

Time 11.00 am **Public Meeting?** Yes **Type of meeting** Advisory group
Venue Online Meeting

Membership

Chair Cllr Alan Bolshaw (Lab)

Labour

Cllr Ian Brookfield
Cllr Craig Collingswood
Cllr Celia Hibbert
Cllr Milkinderpal Jaspal
Cllr Rita Potter
Cllr Sandra Samuels OBE
Cllr Stephen Simkins
Cllr Paula Brookfield

Conservative

Cllr Wendy Thompson
Cllr Simon Bennett

Quorum for this meeting is three Councillors.

Information for the Public

If you have any queries about this meeting, please contact the Democratic Services team:

Contact Kirsty Tuffin
Tel/Email 01902 552873 or Email: kirsty.tuffin@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Address Democratic Services, Civic Centre, First floor, St Peter's Square,
Wolverhampton WV1 1RL

Copies of other agendas and reports are available from:

Website <http://wolverhampton.moderngov.co.uk>
Email democratic.services@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Tel 01902 550320

Some items are discussed in private because of their confidential or commercial nature. These reports are not available to the public.

Agenda

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

- | <i>Item No.</i> | <i>Title</i> |
|-----------------|---|
| 1 | Apologies for absence |
| 2 | Declarations of Interest |
| 3 | Minutes of the previous meeting (Pages 3 - 6)
[To approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 November 2020 as a correct record]. |
| 4 | Matters arising
[To discuss any matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting]. |
| 5 | Forward Plan for the 2020-2021 Municipal Year (Pages 7 - 10)
[To receive the proposed forward plan for Governance Committee for the remainder of the 2020-2021 Municipal Year.] |
| 6 | Local Election Fees and Charges 2021-2022 (Pages 11 - 18)
[To receive the proposed schedule of fees for 2021-2022]. |

Attendance

Members of the Governance Committee

Cllr Alan Bolshaw (Chair)
Cllr Ian Brookfield
Cllr Paula Brookfield
Cllr Craig Collingswood
Cllr Rita Potter
Cllr Sandra Samuels OBE
Cllr Stephen Simkins
Cllr Wendy Thompson
Cllr Simon Bennett

Employees

Fabrica Hastings	Democratic Services Assistant (Observing)
Shelley Humphries	Democratic Services Officer (Host)
Jas Kaur	Democratic Services Manager
Laura Noonan	Electoral Services Manager
David Pattison	Director of Governance
Kirsty Tuffin	Democratic Services Officer

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. Title

- 1 Apologies for absence**
Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Milkinder Jaspal.
- 2 Declarations of interest**
David Pattison, Director of Governance, advised the Committee that pursuant to the Localism Act 2011 and the Council's constitution he had granted Councillors with a dispensation under that Act so that all Councillors attending the Governance Committee (and indeed Council should the matter come before it) could vote on decisions as part of the electoral review by the Local Government Boundary Commission otherwise it would not be possible to make a decision. The dispensation granted under the following circumstances would last for two years to oversee the Boundary Commission process:

Where members of the decision-making body have disclosable pecuniary interests in a matter that would "impede the transaction of the business".

Resolved:

1. That David Pattison, Director of Governance and Monitoring Officer, provide Councillors with a dispensation under the Localism Act 2011 and the Council's constitution, for the duration of Two years, to make decisions as part of the electoral review by the Local Government Boundary Commission.

3 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 11 September 2020 be approved as a correct record.

4 **Matters arising**

There were no matters arising discussed.

5 **Electoral Review: Update on Phase Two**

David Pattison, Director of Governance, presented the report on phase two of the electoral review that had been underway by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE). He outlined the proposed approach to preparing the Council's submission to the LGBCE's consultation on warding patterns and presented the key dates and governance arrangements for signing off the Council's submission to the LGBCE.

The Committee were advised that the LGBCE had delayed phase two of the review, the public consultation on warding patterns would run from 19 January 2021 – 2 April 2021. Following the consultation, recommendations from LGBCE would be drafted and then subject to a second public consultation due to run from 28 June 2021- 6 September 2021. The final recommendation from LGBCE would be developed by October 2021 and be approved by Parliament in November 2021, with implementation of approved changes in May 2022.

