

Council Report



9 March 2022

RETURNING OFFICER'S FEES AND DISBURSEMENTS

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Exempt / confidential / not for publication	No
Council Plan reference	Not in Council Plan
Wards affected	All wards

Executive summary

It has been the practice for the Council to adopt a schedule of fees and disbursements consistent with other Buckinghamshire Councils and this has continued to be the case for the new Buckinghamshire Council, which vested on 1 April 2020.

Fees have not been updated from those adopted last year given that:

- polls should be less complex to administer in 2022;
- Buckinghamshire Council have not amended their fees;
- the Returning Officer is satisfied that current fees will enable the recruitment of appropriate and necessary staffing levels; and
- any additional fees would represent a pressure to the 2022/23 election budget.

Fees paid to the Returning Officer have again not been increased.

1. Decision/s to be made

- 1.1 That the attached schedule of fees and disbursements for Principal Area and Parish elections be adopted for 2022/23.

2. Why is the decision needed?

- 2.1 Section 35(4) of the Representation of the People Act 1983 requires the Council to pay all expenditure properly incurred by the Returning Officer in relation to holding an election. Costs incurred by the Council in administering Principal Area and Parish elections are met by the Council itself and it is therefore appropriate to set a financial framework.

3. Consultation and Scrutiny

- 3.1 Consultation has been undertaken with the Council's appointed Returning Officer (Sharon Bridglalsingh), who is content with the current schedule of fees and disbursements. Returning Officer fees have not been increased.

4. Implications of the decision

Financial	Y	Human rights, equalities, diversity	N
Legal	Y	Policies or Council Plan	N
Communication	N	Procurement	N
Energy Efficiency	N	Workforce	N

a) Financial implications

Appropriate funding was allocated to cover the costs of elections in the 2022/23 budget, based on an uncombined election which will therefore be exclusively funded by the Council itself.

b) Legal implications

Section 35(4) of the Representation of the People Act 1983 requires the Council to pay all expenditure properly incurred by a Returning Officer in relation to the holding of an election. Although not explicitly required, a scale of fees may be fixed by an authority for the conduct of elections and must not be exceeded by the Returning Officer. Setting an agreed framework, provides a safeguard to the Council in relation to its legal duties.

5. Alternatives

- 5.1 To increase fees, which were last updated in 2021. This option is not recommended as there is no immediate need to do so and elections in May 2022 will have no central funding (the cost will be met by MKC).

6. Timetable for implementation

- 6.1 If adopted, the schedule of fees and disbursements will be effective from 1 April 2022.

Annexes: Schedule of Returning Officer's Fees and Disbursements 2022/23

Background Papers: None