

Council Agenda



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Date: 2 December 2014
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Summons to attend a meeting of Council

to be held on Wednesday 10 December 2014 at 7.00 pm
The Ridgeway (main hall first floor), The Beacon, (formerly Wantage Civic Hall), Portway, Wantage, OX12 9BY

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M Reed".

Margaret Reed
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

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Agenda

Open to the Public including the Press

Council's vision

The council's vision is to take care of your interests across the Vale with enterprise, energy and efficiency.

1. Apologies for absence

To receive apologies for absence.

2. Minutes

To adopt and sign as a correct record the council minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2014.

3. Declarations of interest

To receive any declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests in respect of items on the agenda for this meeting.

4. Chairman's announcements

To receive any announcements from the chairman.

5. Statements, petitions and questions from the public relating to matters affecting council.

Any statements, petitions and questions from the public under standing order 32 will be made or presented at the meeting.

6. Urgent business

To receive notification of any matters which the chairman determines should be considered as urgent business and the special circumstances which have made the matters urgent.

7. Petitions under standing order 13

To receive petitions from members of the council under standing order 13 (if any).

8. Questions under standing order 12

To receive questions from members of the council under standing order 12.

1. Question from Councillor Pat Lonergan to Councillor Mike Murray, Cabinet member for planning policy

What system was used to rank and evaluate potential strategic housing sites considered for inclusion in the Local Plan 2031?

2. Question from Councillor Andrew Skinner to Councillor Reg Waite, Cabinet member for human resources

Internal Audit has recently lost employees who had lengthy commutes. In the last 12 months, how many council employees have left, and, of these, how many mentioned difficulty affording housing in the area in their exit interview?

3. Question from Councillor Judy Roberts to Councillor Matthew Barber, Cabinet member for legal and democratic services

What response should petitioners expect when a petition is presented at full council?

4. Question from Councillor Debby Hallett to Councillor Elaine Ware, Cabinet member for economy leisure and property

What's the status of the free wifi the Vale planned to install in Botley?

5. Question from Councillor Judy Roberts to Councillor Matthew Barber, Leader of the council

In the light of hundreds of people objecting to the Doric plans and signing petitions asking the Vale to terminate their land sale contract with Doric, what does the Leader of the Council have to say to the people of Botley?

6. Question from Councillor Debby Hallett to Councillor Elaine Ware, Cabinet member for economy leisure and property

In June 2013, after completion of the Leisure and Sports Facilities Study, the Cabinet Member said there was to be a "follow up piece of work" that would include surveys of community or village halls. When is this survey due to be completed, and when will the report be available?

7. Question from Councillor Margaret Crick to Councillor Matthew Barber, Leader of the council

Councillor Lovatt has inferred in the press (Abingdon Herald, 9th April) that developers behind the north Abingdon housing schemes could also pay for the £12m conversion of Lodge Hill to a diamond interchange. Would the leader confirm or correct this?

8. Question from Councillor Tony de Vere to Councillor Elaine Ware Cabinet member for economy, leisure and property

Can the Leader inform Council what the position is with the redevelopment of the Charter area in Abingdon?

9. Question from Councillor Catherine Webber to Councillor Charlotte Dickson, Chairman of the General Licensing Committee

Please would the Chair update the Council on the state of the AQMAs in Abingdon, Botley and Marcham?

10. Question from Councillor Jenny Hannaby to Councillor Roger Cox, Cabinet member for planning

Please would the Cabinet Member give the Council a brief update on the Grove Airfield s106 negotiations?

11. Question from Councillor Julie Mavhew-Archer to Councillor Mike Murray, cabinet member for planning policy

Has land been reserved in the Local Plan 2031 for the necessary widening and/or dualing along Dunmore Road and Twelve Acre Drive, which would be needed if the housing proposed in the plan is delivered?

12. Question from Councillor Richard Webber to Councillor Elaine Ware, Cabinet member for economy, leisure and property

Please could the Cabinet Member explain the thinking behind the “option packages” being offered as part of the consultation on Abbey Meadow?

13. Question from Councillor Jim Halliday to Councillor Mike Murray, Cabinet member for planning policy

Please could he state how many Local Plan leaflets and CIL leaflets were printed this Autumn, the cost of each print run, the number of households and business each leaflet was mailed to, and the cost of each mailshot ?

14. Question from Councillor Jeanette Halliday to Councillor Matthew Barber, Leader of the council

Did you review the content of the letters concerning individual election registration before they were sent out?

15. Question from Councillor Jim Halliday to Councillor Matthew Barber, Leader of the council

Please could he state how many letters were dispatched to residents about the introduction of Individual Electoral Registration, the cost of mailing these letters, and whether the Council received any funding from Government for this exercise, and if so how much ?

9. Council tax base

(Pages 8 - 11)

Cabinet, at its meeting on 5 December 2014, will consider a report on the council tax base for 2015/16.

The report of the Head of Finance, which Cabinet will consider on 5 December is attached.

The recommendations of Cabinet will be circulated to councillors prior to the Council meeting.

10. Council tax reduction scheme grant to towns and parishes

(Pages 12 - 15)

Council tax reduction scheme grant to towns and parishes

Cabinet, at its meeting on 5 December 2014, will consider a report on the total amount of council tax reduction scheme grant that will be passed down to town and parish councils for 2015/16.

The report of the Head of Finance, which Cabinet will consider on 5 December is attached.

The recommendations of Cabinet will be circulated to councillors prior to the Council meeting.

11. DCLG Building Foundations for Growth: Enterprise Zone Capital Grants Allocation to Milton Park

1. Vale of White Horse District Council, in partnership with MEPC, Milton Park, has been successful in winning Enterprise Zone grant funding of £7million for MEPC to build a bio-technology innovation centre at Milton Park.
2. Vale of White Horse District Council as accountable body, is asked to accept this grant and to administer its release to MEPC in accordance with the grant conditions applied by government.
3. Government will pay the money across to Vale in two tranches, which Vale must claim at the point MEPC achieve specified milestones, in January and February 2015.
4. We are awaiting formal notification of this grant from government, which we believe is imminent. Vale's financial procedure rules allow for us to accept this grant and incorporate it into the budget, however, given the scale of the funding officers ask that Council agree to establish a budget for the £7million. A detailed report on the allocation of and management of the grant will be the subject of an individual cabinet member decision and will be subject to the usual scrutiny arrangements.

Recommendation: Council is asked to agree to establish a budget on receipt of the grant funding of £7million Enterprise Zone grant funding for MEPC to build a bio-technology innovation centre at Milton Park.

12. Councillors' allowances scheme

(Pages 16 - 31)

To consider the report of the head of legal and democratic services and the appended report of the Independent Remuneration Panel (**attached**).

13. Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 - proposal to appoint a joint Independent Remuneration Panel

(Pages 32 - 34)

To consider the report of the head of legal and democratic services (**attached**).

14. Declaration of vacancy - Grove

(Pages 35 - 36)

To consider the report of the head of legal and democratic services (**attached**).

15. Elections fees and charges 2015

(Pages 37 - 56)

To consider the report of the returning officer on the setting of fees and charges for the 2015 district and parish elections (**attached**).

16. Report of the leader of the council

(1) Urgent cabinet decisions

In accordance with the overview and scrutiny procedure rules, a cabinet decision can be taken as a matter of urgency, if any delay by the call-in process would seriously prejudice the council's or the public's interest. Treating the decision as a matter of urgency must be agreed by the chairman of the Scrutiny Committee and must be reported to the next meeting of the council, together with the reasons for urgency.

Councillor Matthew Barber, Leader of the council will report that on 10 October 2014 he took a confidential decision to enter into a new contract for an electoral management system to address problems with the current provider and to vire funds from the capital contingency budget for the purchase of the system and the revenue contingency to cover training on the new system and cover the existing contract costs. The chairman of the scrutiny committee agreed to waive call-in because any delay could impact on the council's delivery of Individual Electoral Registration (IER).

(2) Delegation of cabinet functions

To receive details of any changes to the leader's scheme of delegation.

(3) Matters affecting the authority arising from meetings of joint committees, partnerships and other meetings

To receive the report of the leader (if any).

17. Notices of motion under standing order 11

To receive notices of motion under standing order 11.

1. Motion to be proposed by Councillor Richard Webber, seconded by Councillor Catherine Webber

This council believes that the present system of s106 negotiations leaves much to be desired, and that council should begin immediately the revision of our present process to produce a system which is more open, more transparent and includes input from parish and town councils.

2. Motion to be proposed by Councillor Debby Hallett, seconded by Councillor Jim Halliday

Council recognises that residents have reported that they rely on written communications to get their council information. To better serve the people of the Vale, Council requests Cabinet to include in their 2015-16 budget, a programme for circulating, on a regular basis to all Vale households, written information about Vale activities, services and programmes.

Cabinet Report



Report of Head of Finance

Author: Ben Watson

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Wards affected: All

Cabinet member responsible: Matthew Barber

Tel: 01235 540366

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To: Cabinet on: 5 December 2014

To: Council on: 10 December 2014

Council tax base 2015/16

Recommendations

1. That the report of the head of finance for the calculation of the council's tax base and the calculation of the tax base for each parish area for 2015/16 be approved
2. That, in accordance with The Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by Vale of White Horse District Council as its council tax base for the year 2015/16 be 47,563.1
3. That, in accordance with The Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by Vale of White Horse District Council as the council tax base for the year 2015/16 for each parish be the amount shown against the name of that parish in Appendix 1 of the report of the head of finance to Cabinet on 5 December 2014

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to ask Cabinet to recommend the council tax base for 2015/16 to Council for approval.

Corporate Objectives

2. The calculation of the tax base is a legal requirement and an essential part of the tax setting process which helps to achieve the council's corporate objective of effectively managing its resources.

