

## **RETURNING OFFICERS' FEES AND EXPENSES**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The fees and expenses for Returning Officers in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight to conduct local elections are agreed by a working party of representatives of Hampshire County Council and other Local Authorities in the area. This practice (approved by the Council) ensures uniformity across councils and has been in place for many years. The scale of fees and expenses is published on this and other councils' websites. The current (2015/16) scale is available to view at <http://www.newforest.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=27781&p=0>

### **2. PAY POLICY STATEMENT AND ADJUSTMENTS IN FEES**

- 2.1 The Council's Pay Policy Statement 2016-17, approved by the Council on 22 January 2016, provides for the Returning Officer's scale of fees and expenses to be submitted to the General Purposes and Licensing Committee. Accordingly, the fees and expenses agreed by the county-wide Working Party for 2016-17 are attached for the Committee's consideration.
- 2.2 In setting the fees for 2016/17, the Working Party has had to be mindful of the national living wage (£7.20 per hour with effect from 1 April 2016) to all persons employed at elections. There have therefore been increases in the payments to poll clerks and presiding officers.
- 2.3 The opportunity has also been taken to introduce a simple hourly rate for count assistants and count supervisors – the previous fees were based on a complicated formula comprising an initial fee for the first two hours, with % increases after 1.00 a.m. Other fees, for example for clerical assistants, have been increased by 1% (the 2015/16 national pay award), rounded up or down to the nearest 50 pence. There has been no increase in the Returning Officer's personal fee.

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 Costs of elections are borne by the body, or responsible authority for the body or individual, being elected. The next quadrennial elections for the District and Parish Councils is not scheduled until 2019, so financial implications for the District Council would arise only in 2019, or earlier if a by-election is held. The increased costs at a by-election would amount to approximately £100 of a total of approximately £6,500. The increased costs at a quadrennial district/parish election would be approximately £5,000 of an estimated total of £290,000. Part of that cost would be borne by parish/town councils.

### **4. ENVIRONMENTAL, CRIME & DISORDER AND EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are none.

**5. RECOMMENDATION**

- 5.1 That the fees and expenses for Returning Officers for 2016-17, as set out in Appendix 1, be approved.

**Further information:**

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**Background Papers:**

None