

CONSTITUTION COMMITTEE
9 March 2005

COUNTY COUNCIL ELECTIONS 2005
SCALE OF ELECTION EXPENSES

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Purpose

1. The purpose of the report is to seek the Constitution Committee's approval to a scale of expenses to be used at the County Council elections in May 2005.

Background

2. I am the Returning Officer for elections of County Councillors and, as such, am responsible for conducting the elections in accordance with statutory rules. I appoint officers of the District Councils as Deputy Returning Officers and much of the election work is carried out by their staff.
3. The County Council meets the fees and expenses of the elections, subject to these not exceeding a scale fixed by the Council for the purpose. It has been the practice for the scale to be fixed by members for a general election of Councillors and for the Returning Officer to be authorised to fix a scale for any intervening by-elections (to enable the scale to be updated for inflation).
4. Appendix A sets out proposals for the scale to be used in May. The fees have been increased in line with inflation since the last district council elections in 2003 and follow the scale of election expenses which is adopted by the district councils within the County.
5. It is necessary for the scale to be fixed by the middle of February to enable Deputy Returning Officers to be aware of fees to be paid to polling staff, etc. when they are recruiting and appointing such staff.

Financial Implications

6. It is calculated that the total expenditure will be within the figure to be provided within the 2005/06 revenue budget (£350,000). If the County Council election coincides with the date of the Parliamentary Election, there is likely to be an overall saving as fees for polling staff and the cost of hiring polling stations will be shared on a 50:50 basis.
7. The Director of Resources has been consulted on the resource implications of this report.

Decisions Required

8. The conduct of Elections falls within the terms of reference of the Constitution Committee. It has been the practice for the scale to be fixed by Members for a general election of Councillors and for the Returning Officer to be authorised to fix a scale for any intervening by-elections (to enable the scale to be updated for inflation).

Equal Opportunities Implications

9. Persons from all sections of the community will be employed as presiding officers, poll clerks and counting assistants on the day of the poll. All polling stations have been looked at with a view to improving access for disabled persons.

Recommendations

10. (i) that the attached scale of expenses be used at the County Council elections to be held on 5th May 2005 and for any subsequent by-elections held before 5th April, 2006; and
(ii) that the Chief Executive be authorised to fix a scale for the purpose of by-elections occurring between 6th April, 2006 and the next County Council elections.

Background Papers

None.

Circulation Under Sensitive Issues Procedure

None.

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