Background

3. Before the council tax can be set by the council, a calculation has to be made of the council tax base, which is an estimate of the taxable resources for the district as a whole and for each parish area.
4. The council tax base for the district has to be notified to Oxfordshire County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner by 31 January 2015. Each parish and town council is also notified of the figure for its area.
5. The legislation requires that the council tax base is approved by full council or a non-executive body with delegated powers. No such delegation exists, so cabinet is therefore asked to recommend to council the schedule set out in Appendix 1 as the council tax base for the district as a whole and for each parish area.

Calculation of the tax base

6. The starting point for the calculation is the total number of dwellings and their council tax band.
7. The council then allows for the following information, for each band:
 - (a) dwellings which will be entirely exempt so no tax is payable (e.g. those occupied entirely by students)
 - (b) dwellings which will attract a 25 per cent reduction (e.g. those with a single adult occupier)
 - (c) dwellings which will attract a 50 per cent reduction (e.g. those where all of the adult residents qualify for a reduction)
 - (d) dwellings which will be treated as being in a lower band because they have been adapted for a severely disabled person. The regulations provide methodology to take account of the reduction available to those in band A dwellings
 - (e) dwellings which will be on the valuation list but which attract discounts or disablement relief or are exempt, for only part of the year
 - (f) dwellings which will attract a reduction through the council tax reduction scheme
8. Each band is then converted into "band D equivalents" by applying the factor laid down by legislation. For example, a band A dwelling is multiplied by 2/3 to arrive at the band D equivalent figure, whilst a band H dwelling is multiplied by two. All these are then added together to give a total of band D equivalents.
9. A final adjustment is required to allow for non-collection. The council is required to decide what its collection rate is likely to be and apply this to its council tax base. For the 2014/15 tax the council assumed 98 per cent would eventually be collected and it is proposed to use 98 per cent again in 2015/16.

Taxbase for 2015/16

10. Based on the assumptions detailed above the council tax base for 2015/16 is 47,563.1.
11. Similar calculations are required for each parish in order to calculate the proportion of the district's tax base which relates to its area. A schedule of the tax base for each parish is set out in **Appendix 1**.
12. To calculate the council tax amounts payable per property band for the council, its council tax requirement (i.e. the amount of council tax to be raised) is divided by the Band D equivalent (taxbase). This will be finalised during January and February, culminating in the council tax being set by council on 18 February 2015 (this date is subject to the council being notified of the major precepting authorities' council tax requirements).

Financial Implications

13. These are set out in the body of the report.

Legal Implications

14. These are set out in the body of the report.

Background Papers

None

PARISH COUNCIL TAX BASES - 2015/16

PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL	NUMBER OF PROPERTIES	PARISH TAX BASE 2015-16	PARISH TAX BASE 2014-15
ABINGDON	14,528.0	11,840.2	11,703.2
APPLEFORD	141.0	153.4	152.7
APPLETON WITH EATON	392.0	432.8	430.9
ARDINGTON AND LOCKINGE	219.0	210.5	201.8
ASHBURY	236.0	243.0	236.9
BAULKING	40.0	48.7	46.7
BESSELSLEIGH	29.0	36.1	36.9
BLEWBURY	769.0	697.8	686.3
BOURTON	129.0	139.7	139.4
BUCKLAND	253.0	310.9	314.4
BUSCOT	87.0	87.5	88.7
CHARNEY BASSETT	121.0	150.5	146.1
CHILDREY	223.0	238.2	231.5
CHILTON	592.0	608.9	486.2
COLESHILL	75.0	67.0	62.7
COMPTON BEAUCHAMP	32.0	40.8	40.8
CUMNOR	2,582.0	2,736.6	2,676.1
DENCHWORTH	79.0	82.5	83.1
DRAYTON	981.0	905.4	898.8
EAST CHALLOW	323.0	257.8	258.3
EAST HANNEY	356.0	383.6	368.9
EAST HENDRED	494.0	505.6	508.5
EATON HASTINGS	32.0	33.9	34.0
FARINGDON	3,373.0	2,635.7	2,540.5
FERNHAM	95.0	107.2	105.8
FRILFORD	89.0	120.0	116.4
FYFIELD AND TUBNEY	197.0	236.2	240.0
GARFORD	70.0	82.3	83.1
GOOSEY	55.0	64.9	64.2
GREAT COXWELL	131.0	155.1	153.4
GROVE	3,009.0	2,543.8	2,507.3
HARWELL	1,030.0	971.5	964.8
HATFORD	36.0	45.1	46.6
HINTON WALDRIST	144.0	145.9	142.1
KENNINGTON	1,755.0	1,666.6	1,657.1
KINGSTON BAGPUIZE AND SOUTHMOOR	940.0	984.5	967.5
KINGSTON LISLE	105.0	108.0	101.6
LETCOMBE BASSETT	73.0	81.1	81.3
LETCOMBE REGIS	370.0	367.7	368.3
LITTLE COXWELL	68.0	76.8	75.2
LITTLEWORTH	95.0	114.6	116.6
LONGCOT	212.0	262.8	259.2
LONGWORTH	238.0	259.5	258.5
LYFORD	23.0	26.5	26.2
MARCHAM	708.0	684.9	692.8
MILTON	468.0	419.8	415.2
NORTH HINKSEY	2,020.0	1,691.5	1,658.3
PUSEY	28.0	33.9	33.1
RADLEY	1,003.0	863.7	864.8
ST HELEN WITHOUT	845.0	866.1	807.0
SHELLINGFORD	79.0	80.8	79.8
SHRIVENHAM	1,014.0	1,024.7	975.8
SOUTH HINKSEY	170.0	182.4	179.8
SPARSHOLT	136.0	151.8	150.9
STANFORD IN THE VALE	898.0	836.6	825.3
STEVENTON	658.0	608.2	604.5
SUNNINGWELL	373.0	437.7	440.8
SUTTON COURTENAY	1,055.0	978.1	962.2
UFFINGTON	326.0	323.6	323.1
UPTON	179.0	216.8	210.1
WANTAGE	5,093.0	4,243.3	4,158.1
WATCHFIELD	901.0	837.8	752.8
WEST CHALLOW	84.0	94.1	89.6
WEST HANNEY	224.0	247.2	243.1
WEST HENDRED	148.0	160.7	160.5
WOOLSTONE	61.0	76.9	78.3
WOOTTON	1,182.0	1,157.9	1,151.9
WYTHAM	69.0	76.4	74.1
TOTAL	52,543	47,563.1	46,640.5

Cabinet Report



Report of Head of Finance

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To: Cabinet on: 5 December 2014

To: Council on: 10 December 2014

Council tax reduction scheme grant for town and parish councils

Recommendations

That Cabinet recommends to Council:

(a) that the total council tax reduction scheme grant to be passed down to town and parish councils for financial years 2015/16 to 2017/18 be:

2015/16 - £120,445

2016/17 - £ 80,297

2017/18 - £ 40,149

(b) that the individual grant amounts for towns and parishes for 2015/16 are as set out in **Appendix 1** to this report

(c) that delegated authority be given to the Head of Finance, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, to determine the individual town and parish allocations in 2016/17 and 2017/18, based on the current method of distribution

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is for Cabinet to recommend to council the total amount of council tax reduction scheme grant that will be passed down to town and parish council for the financial years 2015/16 to 2017/18.

Corporate Objectives

2. The council receives a n annual grant from central government which can be passed down to town and parish councils to mitigate the impact of the council tax reduction

scheme on their taxbases. Passing down the grant can help keep down the town and parish element of council tax bills. Determining the amount of grant with reference to the council's Medium Term Financial Plan will help keep the council's council tax as low as possible. Distributing the grant will help meet the objective of effective management of resources.

Background

3. The council tax reduction scheme (CTRS) takes the form of a discount on the council tax bill and, like other discounts (e.g. the single person's 25 per cent discount), has the effect of reducing the council's council tax base. Reducing the tax base means that, if the council's budget requirement remained the same, the amount of council tax charged would increase, or if council tax was not increased the income generated would reduce. This applies to both billing authorities (Vale?) and major precepting authorities (Oxfordshire County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner), as well as local precepting authorities (town and parish councils).
4. To mitigate the impact of the reduced council tax base, each year the Government distributes, via revenue support grant and business rates retention, a non-ringfenced grant to billing authorities and major precepting authorities. Because the Government does not have a method for passing down funding direct to town and parish councils the grant given to billing authorities includes an amount "*attributable to local precepting authorities*".
5. For 2013/14 the council received a sum of **£200,742** to be passed down to town and parish councils. The mechanism for allocating the funding was approved at full Council on 12 December 2012. The full amount of the grant was passed down to Vale of White Horse towns and parishes, based upon their relative need following the reduction in their respective taxbases. Some district councils elsewhere in the country did not pass the grant to towns and parishes.
6. The "Revenue Budget 2013/14 and Capital Programme to 2017/18" report to Cabinet and Council in February 2013 advised (paragraph 12) that for future years the amount of grant was not known and it was assumed that no grant at all would be received. Therefore to partly mitigate the impact on town and parish budgets, the intention was to continue to support the town and parish precepts, but to gradually phase out support over the MTFP (i.e. a 20 per cent reduction year on year).
7. Therefore, the total amount distributed to towns and parishes for 2014/15 was **£160,593** (a reduction of £40,148).