Councillor Ian Brookfield, Leader of Council, advised the Committee that himself and Councillor Wendy Thompson, Leader of the Opposition Group, had raised concerns to LGBCE in regard to the online public consultation as they felt it could disenfranchise up to 30% of the population who do not have access to online facilities. The LGBCE advised the Leader of the Council and Leader of the Opposition Group that due to time and budget restraints the dates of the consultations could not be changed.

The Committee were advised that two working groups would be set up, one for each political group to work independently with support from officers. To help assist both working groups Civica had been contracted to develop a mapping toolkit to plot new proposals using Xpress Maps online software. The new tool would be ready for use by 20 November 2020. A meeting between LGBCE and the leaders from each working group would take place on 25 November 2020. Officers would also meet with LGBCE to achieve a better understanding on what had worked well for other Local Authorities, in similar situations, given the current Covid-19 restrictions.

Resolved:

1. That that the proposed approach to preparing the Council's submission set out in this report for phase two of the electoral review that was currently being undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) be approved.

2. That it be agreed that a full report containing the Council's draft submission be considered by Governance Committee on 12 March 2021 to request Governance Committee to recommend Council approve the submission to the LGBCE on 2 April 2021.

This page is intentionally left blank

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL	Governance Committee 22 January 2021
--	---

Report title	Forward Plan for the 2020-2021 Municipal Year	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Paula Brookfield Cabinet Member for Governance	
Accountable director	David Pattison, Director of Governance	
Originating service	Governance	
Accountable employee	Kirsty Tuffin Tel Email	Democratic Services Officer 01902 552873 Kirsty.Tuffin@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	Not applicable.	

Recommendation for decision:

The Governance Committee is recommended to:

1. Approve the Governance Committee Forward Plan for the 2020-2021 Municipal Year.

1.0 Purpose

1.1 To present the proposed forward plan to Governance Committee for approval.

2.0 Background

2.1 The proposed forward plan outlines decisions to be made by Governance Committee at future meetings.

2.2 The report sets out the items to be brought to the Committee during the existing Municipal Year. Additional items can of course be added and suggested; however, the intention is to give an indication of the pipeline of proposed business.

3.0 Financial implications

3.1 There are no financial implications arising from the recommendation in this report.
[GE/12012021/Y]

4.0 Legal implications

4.1 Due to Covid-19 Committee meetings are being held virtually under The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020. [DP/12012021/C]

5.0 Equalities implications

5.1 There are no equalities implications arising from the recommendation in this report.

6.0 All other Implications

6.1 The Covid-19 implications are covered under legal implications within the report.

7.0 Schedule of background papers

7.1 None.

8.0 Appendices

8.1 Appendix 1: Forward Plan for the 2020-2021 Municipal Year.

Appendix 1 - Governance Committee Forward Plan for the 2020-2021 Municipal Year

Date of Meeting	Title of Report	Lead Officer	Publication Deadline
22 January 2021	Local Election Fees and Charges 2021/2022	Laura Noonan/David Pattison	14 January 2021
12 February 2021	Report on 2020 Annual Canvass	Laura Noonan/David Pattison	4 February 2021
	Update from the Monitoring Officer on Governance Matters	David Pattison	
12 March 2021	Update on 2021 Elections	Laura Noonan/David Pattison	4 March 2021
	Council Submission to Local Government Boundary Review	Stephanie Taylor/Laura Noonan/David Pattison	
	Petition Scheme	Jaswinder Kaur	
	Calendar of Meetings	Jaswinder Kaur	
	Constitution Review	Jaswinder Kaur/David Pattison	
	Update from the Monitoring Officer on Governance Matters	David Pattison	

This page is intentionally left blank

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL	Governance Committee 22 January 2021
--	---

Report title	Local Election Fees and Charges 2021/2022	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Paula Brookfield Cabinet Member for Governance	
Accountable director	David Pattison, Director of Governance	
Originating service	Electoral Services	
Accountable employee	Laura Noonan	Electoral Services Manager
	Tel	01902 554939
	Email	Laura.Noonan@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report has been considered by	Election Board	14 January 2021

Recommendation for decision:

The Governance Committee is recommended to:

