

**NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

Your attendance is requested at a meeting to be held at The Holding Room, The Guildhall, St. Giles Square, Northampton, NN1 1DE on Monday, 18 March 2019 at 6:00 pm.

**George Candler
Chief Executive**

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES
2. MINUTES
3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
4. DEPUTATIONS / PUBLIC ADDRESSES
5. MATTERS OF URGENCY WHICH BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES THE CHAIR IS OF THE OPINION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED
6. REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES 2019
7. RETURNING OFFICER FEES AND EXPENSES
8. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

THE CHAIR TO MOVE:

“THAT THE PUBLIC BE EXCLUDED FROM THE REMAINDER OF THE MEETING ON THE GROUNDS THAT THERE IS LIKELY TO BE DISCLOSURE TO THEM OF SUCH CATEGORIES OF EXEMPT INFORMATION AS DEFINED BY SECTION 100(1) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AS LISTED AGAINST SUCH ITEMS OF BUSINESS BY REFERENCE TO THE APPROPRIATE PARAGRAPH OF SCHEDULE 12A TO SUCH ACT.”

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 18 September 2018

PRESENT: Councillor Sargeant (Chair); Councillor Kilbride (Deputy Chair);
Councillors Marriott and Cali

APOLOGIES: Councillor Parekh

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Parekh.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 15th May 2018 were agreed and signed by the Chair.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

4. DEPUTATIONS / PUBLIC ADDRESSES

There were none.

5. MATTERS OF URGENCY WHICH BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES THE CHAIR IS OF THE OPINION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED

There were none.

6. TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NO. 238 5-7 THE LAKES, BEDFORD ROAD, NORTHAMPTON, NN4 7SH

The Interim Arboricultural Officer submitted a report that sought confirmation of a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) No. 238. The Committee discussed the report and it was noted that the trees added to the visual amenity of the area and considered them to be a better use of the site than additional car parking spaces.

RESOLVED:

That Tree Preservation Order 236 be confirmed.

The meeting concluded at 6:14 pm

Appendices
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GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE REPORT

Report Title	Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places 2019
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AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

Committee Meeting Date:	18 March 2019
Policy Document:	No
Directorate:	Borough Secretary

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To advise the Committee on the Polling District and Polling Place Review to be carried out between April 2019 and 31 January 2020.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Committee is aware of the timetable for the Polling District and Polling Place Review.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 It is a statutory requirement to conduct periodic reviews of polling districts and polling places. Such reviews are required at specific time intervals and also when changes are needed due to circumstances, such as the results of a periodic review.

- 3.1.4 Polling Districts and Polling Places in Northampton were reviewed in 2014 and the current review is required to be conducted between October 2018 and 31 January 2020 (inclusive).

- 3.1.5 The statutory responsibility for reviewing polling districts and polling places rests with the Council for the Borough and Northampton. The General Purposes Committee has the delegated authority to approve the review.
- 3.1.6 The Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) is the Borough Secretary and he is responsible for amending the Register to reflect changes in polling districts.
- 3.1.7 It is the responsibility of the Local or Acting Returning Officer to comment during any review of polling districts and polling places on both existing polling stations and the polling stations that would likely be used if any new proposals for polling places were accepted. The election rules require that the Local or Acting Returning Officers decide how many polling stations are required for each polling place and they must allocate electors to the polling stations in such manner as they think most convenient, In Northampton the main LRO/ARO is the Borough Secretary, but the ARO for that part of the Borough that falls within South Northamptonshire Constituency is the Chief Executive of South Northamptonshire Council. From now on in this respect the term Returning Officer is used to refer to LRO/ARO.
- 3.1.8 A **Polling District** is a geographical area created by the sub-division of a UK Parliamentary constituency for the purposes of a UK Parliamentary election. Each Parish is required to be a separate polling district.
- 3.1.9 A **Polling Place** is the building or area in which polling stations will be selected by the Returning Officer. A polling place within a polling district must be designated so that polling stations are within easy reach of all electors from across the polling district. Polling places should always be defined more specifically than simply the polling district – for example by designating the name of the polling place, normally a particular building or area and its environs.
- 3.1.10 A **Polling Station** is the room or area within the polling place where voting takes place. Unlike polling districts and polling places which are fixed by the local authority, polling stations are chosen by the relevant Returning Officer for the election.
- 3.1.11 As part of the review the Council must consider access requirements and must
- Seek to ensure that all electors in a constituency in the local authority area have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances
 - Seek to ensure that so far as is reasonable and practicable every polling place for which it is responsible is accessible to electors who are disabled
- 3.1.12 The Council must have regard to accessibility to people with disabilities of potential polling stations it is considering designating as a polling place or reviewing the designation of.
- 3.1.13 The Council must follow a formal process as follows:
- Publish a notice of the holding of a review