Amount of council tax reduction scheme grant for 2015/16 to 2017/18

8. Using the same methodology as above (a 20 per year on year reduction) the amount to be distributed to town and parish councils for the next three financial years will be:

Financial year	Amount
2015/16	£120,445
2016/17	£80,297
2017/18	£40,149

9. No funding will be distributed to town and parish councils in 2018/19.

Method of distribution

10. The funding pot as determined above will be distributed to town and councils using the same formula as was used for 2013/14 and 2014/15. This formula looks at the effect the council tax reduction scheme has had on the town and parishes' individual taxbases and calculates the notional "council tax forgone". The town and parish councils then receive a fixed percentage of the council tax forgone.
11. The individual grant amounts for towns and parishes for 2015/16 are as set out in **Appendix 1**.
12. Cabinet is requested to give delegated authority to the Head of Finance, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, to determine individual town and parish allocations in 2016/17 and 2017/18 based on the current method of distribution.

Financial Implications

13. The council tax reduction scheme grant from the government is contained within the council's revenue support grant and the council's baseline funding level for business rates retention. The actual amount of grant for 2015/16 is unknown but overall funding is reducing year on year. The MTFP allows for the 2013/14 grant to reduce by 20 per cent each year so this report fits in with the council's medium term plans.

Legal Implications

14. Whilst the council tax reduction scheme grant is not ringfenced, there is an expectation that councils will use it to mitigate the effect on local precepting authorities of the reduced council tax base.

Risks

15. There is a risk that some town and parish councils may challenge the methodology if they believe that they have not received an appropriate share. However, the Government has not specified any methodology to follow and there is no legal requirement for any of the funding to be passed on.

Other implications

16. There are no other implications arising directly from this report.

Conclusion

17. The government states that part of the funding the council will receive during 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18 is attributable to town and parish councils to mitigate the impact of the council tax reduction scheme on their taxbases. This report recommends how much funding should be passed to town and parish councils without compromising the council's medium term financial plan.

Background Papers

- None

Town/parish	CTRS grant
ABINGDON	£59,772
APPLEFORD	£118
APPLETON WITH EATON	£308
ARDINGTON & LOCKINGE	£102
ASHBURY	£119
BAULKING	£0
BESSELSLEIGH	£0
BLEWBURY	£1,359
BOURTON	£113
BUCKLAND	£42
BUSCOT	£36
CHARNEY BASSETT	£50
CHILDREY	£339
CHILTON	£403
COLESHILL	£49
COMPTON BEAUCHAMP	£0
CUMNOR	£2,046
DENCHWORTH	£12
DRAYTON	£1,410
EAST CHALLOW	£1,163
EAST HANNEY	£0
EAST HENDRED	£892
EATON HASTINGS	£0
FARINGDON	£18,043
FERNHAM	£118
FRILFORD	£0
FYFIELD AND TUBNEY	£8
GARFORD	£59
GOOSEY	£0
GREAT COXWELL	£63
GROVE	£7,397
HARWELL	£1,988
HATFORD	£0
HINTON WALDRIST	£119
KENNINGTON	£2,328
KINGSTON BAGPUIZE	£387
KINGSTON LISLE	£171
LETCOMBE BASSETT	£10
LETCOMBE REGIS	£318
LITTLE COXWELL	£14
LITTLEWORTH	£12
LONGCOT	£147
LONGWORTH	£189
LYFORD	£0
MARCHAM	£1,034
MILTON	£658
NORTH HINKSEY	£1,836
PUSEY	£0
RADLEY	£1,712
ST HELEN WITHOUT	£100
SHELLINGFORD	£12
SHRIVENHAM	£1,341
SOUTH HINKSEY	£186
SPARSHOLT	£43
STANFORD IN THE VALE	£679
STEVENTON	£879
SUNNINGWELL	£169
SUTTON COURTENAY	£2,039
UFFINGTON	£478
UPTON	£56
WANTAGE	£7,176
WATCHFIELD	£584
WEST CHALLOW	£53
WEST HANNEY	£76
WEST HENDRED	£190
WOOLSTONE	£0
WOOTTON	£1,332
WYTHAM	£106
Total	£120,445

Council



Report of Head of Legal and Democratic Services

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To: COUNCIL

Date: 10 December 2014

Councillors' allowances scheme

Recommendations

To:

1. consider the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel set out in its report attached as appendix 1;
2. agree a revised councillors' allowances scheme with effect from 11 May 2015, taking into consideration the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel subject to the approval of the necessary budget as part of the council's budget setting process for 2015/16; and
3. authorise the head of legal and democratic services to finalise a councillors' allowances scheme based on the decision in 2 above, to make any consequential amendments to the constitution, and advertise the changes.

Purpose of Report

1. To consider the report and the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel on a revised councillors' allowances scheme and to agree a scheme of allowances to run from 11 May 2015.

Background

2. The Local Government Act 2000 requires the council to appoint an independent remuneration panel to review its councillors' allowances scheme and make recommendations on the level of allowances to be paid. Council is responsible for setting the scheme of allowances having regard to the panel's recommendations.

3. The last full review of the allowances was in 2008. Council agreed to adopt the scheme recommended by the panel.

Panel report

4. Following several meetings in between March and November 2014, the panel has made recommendations for a scheme of allowances to run from 11 May 2015.
5. The panel's recommendations and the reasons for these are set out in appendix 1.

Financial Implications

6. The 2015/16 draft base budget currently has £203,170 provision for councillors' basic allowances and £75,000 for special responsibility allowances. The total proposed budget provision for councillors' allowances in 2014/15 is £277,140.

Legal Implications

7. The council is required to establish an Independent Remuneration Panel under the Local Government Act 2000 and the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) Regulations 2003. Under the legislation, Council is required to have regard to the recommendations of the panel when making or revising a scheme of allowances. However it does not have to accept the recommendations if it does not consider them appropriate.

Conclusion

8. The Independent Remuneration Panel has undertaken a review of the councillors' allowances scheme. Council is requested to consider the recommendations set out in the report and agree a scheme of allowances to run from 8 May 2015, immediately after the district council elections.



Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel on amendments to the Councillors' Allowances Scheme to be adopted from 11 May 2015

Report to Vale of White Horse District Council on 10 December 2014

**James Davies
Stephen King
Dr Robert Smith**

Introduction

1. The council's constitution states that councillors are entitled to receive allowances as set out in the councillors' allowances scheme. The council's current scheme came into force on 1 April 2012, following consideration of the Independent Remuneration Panel's recommendations, replacing the scheme adopted following the last major review in 2008. The amended scheme is set out in the council's constitution and can be found on the council's website.
2. During 2014 the panel has reviewed whether the scheme should be adjusted to take into account the reduction in the number of district councillors from May 2015 and the effect that has on councillors' workloads. This reduction resulted from the review conducted by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England. It is recommended that Council adopts this new scheme (as set out in appendix A attached) and that it comes into effect on 11 May 2015, after the district council elections.

Legal framework

3. In accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the Local Government Act 2000, and The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, councils have a duty to consider the findings of an independent remuneration panel before determining any councillors' allowances scheme. The regulations place a statutory obligation on the council to establish and maintain an independent remuneration panel to look at councillors' allowances and report its views to the council. There is a statutory obligation for a panel of at least three members, none of whom is also a member of the council or is a member of a committee or sub-committee of the council, nor disqualified from being an elected member of the council (s.80 of the Local Government Act 1972, and s79 of the Local Government Act 2000).
4. In addition to the regulations, the government has issued guidance to councils on councillors' allowances. This guidance deals with the types of allowances which can be paid and what the allowances cover, the setting up, appointment and work of independent remuneration panels, and the making and publication of schemes.

The council's independent remuneration panel

5. In October 2011, Council appointed independent members to its Independent Remuneration Panel until May 2016. The current panel consists of three members who come from different backgrounds:
 - Mr James Davies – a retired manager
 - Mr Stephen King – a local businessman
 - Dr Robert Smith – a retired economist (a management consultant specialising in the public sector / Director of Studies and Deputy Chief Executive at the Civil Service College)

Methodology

6. During 2014, the panel met several times to review the councillors' allowances scheme. To assist in its deliberations the panel had regard to the following information:
 - the Local Government and Housing Act 1989
 - the Local Government Act 2000
 - the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003
 - Guidance on Members' Allowances for Local Authorities in England
 - the council's new executive arrangements – agreed by Council in December 2010
 - details of published figures of annual gross earnings of professional employment groups
 - details of inflation rates and latest projections of inflation rates and earnings from the Bank of England in mid-November 2014
 - details of the Inland Revenue travel and subsistence rates
 - figures of allowances paid by other district councils provided by the South East Employers
7. All councillors were advised of the pending review and were invited to submit their comments through a survey of their time and resources spent on council business. Twenty-seven councillors responded. The panel interviewed a sample of councillors to seek further information and also offered to meet any councillor that wished to speak to the panel. The interviews and survey responses enabled the panel to gather information on a number of aspects, including the time spent by councillors on council business in respect of the different roles, views on the current scheme, levels of allowances generally and the cost to the council, views on comparisons with other authorities, and comments on what activities and roles warrant a special responsibility allowance. The panel also took into account the advice from democratic services and the chief executive.
8. The panel wishes to thank all councillors who completed survey questionnaires, were interviewed or submitted comments. Without their assistance the review would not have been possible.

Calculation of allowances

9. In calculating the allowances, the panel used the average number of hours per councillor per week, less a voluntary contribution considered reasonable for councillors in a voluntary role, multiplied by a daily rate.
10. The government guidance stresses that it is important that some element of councillors' work continues to be voluntary—that some hours are not remunerated. The panel agrees with this principle. However, the panel also recognises that this must be balanced against the need to ensure councillors do not suffer financial loss, and that people are encouraged to come forward as elected members and that their service to the community is retained.
11. The voluntary contribution used in the panel's calculations of the basic allowance in the last major review was five hours per week. However in this year's review, the panel has used a lower voluntary contribution as it believes that today there are increasing levels of pressure on people's time, evidenced by many charities

finding it more difficult to recruit volunteers. The panel believes that it is reasonable, in calculating the basic allowance, to reduce the voluntary element and accordingly has chosen a voluntary contribution figure of three hours per week, representing broadly one evening per week including travel time.