1. To approve the proposed schedule of fees from now through to 31 March 2022, as shown in Appendix 1.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To outline the fees and charges relating to Local Elections, which must be set locally.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Representation of the People Act 1983 requires each Council to appoint an officer of the authority as Returning Officer to undertake various statutory duties in relation to election procedures. The Council's Returning Officer is the Chief Executive.
- 2.2 The Representation of the People Act 1983, Section 36(4) requires the council to cover all expenditure incurred by the Returning Officer in the holding of an election for all or any seats on it. The Council may set scales of expenditure which the Returning Officer must not exceed. The costs of running an election result from having to meet a range of fees, charges and expenses incurred in paying council employees and non-council employees for undertaking election duties, expenses for printing notices, poll cards, ballot papers and postal packs and hiring polling station venues and conducting the count.
- 2.3 The Returning Officer is held personally responsible for the organisation and conduct of every election held within Wolverhampton. For national elections and referenda, the fee paid to the Returning Officer is set by statute and paid by central Government. For Police and Crime Commissioner Elections, the fee is also paid by Central Government (Electoral Claims Unit), and for Combined Authority Mayoral it is paid for by the Combined Authority. When the current Chief Executive was appointed as Returning Officer for local elections it was agreed that no fees should be paid for the oversight of local elections and such duties are considered part of the role of the Chief Executive and therefore covered by the associated salary. Other authorities do pay a Returning Officer fee for local elections.
- 2.4 Fees and charges have not been formally reviewed in Wolverhampton for a number of years. They are regularly reviewed across the West Midlands region to ensure consistency and are also reviewed annually in line with inflation. The scale of fees and charges is taken to Election Board for approval from the Returning Officer ahead of every election. It is good practice that these fees be approved by Governance Committee going forward.

3.0 Scale of fees

- 3.1 The fees payable to staff working in polling stations and on other electoral duties are broadly in line with assumptions laid down by the Cabinet Office as reasonable for that role and in line with the West Midlands region.
- 3.2 No pay rate equates to less than the National Living Wage.
- 3.3 It is proposed that the fees are rounded up to whole numbers and comparable with the regional election fees instead of the council pay grades.

3.4 It is proposed that the day and night payment rate for the count is abolished in favour of a standard hourly rate, as any difference in rate of pay for the same role may be challenged by the Election Claims Unit at the Cabinet Office. All other Councils in the West Midlands region pay a set hourly rate for the count, and the proposed fees are in line with the region.

4.0 Financial implications

4.1 The actual cost of the Combined Election in May 2021 will clearly not be established until later this year, but early preparatory work indicates that it will be in the region of £450,000. This estimate incorporates staffing costs based on the proposed scale of fees recommended in this report. The Council will meet the third of this total cost associated with local elections, with two thirds to be funded by the Government and the Combined Authority for the Police and Crime Commissioner and Mayoral elections respectively. The anticipated £150,000 cost to the Council will be funded from the £192,000 budget currently set aside for local elections.

4.2 Additional preparations are being made for the May 2021 elections due to the impact of Covid-19. This includes:

- the purchase of personal protective equipment
- planned use of Covid Marshals at polling stations.

4.3 The estimated costs of these are currently included in the forecasts identified above, though the possibility of reducing the overall election cost to the Council by funding these elements from additional Government Covid-19 grants is to be explored.

[GE/01052021/C]

5.0 Legal implications

5.1 The approach taken is lawful and in compliance with relevant election law. [DP/12012021/B]

6.0 All Other Implications

6.1 Typically 800 people are employed on election duties which is managed by Electoral Services Team. More roles are expected to be recruited to for the triple election and to ensure polling stations are covid-secure. An individual risk assessment will need to be completed for every person employed which will have resource implications on HR and Electoral Services Team.

