

REPORT TO CABINET

REPORT OF: ELECTIONS & ELECTORAL REGISTRATION
MANAGER

REPORT NO. DEM 197

DATE: 8th NOVEMBER 2004

TITLE:	PARISH COUNCIL ELECTION COSTS
FORWARD PLAN ITEM:	N/A
DATE WHEN FIRST APPEARED IN FORWARD PLAN:	N/A
KEY DECISION OR POLICY FRAMEWORK PROPOSAL:	N/A

COUNCIL AIMS/PORTFOLIO HOLDER NAME AND DESIGNATION:	
CORPORATE PRIORITY:	
CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS:	N/A
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT IMPLICATIONS:	N/A
BACKGROUND PAPERS:	CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT 1854 OF 22.12.94

PARISH COUNCIL ELECTION COSTS

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to present a proposal to charge in full for Parish Council elections with effect from 1st April 2005, except where elections are combined when the charge would only be the marginal extra cost. This report has arisen as a result of the work on investigating current expenditure on non-priority areas.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Cabinet consider whether or not to adopt a method of charging Town/Parish Councils for the cost of their elections and, if so, which of the alternatives to adopt.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1. Up to and including the 1991 elections, the Representation of the People Act 1983 (RPA83) made provision for the costs of Parish Council elections to be paid by the District Council but charged only on the Parish for which the election was held.
- 3.2. In November 1992, the law changed and the RPA83 was amended to give Districts the option of either bearing costs themselves or charging them to the relevant Parish Council. The RPA83 was, in fact, amended to read “..... shall, ***if the District Council so require***, be repaid to that Council by the Council for the Parish where the election is held.”
- 3.3. The practice up to the 1991 elections had been to share the cost of combined elections equally, with the exception of specifically attributable costs such as notices of poll and ballot papers. The whole cost of the election was charged if there was no concurrent ward election.
- 3.4. After the change in law in 1992, the local practice changed to a charge of only the marginal costs, i.e. excluding those which the District (or County) Council would incur in any event, e.g. hire of polling stations, printing of poll cards etc. In short, only the extra costs of holding a Parish election with a contested District ward election were charged to the Parish together with specifically attributable costs. This of course lowered the total sum due from the Parish.
- 3.5. In 1994, the Council changed to the current practice of bearing all the costs of Town/Parish elections, whether combined or not.

4. COMMENTS OF DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND STRATEGIC RESOURCES

I am in agreement with the recommendation.

5. COMMENTS OF CORPORATE MANAGER, DEMOCRATIC AND LEGAL SERVICES

No comments, other than the RPA83 provides the Council with a discretion with regard to the charging of Parish Council election costs.

6. ALTERNATIVES

The alternatives are:-

1. To maintain the status quo, whereby all costs are borne by the District Council.
2. To recharge all Town/Parish Councils with the full cost of their elections, except where there are combined elections when the marginal costs would be charged, together with specifically attributable costs.
3. To split all combined costs on a 50/50 basis.

M.L.HALL
Elections and Electoral Registration Manager