12. The daily rate used in the calculation of allowances used to be the local government daily rate provided by the Local Government Association. However, this daily rate is no longer available as the association no longer produces this information. In looking for alternatives, the panel reviewed information provided by the Office of National Statistics to see if any figures were available which suggested appropriate remuneration rates for occupations reasonably comparable to the work undertaken by local councillors. The panel considered that the best comparable daily rate was for 'Public Services Associate Professionals'. The panel has used the mean earnings of this employment group as the primary basis for choosing the daily rate to apply to the time spent by councillors.
13. The panel looked at whether allowances should be subject to a regional weighting due to the cost of living in the Oxford area. However, it concluded that while Oxford had a higher cost of living than the South East average, Abingdon did not, therefore there was no justification to treat the Vale as a special case.

Basic allowance

14. The basic allowance is a flat rate allowance payable to all councillors to recognise their time and commitment to the council. It covers all meetings of the authority, meetings with officers, meetings with electors/residents, political group meetings, and travel to and from those meetings. It also covers incidental costs of a councillor using their home.
15. During 2014 the panel undertook a thorough review of the basic allowance. The driving factor was the reduction in the number of district councillors in May 2015 from 51 to 38. This review involved recalculating the base on which the allowance was founded. This base was previously set in 2008.
16. Through its survey and councillor interviews, the panel assessed the time councillors spent on council work. This included time spent on:
 - official council meetings, including preparation, travel time to and from, and attendance at the meeting and training events
 - attending parish council meetings as a district councillor
 - helping electors in their ward
 - representing the council on outside bodies
 - attending political group meetings
 - miscellaneous duties
17. From the data gathered, the panel found that there had been a reduction in the average number of hours spent by councillors in carrying out their role, compared to the last major review in 2008. However, this reduction was offset by an expected increase in workload that councillors would have to undertake following the May 2015 elections, with fewer councillors to undertake the work. This is likely to require councillors to spend more time attending meetings, and more time on ward work, parish work and representational duties. However, some other elements should not increase, for example attendance at political group meetings.

18. The panel has calculated the basic allowance for 2015/16 based on there being no change to the numbers of councillors on the Planning, Scrutiny, Audit and Licensing committees. If the new council changes this significantly, the basic allowance should be reviewed further.
19. In its calculations, the panel has included some time for councillors' miscellaneous duties. This covers time spent on incidental conversations, by either telephone or email, over and above the five main categories surveyed and listed in the bullet points in paragraph 16 above.
20. Also included in basic allowance is an element to cover councillors' incidental expenses of using their home for council work. These include telephone, computer use, paper, and printing costs.
21. The panel considers that the figures obtained from its analysis justify an increase in the basic allowance to £4,575 per annum (currently £3,906 per annum) and that this should take effect from the May 2015 elections. This brings the council's basic allowance to just above the average for district councils in South East England. However, this average was from 2013/14 figures, the latest available at the time of this report. This increase to the basic allowance also takes into account an annual cost of living increase of two per cent for 2015/16.

RECOMMENDATION

That from 1 April 2015 to 10 May 2015, while existing councillors are still in office, the basic allowance remains unamended at £3,906 per annum.

The panel recommends that the basic allowance is increased to £4,575 per annum from 11 May 2015 when councillors take up office after the elections.

Special responsibility allowances

22. The councillors' allowances scheme can include the payment of special responsibility allowances to councillors who have significant responsibilities above basic allowance responsibilities. The panel has previously considered in detail which roles should receive a special responsibility allowance, basing its recommendations on the level of responsibility, comparisons between different roles, the hours spent, and comparisons with other authorities.
23. The panel has reviewed the special responsibility allowances. As the council's committee structure has remained unchanged, the panel is making no recommendations for any changes at this time; the new council could make changes to the structure. However, the panel would like to review the special responsibility allowances in 2015 in the light of the new council following the elections in May 2015 and the reduction in the number of councillors.
24. In the meantime, the panel believes that the special responsibility allowances should be subject to a cost of living increase and recommends two per cent rise.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The panel recommends that no changes are made to structure of the special responsibility allowances at this time but conducts a further review after the district council elections in 2015.

That from 1 April 2015 to 10 May 2015, while existing councillors are still in office, the special responsibility allowances remain unamended.

The panel recommends a cost of living increase of two per cent to the special responsibility allowances in 2015/16, from 11 May 2015 when councillors take up office after the elections, as set out in schedule 1 of appendix A.

Travelling and subsistence allowances

25. Travel and subsistence allowances are intended to reimburse councillors for expenditure incurred when undertaking the approved duties set out in schedule 3 of the attached scheme. The panel considers that the council should continue to use the HM Revenue and Customs' rates for travel allowances as these rates are widely recognised as being reasonable and fair recompense for business expenses. From the survey and interviews conducted in 2014, no councillor suggested that these allowances were unreasonable. These allowances are set out in schedule 2 of the appended scheme.

RECOMMENDATION

The panel recommends that the scheme continues to use the HM Revenue and Customs rates for travel, and the subsistence allowances, as set out in schedule 2 of the appended scheme.

Childcare allowance and dependent carer's allowance

26. The childcare allowance and dependent carer's allowance are payable to councillors who incur expenditure on the care of their children or dependent relatives whilst the councillor is undertaking approved duties such as attending meetings. Whilst very few councillors currently claim for the childcare allowance or dependent carer's allowance, the panel recognises that it is important to offer these allowances to councillors so they are not discouraged from carrying out council work by their personal responsibilities.
27. The panel believes that the current allowances meet this objective. The scheme allows councillors to claim a childcare allowance of up to £6 per hour, and dependent carer's allowance of up to £15 per hour. In both cases, evidence of payment must support each claim. The panel also recommends keeping a limit on the total amount claimable during one year, this limit remaining at £2,698 per councillor.

RECOMMENDATION

The panel recommends no change to the childcare allowance of up to £6 per hour and a dependent carer's allowance of up to £15 per hour, up to an annual limit of £2,698 claimable per councillor.

Annual adjustments and amendments

28. The basic allowance payable under the scheme is normally adjusted at the beginning of each financial year. In recent years it has normally been adjusted by the equivalent of the council's staff pay increase, in line with the panel's recommendation. However, the panel considers that it should review this scheme annually to determine whether any inflationary adjustment is appropriate. However, the basic allowance and special responsibility allowances recommended above include an annual adjustment for 2015/16.

RECOMMENDATION

The panel recommends that it carries out an annual review of the allowances payable under the councillors' allowances scheme to determine whether allowances are adjusted for cost of living.

Conclusion and recommendation

29. The panel recommends that the councillors' allowances scheme attached as appendix A updates the scheme adopted from 1 April 2012, and that the revised scheme is effective from 11 May 2015, after the next district council elections in May 2015. Until 10 May 2015 the current scheme and its allowances remain unamended.
30. The panel recognises that with such a significant reduction in the number of district councillors from May 2015, there may be a need for further adjustments to the scheme at a later date.

RECOMMENDATION

To update the councillors' allowances scheme with the amendments set out in this report and that the revised scheme (attached as appendix A) is effective from 11 May 2015, immediately after the next district council elections in May 2015, and replaces the previous scheme. Until 10 May 2015 the current scheme and its allowances remain unamended.



Councillors' allowances scheme

1. The Vale of White Horse District Council, in exercise of the powers conferred by the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (as amended) hereby makes the following scheme:

CITATION AND COMMENCEMENT

2. This scheme may be cited as the Vale of White Horse District Council councillors' Allowances Scheme which comes into force with effect from 11 May 2015.
3. The previous scheme is amended on 10 May 2014.

Interpretation

4. In this scheme the following expressions have the meanings mentioned below:
 - (a) "Authority" means the Vale of White Horse District Council
 - (b) "Chief Finance Officer" means the Officer delegated with the statutory responsibilities under the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)
 - (c) "Councillor" means an elected member of the authority
 - (d) "Member" means either a councillor or a member of a committee or sub-committee of the authority who is not a councillor
 - (e) "Proper Officer" means the monitoring officer of the authority
5. This scheme shall be construed having regard to the definitions and other provisions set out in the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (as amended).

Basic allowance

6. The basic allowance set out in schedule 1 to this scheme shall be the maximum allowance paid to each councillor during any year.
7. The basic allowance covers all meetings of the authority, meetings with officers, meetings with electors/residents, political group meetings, and travel to and from those meetings. It also covers incidental costs of a councillor using their home.

8. Where a councillor's term of office begins or ends otherwise than at the beginning or end of a year, their entitlement shall be to payment of such part of the basic allowance as bears to the whole the same proportion as the number of days during which their term of office as a councillor subsists bears to the number of days in that year.

Special responsibility allowances

9. The special responsibility allowances set out in schedule 1 to this scheme shall be the maximum paid to those councillors who have the special responsibilities referred to in the schedule during any year.
10. Where a councillor would ordinarily hold positions that attract more than one special responsibility allowance, the councillor may only claim one such allowance, being the highest allowance.
11. Where a councillor does not have throughout the whole of a year any such special responsibilities as entitle him to a special responsibility allowance, their entitlement shall be to payment of such part of the special responsibility allowance as bears to the whole the same proportion as the number of days during which he has such special responsibilities bears to the number of days in that year.

Childcare allowance and dependent carer's allowance

12. Any councillor may claim the childcare allowance or the dependent carer's allowance to reimburse the expenses incurred for child or dependent care up to the amounts specified in schedule 1 of this scheme, where those expenses have been incurred in connection with or relating to the duties specified in schedule 3 of this scheme.
13. Each claim by a councillor shall be supported by evidence of payment to the satisfaction of the proper officer.