7.0 Schedule of background papers

7.1 None.

8.0 Appendices

8.1 Appendix 1: Election Fees and Charges 2021/2022.

This page is intentionally left blank

City of Wolverhampton Council – Election Fees and Charges 2021/2022

SCALE OF FEES	Fees paid in 2019	Proposed Fees 2021/2022
Fee for Returning Officer		
Local Election	0	0
European Parliamentary Election	£8,572	N/A
Parliamentary Election (3 constituencies)	£8,706	N/A
Police and Crime Commissioner Election	In 2016 - £9,450	Awaiting charges order in early 2021
West Midlands Combined Authority Mayoral Election	In 2017 - £8,591	Awaiting charges order in early 2021
Fee for Deputy Returning Officer – flat rate		
<i>(up to 50% of RO fee)</i>		
Deputy Returning Officer – full powers	£500	£500
Assistant Deputy Returning Officer – full powers	£400	£400
Deputy Returning Officer – limited powers – Postal Vote Opening Manager	N/A	£200
Deputy Returning Officer – limited powers – receipt of nominations	N/A	£100 (non-core-team)
Polling Station Staff – flat rate		
+ 20% uplift fee for combination election – figure in brackets will be paid for May 2021 election		
Polling Station Inspector	£245	£250 (£300)
Polling Station Inspector mileage	£0.45p a mile	£0.45p a mile
Presiding Officer	£220	£230 (£276)
Presiding Officer mileage	£10	£10
Transporting polling booth	£15	£15

Poll Clerk	£143	£150 (£180)
Poll Clerk mileage	£5	£5
Reserve PO and PC fee	N/A	£50
Training (Polling Station Inspector/Presiding Officer/Poll Clerk)	£30	£30
Postal Vote Opening – per hour		
Postal Vote Opening Manager	X 1.25 hourly rate of core team member - overtime only	£200 DRO fee and x 1.25 hourly rate for overtime
Postal Vote Opening Supervisor Count night	£14.92 £18.65	£15 £20
Postal Vote Opening Adjudicator Count night	£11.88 £14.51	£12.50 £15
Postal Vote Opening Assistant Count night	£9.55	£10 £12.50
Verification and Count (hourly rate)		
Candidate and Agent Liaison Officer	£300 flat fee	£300 flat fee
Operations Manager Leads (Logistics, Reception, Comms, Count site manager/ICT/senior result co-ordination) After 9pm/weekend	£22.63 £27.74	£30
Count Supervisor After 9pm/weekend	£14.92 £18.65	£20
Assistant Count Supervisor After 9pm/weekend	£11.88 £14.51	£15

Count Assistant After 9pm/weekend	£10.14 £12.10	£12.50
Chief counting supervisor (results co-ordination) After 9pm/weekend	£14.92 £18.65	£20
Chief counting supervisor assistant After 9pm/weekend	£11.88 £14.51	£15
Ballot box receipt assistant After 9pm/weekend	£11.88 £14.51	£15
Ballot box runner After 9pm/weekend	£10.14 £12.10	£12.50
Receptionist / Door Keepers After 9pm/weekend	£10.14 £12.10	£12.50
Training fee for Count Supervisors and Assistant Count Supervisors	£30	£30
Core team overtime		
5 members of core election team for overtime hours. Electoral Services Manager (G8), Electoral Services Officer (G6), Electoral Services Assistants (G4)	X1.25 hourly rate Core team election day fee – same as Presiding Officer - £220	X 1.25 hourly rate Core team election day fee - £300
Temporary clerical assistants	£10.14	£10.41 (Grade 4)
Delivery of training session	£100	£80 per session for external trainer / core team - x 1.25 hourly rate.
Ballot box preparation		
Ballot box preparation supervisor	£10.98	£12.50
Ballot box preparation assistant	£10	£10

SCALE OF FEES – SERVICES	Cost
Printing and provision of ballot papers	Actual and necessary (print contract in place with FCS Laser Mail for next 3 years)
Printing official poll cards.	Actual and necessary (print contract in place with FCS Laser Mail for next 3 years)
Printing of postal vote packs	Actual and necessary (print contract in place with FCS Laser Mail for next 3 years)
Printing and providing notices and other documents required in and about the election or poll and cost of publishing such notices and documents	Actual and necessary
Renting of any building, room or equipment for the purposes of the election and for expenses of heating, lighting and cleaning any building or room or repairs to equipment.	Actual and necessary
Hiring or constructing a polling station for the purposes of the election and for expenses of heating, lighting and cleaning any building or room or repairs to equipment.	Actual and necessary
Providing ballot boxes, including repairs	Actual and necessary
Conveyance of ballot boxes, equipment etc.	Actual and necessary
Delivery and collection of polling booths	Actual and necessary
Printing copies of the register of electors	Actual and necessary
Postage	Actual and necessary – as per Royal Mail charges
Election stationery and materials, general stationery, cost of delivery of documents to the Returning Officer and miscellaneous expenses.	Actual and necessary
Premium for Employer's Liability, Third Party and Personal Indemnity Insurance.	Actual and necessary