- Consult the (Acting) Returning Officer for Northampton North, Northampton South and South Northamptonshire and the LRO
- Publish all representations made by the Returning Officers within 30 days of receipt
- Seek representations from such persons as it thinks have particular expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons with different forms of disability. Such persons must have an opportunity to make representations and to comment on the representations made by the Returning Officers
- On completion of the review the Council must make a decision and give reasons for its decisions and publish all the papers involved in the consultations and in deciding. It must also state where the results of the review have been published.

3.3.14 The key dates for this process will be:

- 30 March – Publication of Notice of Review
- April to September – consultation and analysis stage, leading to preparation of the Returning Officer’s proposals. This will include seeking comments from interested parties on existing arrangements
- 17 September - General Purposes Committee to review the results of consultation and the Returning Officers’ proposals and the Committee’s comments
- 20 September- 22 November Public consultation on the Returning Officer’s proposals and the Committee’s comments
- 5 November- General Purposes Committee to determine the Council’s final decision, which is then published.

3.3.15 At all stages responses to consultation and details of proposals will be published on the Council’s website.

3.3.16 Consultation is expected to include all interested groups or bodies including

- Electors
- Candidates
- Agents
- Political Parties
- Councillors
- Other elected representatives
- Local disability groups

- National disability groups

3.3.17 For Northampton, officers would specifically seek to include the relevant members of the Forums, Parish Councils and Residents Associations.

3.3.18 There is a right for the electors to make representations to the Electoral Commission if they feel that the Council's final decision has failed to properly address accessibility or other reasonable requirements.

3.3.19 The process for carrying out the review is laid down in some detail by the Electoral Commission. The Committee needs to follow that process but may augment the process, particularly with regard to the extent of consultation, as long as doing so does not affect the balance of the process.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

4.1.1 There are no new policy implications

4.2 Resources and Risk

4.2.1 The resources necessary to conduct the review will be funded from base budget

4.3 Legal

4.3.1 The Council needs to conduct a review now to ensure compliance with legislation

4.4 Equality

4.4.1 The review will include specific focus on access and disability issues as described in the report

5. Background Papers

5.1.1. Electoral Commission "Reviews of Polling Districts, Polling places and Polling Stations" guidance

Francis Fernandes
Electoral Registration/Returning Officer

Appendices: 1



NORTHAMPTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE REPORT

Report Title	Returning Officer Fees and Expenses
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AGENDA STATUS: PUBLIC

Committee Meeting Date:	18 March 2019
Policy Document:	No
Directorate:	Borough Secretary and Monitoring Officer

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To approve the scales of election fees paid to the Returning Officer for any Borough or Parish Council elections during 2019/20.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the scale of election fees appended to this report be adopted for 2019/20 in relation to any Local by-elections or Referendums which may be required.

3. Issues and Choices

3.1 Report Background

- 3.1.1 The local authority is required to appoint a Returning Officer to conduct these elections on their behalf. The Returning Officer is legally responsible and accountable for the management of elections. Each local authority is required to place the services of its staff at the disposal of the Returning Officer to help run the election.
- 3.1.2 In order for the Returning Officer to be able to carry out their duties, Section 36 (4) of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (For a district election including by-elections) states that the council may set a maximum scale of charges for the returning officer to use. The legislation states that a returning officer's expenses for conducting an election shall be paid by the council but if a scale is set, the expenses shall not exceed those laid down in the scale.

3.1.3 For parish/town council elections, Section 36 (5) states that the council may similarly set a maximum scale of charges for the Returning Officer to use, which the district council is responsible for paying, but which shall be repaid to the district council by the parish council for which the election is held, if the district council so requires it to be paid. It is the policy of this council that parish councils are required to pay for elections.