Travelling and subsistence allowances

14. Councillors are expected to use public transport wherever possible and allowances will only be paid for the use of the private vehicle when a reasonable public transport service is not available for the same journey. Where a councillor uses public transport in connection with or relating to the duties specified in schedule 3 to this scheme, they may claim reimbursement of the actual costs incurred for standard class fares only. Where a councillor travels by rail, reimbursement will be made at the standard class rate.
15. The travelling allowances set out in schedule 2 to this scheme shall be the maximum paid to those councillors who claim reimbursement for the costs incurred in connection with or relating to the duties specified in schedule 3 of this scheme.
16. For journeys undertaken by a councillor in their own vehicle when a reasonable public transport service is not available they may claim for the mileage costs attributable to performing the duties specified in schedule 3 at the appropriate rate set out in schedule 2 to this scheme. A councillor who carries other councillors and officers engaged on the same approved duty may also claim a supplement per passenger mile in accordance with the rates set out in schedule 2 to this scheme.

17. The subsistence allowances set out in schedule 2 to this scheme shall be the maximum paid to those councillors who claim reimbursement for the costs incurred in connection with or relating to the duties specified in schedule 3 of this scheme.
18. A claim can only be made for the actual costs incurred on meals or accommodation up to the limits shown in schedule 2 to this scheme if the councillor has been absent from home for more than four hours during the specified times.
19. Any councillors' claim must be supported by evidence of the travelling or subsistence costs actually incurred to the satisfaction of the proper officer. In particular the production of receipts or similar evidence shall be required.

Co-optee allowances

20. Any persons co-opted to a committee of the council may be paid travel allowances in respect of any travel costs incurred in connection with functions related to that committee and that such travel should be at the same rates as those for councillors. No other allowances will be payable in respect of co-opted members.

Provisions to forego allowances

21. Any councillor may by notice in writing given to the proper officer of the authority elect to forego their entitlement or any part of their entitlement to any allowances payable under this scheme.

Annual adjustments and amendments to allowances

22. The allowances payable under this scheme shall be reviewed each year by the Independent Remuneration Panel.
 - (a) The panel may recommend the use of an appropriate index for adjustments to the basic allowance, special responsibility allowances, and childcare/dependent carer's allowances.
 - (b) in the case of travelling allowances, increases shall be by reference to the HM Revenue and Customs rates for the previous year.
 - (c) in the case of subsistence allowances by reference to the subsistence allowances agreed by the council for officers for the previous year.
23. Each councillor shall be entitled to be paid the revised allowances with effect from the effective date for which the adjustment was made. All adjustments shall be rounded to the nearest whole pound.
24. Where an amendment is made to this scheme (which does not fall within the annual adjustments referred to above) which affects any allowance payable for the year in which the amendment is made, the councillors concerned shall be entitled to such allowances as amended with effect from the following April, unless an alternative date is specified by the council.

Entitlement and claims

25. No councillor who is also a member of another authority shall be entitled to receive allowances from more than one authority in respect of the same responsibilities and duties.
26. Subject to paragraphs 21 above the basic and special responsibility allowance allowances shall automatically be paid to those councillors who are entitled to those allowances, unless notice in writing has been given to the proper officer by a councillor to forego their entitlement or any part of it.
27. Councillors shall submit claims for the childcare allowance, the dependent carer's allowance, and the travelling and subsistence allowances on claim forms which shall be obtained from the monitoring officer. Councillors must certify that any expenses claimed have actually been incurred and will not be reimbursed by any other authority.
28. Claims shall be submitted at the end of each month for payment the following month. Claims submitted more than two months after the expenses were incurred will only be paid with the specific approval of the monitoring officer.

Payments, backdating and repayments

29. Payments shall be made each month in respect of basic allowances and special responsibility allowances in instalments of one-twelfth of the amount specified in this scheme, subject to the annual adjustments and amendment provision set out in paragraphs 22 to 24 of this scheme.
30. Payments shall be made each month in respect of the childcare allowance, the dependent carer's allowance, and travelling and subsistence allowances in respect of claims received.
31. Backdating of amended allowances to the beginning of the financial year may be agreed by the monitoring officer.
32. Where payment of any allowance has already been made in respect of any period during which a councillor:
 - ceases to be a councillor of the authority or
 - is in any other way not entitled to receive the allowances in respect of that period

the authority shall require that such part of the allowances as relates to such period be repaid to the authority forthwith or with the agreement of the councillor concerned and the chief finance officer repaid by way of deductions from subsequent payments of allowances to which the councillor is later entitled.

Pensions

33. There are no provisions relating to pensions in this scheme.

SCHEDULE 1

COUNCILLORS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME (with effect from 11 May 2015)

	Allowance for 2014/15 as at 1 April 2014	Allowance for 2015/16 (as at 11 May 2015 based on amendments to scheme recommended by the Independent Remuneration Panel)
Councillor's Basic Allowance	£3,984	£4,575
Special Responsibility Allowances		
Leader of the Council	£17,795	£18,151
Deputy Leader	£13,050	£13,311
Ordinary member of cabinet	£8,304	£8,470
Chairman of Council	£4,745	£4,840
Vice-Chairman of Council	£1,186	£1,210
Chairman of Scrutiny Committee	£2,373	£2,420
Vice-Chairman of Scrutiny Committee	£1,186	£1,210
Chairman of Planning Committee	£4,745	£4,840
Vice-Chairman of Planning Committee	£2,373	£2,420
Chairman of Audit and Governance Committee	£1,186	£1,210
Leader of Major Opposition Group	£1,186	£1,210
Childcare allowance and dependent carer's allowance	Annual maximum claimable per councillor £2,698	Annual maximum claimable per councillor £2,698
Childcare allowance	Up to £6 per hour	Up to £6 per hour
Dependent carer's allowance	Up to £15 per hour	Up to £15 per hour

TRAVEL & SUBSISTENCE

TRAVELLING ALLOWANCES

The Council authorises the payment of standard class fares only to councillors in respect of travel by public transport. The rate for travel by a Member's own private vehicle, or one belonging to a member of their family or otherwise provided for their use, shall not exceed the following rates set out below:

Mileage Rates

	First 10,000 miles in the tax year	Each mile over 10,000 in the tax year
Cars and vans	45p	25p
Motor cycles	24p	24p
Bicycles	20p	20p

Passenger payments – cars and vans

5p per passenger per mile for carrying fellow councillors/officers in a car or van on journeys which are also council journeys for them.

SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCES the rate of subsistence allowance shall not exceed:

(1)	In the case of an absence, not involving an absence overnight from the usual place of residence:		
(a)	Breakfast Allowance (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence and before 11 am)		£4.92
(b)	Lunch Allowance (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence including the lunchtime period 12- 2pm)		£6.77
(c)	Tea Allowance (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence including the period 3pm-6pm)		£2.67
(d)	Evening Meal allowance (more than 4 hours away from the normal place of residence ending after 7pm)		£8.38
(2)	In the case of an absence overnight from the usual place of residence:		£79.82
	and for such an absence overnight in London, or for the purpose of attendance at an annual conference (including or not including an annual meeting) of the Local Government Association or such other association of bodies as the Secretary of State may for the time being approve for the purpose, the rate may be increased to:		£91.04

APPROVED DUTIES

Attendance at any of the following meetings is an approved duty for the purpose of the payment of travel, subsistence, childcare and dependent carer's allowances:

- (1) A meeting of the authority, any committee, sub-committee of the authority, or any other body to which the authority makes appointments or nominations, or of any committee or sub-committee of such a body;
- (2) Any other meeting which is authorised by the authority, a committee or sub-committee of the authority, or a joint committee of the authority, and one or more other authorities, or a sub-committee of such a joint committee provided that (where the authority is divided into more than two political groups) it is a meeting to which members of at least two political groups have been invited or (if the authority is not divided into political groups) to which two or more councillors have been invited.
- (3) A meeting of any association of authorities of which the authority is a member.
- (4) In pursuance of any standing order requiring councillors to be present while tender documents are opened.
- (5) In connection with the discharge of any function of the authority conferred by or under any enactment and empowering or requiring the authority to inspect or authorise the inspection of premises.
- (6) Any other duty approved by the authority, or for the purpose of, or in connection with the discharge of the functions of the authority or of any of its committees or sub-committees.
- (7) Any duty for the purpose of, or in connection with, the discharge of the functions of an executive, where the authority are operating executive arrangements within the meaning of Part II of the Local Government Act 2000.
- (8) Pre-Agenda Meetings organised by the head of legal and democratic services and organised meetings where councillors are invited to attend to enable officers to exercise delegated functions.
- (9) Any meeting with an officer of the council where the officer has invited a councillor to that meeting. When making an expenses claim, the councillor must provide written evidence of the invitation.

Note - Duties which attract no allowance include duties of a Party Political nature, attendance at meetings within the councillors own ward on business relating only to that ward and meetings of a social nature. Councillors cannot claim travelling or subsistence allowance for ward duties (unless covered by 1 to 9 above).

The definition of 'Party Political nature' does not necessarily relate to all events which are open solely to one political party. It depends who is organising the event and whether similar events are open to other parties. Therefore, provided an event is open to all political parties, even on different dates, then it does not constitute a 'Party Political nature', and can therefore be claimed as an eligible event under this scheme.

