representatives to serve on the Working Party.

Further information:

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Background Papers:

Published documents