3.1.4 The local authority is required to appoint a Returning Officer to conduct these elections on their behalf. The Returning Officer is personally (not corporately) responsible for the management of elections. Each local authority is required to place the services of its staff at the disposal of the Returning Officer to help run the election.

3.1.5 In Northampton Borough Council, the Returning Officer is the Council's Borough Secretary and Monitoring Officer. Even though the Returning Officer is also an employee of the Council, at the time of an election his responsibility is completely separate. In order to run a local election the Returning Officer needs to employ and pay additional staff with different levels of responsibility. It is important that this is done fairly and transparently. In order to achieve this, the Council must agree a schedule of fees which they all use to pay staff to ensure that there is a consistent approach for everyone.

3.1.5 There is no formal consensus of fees between the Northamptonshire local authorities. The proposed fees for NBC are in line with those paid by Daventry District Council.

3.1.6 The fees will be increased each year in line with the Annual Pay Award.

4. Implications (including financial implications)

4.1 Policy

4.1.1 The scale of the proposed election fees are in line with the Councils existing pay policy.

4.2 Resources and Risk

4.2.1 The costs of Parish Council elections are recoverable from the relevant Parish Council

4.2.2 Northampton Borough Council has to meet the costs of any Borough Council elections including by-elections. It is important to ensure that the Returning Officer has sufficient funding to run the election, and can attract experience and committed staff to comply with legislation

4.3 Legal

4.3.1 Legal issues are covered within the body of the report

4.4 Equality

4.4.1 There are no diversity and equalities implications arising from the report

5. Background Papers

5.1.1. None

Francis Fernandes
Borough Secretary & Returning Officer

Appendix 1

SCALE OF ELECTION FEES AND EXPENSES FOR LOCAL ELECTIONS 2019/20

Returning Officer fee for conducting the election and generally performing the duties required.	Fee
Contested District Council elections. For the first 1000 local government electors within each electoral ward For each additional 500 local government electors or fraction thereof	£105.06 £39.92
Uncontested District Council elections (for each electoral ward)	£70.39
Contested Parish Council elections For the first 500 local government electors within each electoral area For each additional 100 local government electors or fraction thereof	£67.42 £12.61
Uncontested Parish Council elections (for each electoral area)	£37.82
Combined District and Parish elections (for each parish electoral area)	£44.13

Deputy Returning Officer (full powers)	25% of RO fee
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All equipment to be purchased, hired, altered or repaired	Actual and necessary cost
Hire and fitting up of Polling Stations including heating, lighting, cleaning and damages and expenses paid in respect thereof	Actual and necessary cost
Stationery at Polling Stations	Actual and necessary cost
Printing and providing nomination forms, notices, ballot papers and other forms and documents required in and about the election or poll.	Actual and necessary cost
Printing and issue of Polling Cards	Actual and necessary cost
Despatch and receipt of postal voting packs	Actual and necessary cost
Travelling expenses for Returning Officer and elections staff	Paid at HMRC

	mileage rate.
Presiding Officer Single election Combined election	£236.39 £262.65
Poll Clerk Single election Combined election	£141.83 £157.59
Polling Station Inspector	£273.16
Senior Polling Station Inspector	£288.92
Counting Assistant Night time, weekend or bank holiday count (per hour) Day time count (per hour)	£17.86 £14.71
Count Supervisor Night time count, weekend or bank holiday count (per hour) Day time count (per hour)	£25.74 £22.59
Senior Supervisor Night time count, weekend or bank holiday count (per hour) Day time count (per hour)	£32.31 £29.15
Count Manager Night time count, weekend or bank holiday count (per hour) Day time count (per hour)	£45.44 £42.29
Porter/Security Night time count, weekend or bank holiday count (per hour) Day time count (per hour)	£17.86 £14.71
Postal Vote Assistant Day time (per hour) Evening (per hour)	£10.51 £13.66
Postal Vote Supervisor Day time (per hour) Evening (per hour)	£15.76 £18.91

Note:

With regard to other electoral activities and events where there is not a fees and charges order set by Government (this includes but is not limited to neighbourhood planning referendums, council tax referendums and local polls) this schedule shall be used for the basis of calculating fees and charges.