Council



Report of Head of Legal and Democratic Services

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To: COUNCIL

Date: 10 December 2014

Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 – proposal to appoint a joint Independent Remuneration Panel

Recommendations

subject to the agreement of South Oxfordshire District Council, to:

- (a) dissolve the existing independent remuneration panel with effect from the appointment of a joint independent remuneration panel;
- (b) appoint a joint independent remuneration panel with South Oxfordshire District Council to carry out reviews of the councillors' allowances schemes at both councils and make recommendations on any changes to the schemes to the relevant Council;
- (c) make the appointment of the joint independent remuneration panel effective until May 2020, one year after the 2019 district council elections;
- (d) authorise the head of legal and democratic services to make appointments to the joint independent remuneration panel, and advise councillors in due course of the outcome of the appointments process.

Purpose of Report

1. To invite Council to appoint a joint independent remuneration panel with South Oxfordshire District Council for the purposes of reviewing the councillors' allowances schemes and making recommendations to the councils.

Background

2. The council has a duty to establish and maintain an independent remuneration panel to review councillors' allowances and make recommendations to the council. The council can only approve a councillors' allowances scheme having first considered the report of its independent remuneration panel.
3. The council adopted its current scheme in December 2011 following consideration of the panel's report, with effect from 1 April 2012. Since then, the council has agreed the panel's recommendations to make minor changes to the scheme, mostly to increase the basic allowance in line with the staff salary increase.

The current independent remuneration panel

4. The council appointed five independent persons to its current panel in 2011, with their terms of office running until May 2016, one year after the next district council elections. The panel has met regularly and this year has conducted a major review of the scheme (see separate report on the Council agenda).
5. Since appointing five independent persons to the panel in 2011, one panel member has resigned and another passed away. This leaves the panel with three members, which is the minimum requirement. The panel members' role is voluntary.

Proposal for a joint panel

6. The leaders of South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils have suggested that Council considers a joint independent remuneration panel. Officers see merit in this proposal as it will reduce the time taken to review the two councils' schemes.
7. The panel must consist of a minimum of three independent persons who cannot be members of either council, nor be anyone who is disqualified from being an elected member of the council. Officers recommend that the panel is appointed after an advertisement, and a full application and appointment process.
8. The joint panel should ideally be appointed for a number of years to allow it to build up expertise in the councils' schemes, the regulations, government guidance and other best practice. Officers recommend that the panel is appointed until May 2020, one year after the 2019 district council elections. Council is asked to authorise the head of legal and democratic services to make appointments to the joint panel, ideally of five members. Existing panel members from each council will be invited to apply, while simultaneously an advertisement will be placed on the council's website for new panel members. Councillors will be updated of the outcome of the appointments process.

Financial Implications

9. The appointment of a single joint independent remuneration panel should bring economies of scale with less time required to conduct reviews. The data gathering exercise in any review will be shorter as information can be shared across the two councils. The process of reviewing the two councils' schemes should be simpler and avoid duplication of resources. While it is possible that there may be

differences in the schemes the joint panel recommends to the two councils, the schemes will have many similarities resulting from the regulations and government guidance on councillors' allowances schemes, and that both councils operate a leader and Cabinet style of executive arrangements, and a scrutiny committee. The remainder of the committee structures are similar also.

Legal Implications

10. In accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, the Local Government Act 2000, and The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, councils have a duty to consider the findings of an independent remuneration panel before determining any councillors' allowances scheme. The regulations place a statutory obligation on the council to establish and maintain an independent remuneration panel to look at councillors' allowances and report its views to the council. There is a statutory obligation for a panel of at least three members, none of whom is also a member of the council or is a member of a committee or sub-committee of the council, nor disqualified from being an elected member of the council (s.80 of the Local Government Act 1972, and s79 and 83(ii) of the Local Government Act 2000).

Risks

11. The panel may consider that both councils should be treated the same and adopt a joint councillors' allowances scheme. However, the presence of a joint panel does not require the councils to have a joint scheme. Both councils are free to adopt different schemes if they wish.

Conclusion

12. The council is recommended to appoint a joint independent remuneration panel with South Oxfordshire District Council. This will avoid duplication of effort to conduct reviews of the councillors' allowances schemes. Council will be free to adopt its own scheme and will not be required to adopt the same scheme as South Oxfordshire District Council.

Council report



Report of Head of Legal and Democratic Services

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To: Council

DATE: 10 December 2014



Declaration of vacancy – Grove

Recommendation

That Council:

1. notes that Kate Precious has ceased to be a member of this authority;
2. declares as vacant the office held by Kate Precious as a councillor for the Grove ward;
3. notes that no by election will be held to fill the vacancy.

Purpose of report

1. To note that Ms Precious ceased to be a councillor by virtue of her absence and to formally declare a vacancy in the Grove ward.

Background

2. Ms Precious has not attended a meeting of the authority for six months. Under section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972 if a councillor fails throughout a period of six consecutive months from the date of his/her last attendance to attend any meeting of the authority, he/she shall, unless the failure was due to some reason approved by Council before the expiry of that period, cease to be a member of the authority.
3. Section 86 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires an authority to declare a vacancy in such circumstances.

Attendance of Ms Kate Precious

4. Ms Precious last attended a meeting of the district council on 14 May 2014 when she attend the annual meeting of Council. She therefore had until midnight on 14 November 2014 to attend a further meeting to avoid the effect of section 85 set out in paragraph two of this report.

5. Officers have undertaken thorough checks of attendance records and minutes of meetings. There is no record of Ms Precious attending a meeting between 15 May and 14 November 2014. Within that period Council has not given its approval to any reason for failure to attend and therefore Ms Precious ceased to be a councillor by virtue of section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Declaration of vacancy

6. Section 86(1)(c) of the Local Government Act 1972 provides that where a councillor ceases to be a member of the authority by reason of failure to attend meetings of the authority, the authority shall, except in any cases in which a declaration has been made by the High court, forthwith declare the office to be vacant. This is a statutory duty on the Council. Officers recommend that Council declares the vacancy.

Next steps

7. Under section 87(1) (f) of the Local Government Act 1972 the vacancy is deemed to be the date on which Council declares the vacancy – 10 December 2014. Public notice of the vacancy must be given immediately after this declaration.
8. Under section 89(3) of the Local Government Act 1972 where a casual vacancy occurs within six months before the day on which the councillor whose office is vacant would regularly have retired (calculated as the fourth calendar day after the day of the poll to fill the particular vacancy - in this case 11 May 2015), an election shall not be held unless the total number of unfilled vacancies exceeds one third of the total membership of the council. Because this vacancy occurred within six months of 11 May 2015 the vacancy will be filled at the next ordinary election on 7 May 2015.

Financial Implications

9. None arising from this report.

Legal Implications

10. These are set out in the body of this report.

Conclusion

11. Ms Precious has ceased to be a member of this authority by virtue of her absence. Council is required to declare the seat vacant. Because the vacancy occurred within six months of the office retirement date of 11 May 2015 no by election will be held.

Background papers: None

Council



Report of the Returning Officer

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To: Council

DATE: 10 December 2014

Elections – fees and charges 2015

Recommendations

Council is asked to

1. agree the scales of fees for district and parish council elections, parish polls and neighbourhood planning referendums for 2015/16 as set out in the Appendix to this report;
2. agree to continue to charge parish and town councils for running elections on their behalf.

Purpose of Report

1. This report recommends the adoption of scales of fees payable to the returning officer (RO) in connection with district and parish council elections, parish polls and neighbourhood planning referendums for 2015/16 and that council continues to charge parish and town councils for running elections on their behalf.

Strategic Objectives

2. The setting of transparent fees contributes to the corporate objective of effective management of resources.

Background

3. The Representation of the People Act 1983 (the 1983 Act), 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 (RO) must not exceed. The fees for conducting Parliamentary, and European Parliamentary and Police and Crime Commissioner elections are regulated by the Returning Officers' Fees and Charges Orders made by the Government.

Scale of fees

4. At its meeting on 8 December 2010 Council agreed scales of fees for elections and parish polls in accordance with provisions in the Representation of the People Act 1983 and the Local Government Act 1972.
5. Council now needs to approve a scale of fees and charges for 2015/16. Officers have used the fees and charges format previously agreed by council. Some post fees have been increased (presiding officer, poll clerk and postal vote staff positions) by up to £5 to reflect rates payable by similar authorities.
6. Under the Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012, which came into force on 3 August 2012, each council is required to make arrangements for the referendum to take place in any localities they are responsible for within the referendum area. The council is also required to meet the costs of a neighbourhood planning referendum. The council's previous scheme for local elections does not include reference to the fees payable for running a neighbourhood planning referendum.
7. At a neighbourhood planning referendum in England the referendum is the responsibility of the counting officer (CO) who is the RO for principal area elections for that authority (i.e. the person appointed as the RO for the election of principal area councillors is also the CO for the referendum).
8. A number of fees for the RO are shown. The RO uses these fees to pay both himself and key staff. After the 2015 elections, the RO will report actual expenditure to the audit and governance committee. This will set out the cost of the elections and detail the total amount of fees paid to the RO and each of his deputies.
9. Following the 2015 elections officers will undertake a full review of the fees and charges structure with colleagues from within Oxfordshire and examine best practise from around the country with the aim of further simplifying the process. Council will receive a report at its meeting in December 2015.

Charging parish and town councils for the costs of holding elections

10. Any expenditure incurred in the election of a parish councillor is rechargeable only on the parish for which the election was held. The 1983 Act makes provision for district councils to re-charge the relevant parish council for running elections on their behalf. Previously the council has levied such a charge. The RO recommends that a charge is levied and that where there is a combined district, parish and parliamentary election, this should be on the basis of equal apportionment of shared costs.

Financial Implications

11. If the council discontinues its current practice of recharging parish and town councils for the costs of running their elections, this will create a significant additional budget pressure. The council would have to meet any costs that it could not contain within the overall budget from the contingency fund.

Legal Implications

12. There is a requirement for the council to agree the scales of fees for district and parish council elections, referendums and parish polls and to make a decision on recharging parish councils for the running elections on their behalf.

