Leaders’ Committee

Review of Scale of Election Fees 2015/16

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Date: 10 February 2015
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Summary: The attached report deals with revisions to the scale of fees and expenses which can apply for local government elections in London boroughs in 2015/16.

Recommendations: Members are asked to approve the proposed scale of fees and expenses, as outlined in Appendix 1, as guidance for the London boroughs, with effect from 1 April 2015.
Review of Scale of Election Fees 2015/16

Introduction

1. A review of the scale of election fees supplied to London Councils by the London Election Management Board is attached as an appendix. London boroughs were first empowered to fix their own scales of election fees in 1974. It has been the practice of London Councils and its predecessor bodies to receive a report and recommend a London-wide scale of fees for adoption by individual boroughs.

Basis for Review of Scale of Fees for Local Borough Council Elections and Referendums

2. This report proposes the scale of fees and expenses that will take effect on 1 April 2015. Members agreed to adopt the thorough revision in fees that was recommended in 1990 and to revise the fees annually thereafter. The established practice has been to revise all fees and expenses (where not stated as “actual and necessary cost”) in accordance with the previous year’s local government pay increases.

3. In 2002, in the light of changes to the law on postal voting, the requirement for staff to attend training sessions and a government review of fees for polling station staff, it was agreed it was necessary to make additional revisions to some fees. A further revision was agreed for the full council elections in 2006. This took account of experiences in dealing with changes to the law on postal votes, a further government review of the fees paid for parliamentary elections, and a desire to set fees for polling station inspectors and senior count staff. An additional charge to help recognise the need for more staff to manage and supervise the issue and receipt of postal votes was agreed in 2008. No further changes to the basic structure of the fees and expenses are proposed for 2015.

4. A local government pay award of 2.2% covering the 15 months up to 31 March 2016 has been agreed. Also additional consolidated payments are to be made to staff at SCP 5-49. Therefore, it is proposed that for the coming year:

   - Part A fees – zero increase. These are the fees for Returning Officers and Deputy Returning Officers, and that

   - Part B fees - are increased by 2% for the twelve months commencing 1 April 2015. The roles undertaken in part B are generally recognised as being within the
SCP 5-49 range and, therefore, should reflect the 2.2% over 15 months and consolidated payments as part of this year’s Local Government pay settlement.

5. It is proposed that the scale should continue to form the basis for fees and expenses for referendums under the Local Government Act 2000 and any subsequent London borough mayoral elections. The further scale is to cater for any combined London borough and mayoral elections. It is proposed that the formula – where its use is appropriate – remains as a 20% increase when a combination is required. This formula was reduced from 25% in 2010 to bring it into line with the government costing assumptions for combined polls.

6. Part B expenses for polling station and count staff have been rounded to the nearest five pence. Fees for polling station staff are also shown as hourly rates to cater for any staff working only part of the day and any elections and referendums using non-standard polling times.

**UK Parliamentary General Election 2015**

7. The UKPGE will almost certainly be held on 7 May 2015. The funding for the election comes from the government’s Consolidated Fund. A maximum recoverable amount (MRA) for the services and expenses required to conduct the polls will be made known to Acting Returning Officers’ shortly. The MRA no longer comes with a list of assumptions upon which the amount is based. Therefore the long-standing London Scale of fees and expenses are an important guide upon which most, if not all, London borough’s base their poll, count and postal vote staff fees. Therefore, it is recommended that the fees and expenses as set out in Appendix 1, which have been in place and successfully underpinned the planning and budget assumptions for London Boroughs Returning Officers since 1990, are agreed.

**Recommendation**

Leaders’ Committee is recommended to agree the attached Scale of Returning Officers’ Fees and Expenses as guidance for the London boroughs.

**Appendices**

Appendix 1: Proposed Scale of Election Fees 2015/16

**Financial Implications for London Councils**
There are no financial implications arising from this report.

**Legal Implications for London Councils**

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

**Equalities Implications for London Councils**

There are no equalities implications arising from this report.