Other implications

11. None.

Conclusion

12. This report asks council to agree scales of fees for district and parish council elections, referendums and parish polls for 2015/16 and to agree to charge parish councils for running their elections.

Background Papers

Representation of the People Act 1983
Existing Scales of Expenditure for Elections

APPENDIX A

Scale 1 – Scale of expenditure for elections of District Councillors

Only the fees and disbursements specified below shall be chargeable. The fees payable to the Returning Officer or his/her duly appointed Deputy Returning Officer(s) shall include all payments which he/she makes from his/her fees to other persons by way of remuneration of services undertaken on his/her behalf.

In no case shall a charge exceed the sum actually and necessarily paid or payable by the Returning Officer. Subject to this, the maximum charges are set out in the scale.

Part 1 – Uncontested Elections

A – Fees

- | | | |
|---|--|-----|
| 1 | To the Returning Officer, or where appropriate a Deputy Returning Officer for carrying out all the duties assigned to him / her by the Returning Officer for conducting the election and generally performing the duties required by any enactments relating to the election, other than any duties for which separate fees are provided for each ward a fee of | £60 |
| 2 | To the Returning Officer, or a Deputy Returning Officer for services in connection with the preparation , maintenance and issue of official poll cards for each ward a fee of | £35 |

B – Disbursements

- | | | |
|---|---|--------------------------|
| 3 | For the employment of persons for clerical and other assistance for each ward a fee of | £40 |
| 4 | For printing and providing nomination packs and forms , notices and other documents required for the election, including the printing costs, computer charges and all associated costs, together with advertising expenses, postage, telephone calls and miscellaneous expenses for each ward a fee of | £115 |
| 5 | For printing and postage of poll cards | Actual and necessary |
| 6 | Travelling expenses of the Returning Officer, Deputy Returning Officer and Assistants | HMRC rate actual mileage |

Part 2 – Contested Elections

A – Fees

- 7 To the Returning Officer, or where appropriate a Deputy Returning Officer for carrying out all the duties assigned to him / her by the Returning Officer for **conducting the election** and generally performing the duties required by any enactments relating to the election, other than any duties for which separate fees are provided for each ward a fee of £115
- (If the Returning Officer or duly appointed Deputy Returning Officer also carries out the functions specified under **items 8, 9, and 10** of this scale, he/she will be entitled to claim the fees payable under those items of this scale)
- 8 To the Returning Officer, or a Deputy Returning Officer for services in connection with the preparation , **maintenance and issue of official poll cards** for each ward a fee of £35
- 9 To the Returning Officer, or a Deputy Returning Officer appointed for the purposes of Rules 25(b) and 38 to 44(1) of the Local Elections (Principal Areas) Rules 1986 (or such legislation as may subsequently be enacted), for making arrangements for the **issue and opening of postal votes** for each ward a fee of £55
- 10 To the Returning Officer, or a Deputy Returning Officer appointed for the purposes of Rules 25(b) and 38 to 44(1) of the Local Elections (Principal Areas) Rules 1986 (or such legislation as may subsequently be enacted), for making arrangements for **counting the votes and declaring the results of the poll** for each ward a fee of £115
- (A Deputy Returning Officer appointed under **item 10** cannot also claim the fee payable under **items 18 and 19** of this scale)

B – Disbursements

- 11 For the employment of persons for **clerical and other assistance** for each ward a fee of £70
- 12 For **printing and providing nomination packs and forms**, notices and other documents required for the election, including the printing costs, computer charges and all associated costs, together with advertising expenses, postage, telephone calls and miscellaneous expenses for each ward a fee of £115
- 13 **Presiding Officer**, a fee of £195
or where a poll is combined with any other poll, a fee of £220
- 14 **Poll Clerk**, a fee of £115

or where a poll is combined with any other poll, a fee of £135

(The fees for Presiding Officers and Poll Clerks include all expenses other than travelling expenses specified in **item 20** of this scale)

An additional poll clerk may be employed full-time or part time at a polling station at the discretion of the Returning Officer or his/her duly appointed Deputy Returning Officer and may be paid an appropriate amount within the fee payable under **item 14** of this scale, such amount to be determined by the Returning Officer or his/her duly appointed Deputy Returning Officer.

The Returning Officer may also retain reserve staff on a standby basis and pay them an appropriate amount within the fees payable under **items 13 and 14** of this scale.

The Returning Officer has discretion under item 13 to pay a presiding officer an enhanced fee if covering more than one polling station or supervising a number of less experienced presiding officers within a polling place.

- 15 **Presiding Officer and/or Poll Clerk attending a training session** a fee up to the amount specified below to be determined by the Returning Officer or his/her duly appointed Deputy Returning Officer
- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------|
| (a) by-elections | No fee |
| (b) ordinary / combined elections | £30 |

- 16 To the Returning Officer or his/her duly appointed representatives, for **inspection and supervision of each polling station** a fee per polling place £20

The fee payable to any one inspector shall not exceed £220.

- 17 For the employment of persons in connection with the **issue and receipt of postal ballot papers**. For each ward fees as follows: -
- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| (a) postal vote supervisors | £12.50 per hour |
| (b) postal vote count assistants | £10 per hour |

The Returning Officer has discretion to reduce the fees payable in connection with the issue and receipt of postal ballots papers as he/she determines appropriate.

- 18 **Count Supervisor**, a fee of
- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------|
| (a) by-elections | £40 |
| (b) ordinary / combined elections | £100 |
- 19 **Count Assistant**, a fee of
- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| (a) by-elections | £20 |
| (b) ordinary / combined elections | £70 |

The Returning Officer may exercise discretion to pay lower count

supervisor and count assistant fees in the case of a day time count. He/she may also exercise discretion to pay higher fees in the case of longer counts.

20	Travelling expenses of the Returning Officer, Deputy Returning Officer, Assistants, Presiding Officer, Poll Clerks, Count Assistants, Polling Station Inspectors and any other person	HMRC rate
21	Fees associated with each polling station as follows: -	
	(a) Hire and associated costs (heating / electric) of polling station venue	Actual and necessary cost
	(b) Compensation payable in consequence of the cancellation of functions in order to make suitable premises available for use as polling stations	Actual and necessary cost
	(c) Booking halls, writing letters, arranging staff, preparation of ballot box and licence costs	Actual and necessary cost
	(d) Polling booth / screen delivery	Actual and necessary cost
	(e) Paper, stationery packs	Actual and necessary cost
	(f) Manual assistance (for moving ballot boxes and stationery)	Actual and necessary cost
	Note A - Some wards may have more than one polling station.	
22	Printing of ballot papers	Actual and necessary cost
23	Printing and postage of poll cards	Actual and necessary cost
24	Fees associated with postal vote issue and opening as follows: -	
	(a) Hire and associated costs (heating / electric) of postal vote opening venue	Actual and necessary cost
	(b) Compensation payable in consequence of the cancellation of functions in order to make suitable premises available for use as postal vote venue	Actual and necessary cost
	(c) Postal vote packs printing	Actual and necessary cost
	(d) Postage of postal packs (issue and return)	Actual and necessary cost
25	Fees associated with the count as follows: -	
	(a) Hire and associated costs (heating / electric) of count venue	Actual and necessary cost
	(b) Compensation payable in consequence of the cancellation of functions in order to make suitable premises available for use as	Actual and necessary

count venue

cost

(c) Stationery and equipment for the count

Actual and
necessary
cost

(d) Additional printing/notices for the count

Actual and
necessary
cost

26 **Any other costs** associated with the election, such as bank charges and any other miscellaneous costs

Actual and
necessary
cost

27 **Copy of the register**

Actual and
necessary
cost

Note B - At a combined election of District and Parish Councillors, other than the expenses involved in producing official poll cards which are to be borne solely by the District Council, the costs are to be shared on an equal basis between the District Council and the Parish/Town Councils concerned, unless a particular expense can actually be allocated to a specific authority, but

(a) in the case of costs associated with postal vote opening, recharges will be calculated based on the number of postal votes issued as a percentage of the total number of postal votes returned; and

(b) in the case of costs associated with the count, recharges will be calculated based on the number of contested parish/town, or ward of a parish/town / ward electorate as a percentage of the total number of contested electorate.

Note C - In the event of a combined District Election with any other election(s) and/or Referendum, the recharges associated with the Referendum will be determined by the Returning Officer having regard to any funding provided for such an event and any national guidance. Any remaining costs will be apportioned as detailed in Note B above.

Scale 2 – Scale of expenditure for elections of Parish Councillors

Only the fees and disbursements specified below shall be chargeable. The fees payable to the Returning Officer or his/her duly appointed Deputy Returning Officer(s) shall include all payments which he/she makes from his/her fees to other persons by way of remuneration of services undertaken on his/her behalf.

In no case shall a charge exceed the sum actually and necessarily paid or payable by the Returning Officer. Subject to this, the maximum charges are set out in the scale.

Part 1 – Uncontested Elections

A – Fees

- 1 To the Returning Officer, or where appropriate a Deputy Returning Officer for carrying out all the duties assigned to him / her by the Returning Officer **for conducting the election** and generally performing the duties required by any enactments relating to the election, other than any duties for which separate fees are provided for each parish/town, or ward of a parish/town at which an election is held, a fee of £30

- 2 To the Returning Officer, or a Deputy Returning Officer for services in connection with the preparation , **maintenance and issue of official poll cards**
 a flat fee according to the number of seats for each parish/town, or ward of a parish/town at which an election is held as follows: -
 - 1 – 5 seats £10
 - 6 – 9 seats £15
 - 10 – 14 seats £20
 - 15 and above seats £25

B – Disbursements

- 3 For the employment of persons for **clerical and other assistance** for each parish/town, or ward of a parish/town at which an election is held, a fee of £20

- 4 For **printing and providing nomination packs and forms**, notices and other documents required for the election, including the printing costs, computer charges and all associated costs, together with advertising expenses, postage, telephone calls and miscellaneous expenses
 a flat fee according to the number of seats for each parish/town, or ward of a parish/town at which an election is held as follows: -
 - 1 – 5 seats £35
 - 6 – 9 seats £50
 - 10 – 14 seats £65
 - 15 and above seats £80

- | | | |
|---|---|----------------------|
| 5 | For printing and postage of poll cards | Actual and necessary |
| 6 | Travelling expenses of the Returning Officer, Deputy Returning Officer and Assistants | HMRC rate |

Part 2 – Contested Elections

A – Fees

- | | | |
|---|---|-----|
| 7 | To the Returning Officer, or where appropriate a Deputy Returning Officer for carrying out all the duties assigned to him / her by the Returning Officer for conducting the election and generally performing the duties required by any enactments relating to the election, other than any duties for which separate fees are provided a flat fee according to the number of seats for each parish/town, or ward of a parish/town at which an election is held as follows: - | |
| | 1 – 5 seats | £50 |
| | 6 – 9 seats | £55 |
| | 10 – 14 seats | £60 |
| | 15 and above seats | £65 |

(If the Returning Officer or duly appointed Deputy Returning Officer also carries out the functions specified under **items 8, 9, and 10** of this scale, he/she will be entitled to claim the fees payable under those items of this scale)

- | | | |
|---|--|-----|
| 8 | To the Returning Officer, or a Deputy Returning Officer for services in connection with the preparation, maintenance and issue of official poll cards a flat fee according to the number of seats for each parish/town, or ward of a parish/town at which an election is held as follows: - | |
| | 1 – 5 seats | £10 |
| | 6 – 9 seats | £15 |
| | 10 – 14 seats | £20 |
| | 15 and above seats | £25 |

- | | | |
|---|--|-----|
| 9 | To the Returning Officer, or a Deputy Returning Officer appointed for the purposes of Rules 25(b) and 38 to 44(1) of the Local Elections (Principal Areas) Rules 1986 (or such legislation as may subsequently be enacted), for making arrangements for the issue and opening of postal votes a flat fee according to the number of seats for each parish/town, or ward of a parish/town at which an election is held as follows: - | |
| | 1 – 5 seats | £20 |
| | 6 – 9 seats | £25 |
| | 10 – 14 seats | £30 |
| | 15 and above seats | £35 |

- | | | |
|----|--|--|
| 10 | To the Returning Officer, or a Deputy Returning Officer appointed for the purposes of Rules 25(b) and 38 to 44(1) of the Local Elections (Principal Areas) Rules 1986 (or such legislation as may subsequently be enacted), for making arrangements for counting the votes and declaring the results of the poll a flat fee according to the number of seats for each parish/town, or | |
|----|--|--|

ward of a parish/town at which an election is held as follows: -	
1 – 5 seats	£50
6 – 9 seats	£55
10 – 14 seats	£60
15 and above seats	£65

(A Deputy Returning Officer appointed under **item 10** cannot also claim the fee payable under **items 18 and 19** of this scale)

B – Disbursements

- 11 For the employment of persons for **clerical and other assistance** a flat fee according to the number of seats for each parish/town, or ward of a parish/town at which an election is held as follows: -
- | | |
|--------------------|-----|
| 1 – 5 seats | £20 |
| 6 – 9 seats | £30 |
| 10 – 14 seats | £40 |
| 15 and above seats | £50 |
- 12 For **printing and providing nomination packs and forms**, notices and other documents required for the election, including the printing costs, computer charges and all associated costs, together with advertising expenses, postage, telephone calls and miscellaneous expenses a flat fee according to the number of seats for each parish/town, or ward of a parish/town at which an election is held as follows: -
- | | |
|--------------------|-----|
| 1 – 5 seats | £35 |
| 6 – 9 seats | £50 |
| 10 – 14 seats | £65 |
| 15 and above seats | £80 |
- 13 **Presiding Officer**, a fee of £195
or where a poll is combined with any other poll, a fee of £220
- 14 **Poll Clerk**, a fee of £115
or where a poll is combined with any other poll, a fee of £135

(The fees for Presiding Officers and Poll Clerks include all expenses other than travelling expenses specified in **item 20** of this scale)

An additional poll clerk may be employed full-time or part time at a polling station at the discretion of the Returning Officer or his/her duly appointed Deputy Returning Officer and may be paid an appropriate amount within the fee payable under **item 14** of this scale, such amount to be determined by the Returning Officer or his/her duly appointed Deputy Returning Officer.

The Returning Officer may also retain reserve staff on a standby basis and pay them an appropriate amount within the fees payable under **items 13 and 14** of this scale.

The Returning Officer has discretion under **item 13** to pay a

presiding officer an enhanced fee if covering more than one polling station or supervising a number of less experienced presiding officers within a polling place.

- | | | |
|----|--|---------------------------|
| 15 | Presiding Officer and/or Poll Clerk attending a training session a fee up to the amount specified below to be determined by the Returning Officer or his/her duly appointed Deputy Returning Officer | |
| | (a) by-elections | No fee |
| | (b) ordinary / combined elections | £30 |
| 16 | To the Returning Officer or his/her duly appointed representatives, for inspection and supervision of each polling station a fee per polling place of | £20 |
| | The fee payable to any one inspector shall not exceed £220. | |
| 17 | For the employment of persons in connection with the issue and receipt of postal ballot papers . For each parish/town, or ward of a parish/town at which an election is held as follows: - | |
| | (a) postal vote supervisors | £12.50 per hour |
| | (b) postal vote count assistants | £10 per hour |
| | The Returning Officer has discretion to reduce the fees payable in connection with the issue and receipt of postal ballots papers as he/she determines appropriate. | |
| 18 | Count Supervisor , a fee of | |
| | (a) by-elections | £20 |
| | (b) ordinary / combined elections | £100 |
| 19 | Count Assistant , a fee of | |
| | (a) by-elections | £10 |
| | (b) ordinary / combined elections | £70 |
| | The Returning Officer may exercise discretion to pay lower count supervisor and count assistant fees in the case of a day time count. He/she may also exercise discretion to pay higher fees in the case of longer counts. | |
| 20 | Travelling expenses of the Returning Officer, Deputy Returning Officer, Assistants, Presiding Officer, Poll Clerks, Count Assistants, Polling Station Inspectors and any other person | HMRC rate mileage |
| 21 | Fees associated with each polling station as follows: - | |
| | (a) Hire and associated costs (heating / electric) of polling station venue | Actual and necessary cost |
| | (b) Compensation payable in consequence of the cancellation of functions in order to make suitable premises available for use as polling stations | Actual and necessary cost |
| | (c) Booking halls, writing letters, arranging staff, preparation of | Actual and |

ballot box and licence costs	necessary cost
(d) Polling booth / screen delivery	Actual and necessary cost
(e) Paper, stationery packs	Actual and necessary cost
(f) Manual assistance (for moving ballot boxes and stationery)	Actual and necessary cost
(g) Conversion Packs	Actual and necessary cost
Note A - Some parish/town, or ward of a parish/town at which an election is held may have more than one polling station.	
22 Printing of ballot papers	Actual and necessary cost
23 Printing and postage of poll cards	Actual and necessary cost
24 Fees associated with postal vote issue and opening as follows: -	
(a) Hire and associated costs (heating / electric) of postal vote opening venue	Actual and necessary cost
(b) Compensation payable in consequence of the cancellation of functions in order to make suitable premises available for use as postal vote venue	Actual and necessary cost
(c) Postal vote packs printing	Actual and necessary cost
(d) Postage of postal packs (issue and return)	Actual and necessary cost
25 Fees associated with the count as follows: -	
(a) Hire and associated costs (heating / electric) of count venue	Actual and necessary cost
(b) Compensation payable in consequence of the cancellation of functions in order to make suitable premises available for use as count venue	Actual and necessary cost
(c) Stationery and equipment for the count	Actual and necessary cost
(d) Additional printing/notices for the count/grass skirts	Actual and necessary cost
26 Any other costs associated with the election, such as bank charges and any other miscellaneous costs	Actual and necessary cost
27 Copy of the register	Actual and necessary

Note B - At a combined election of Parish and District Councillors, other than the expenses involved in producing official poll cards which are to be borne solely by the District Council, the costs are to be shared on an equal basis between the Parish/Town Councils concerned and the District Council, unless a particular expense can actually be allocated to a specific authority, but

(a) in the case of costs associated with postal vote opening, recharges will be calculated based on the number of postal votes issued as a percentage of the total number of postal votes returned; and

(b) in the case of costs associated with the count, recharges will be calculated based on the number of contested parish/town, or ward of a parish/town / ward electorate as a percentage of the total number of contested electorate.

Note C - In the event of a combined Parish Election with any other election(s) and/or Referendum, the recharges associated with the Referendum will be determined by the Returning Officer having regard to any funding provided for such an event and any national guidance. Any remaining costs will be apportioned as detailed in Note B above.

Scale 3 – Scale of expenditure for polls consequent on parish meetings

In accordance with Section 150(7) of the Local Government Act 1972 the following scale of expenditure shall be applied to the expenses of any poll consequent on a Parish Meeting in so far as it may be applicable.

Only the fees and disbursements specified below shall be chargeable. The fees payable to the Returning Officer or his/her duly appointed Deputy Returning Officer(s) shall include all payments which he/she makes from his/her fees to other persons by way of remuneration of services undertaken on his/her behalf.

In no case shall a charge exceed the sum actually and necessarily paid or payable by the Returning Officer. Subject to this, the maximum charges are set out in the scale.

A – Fees

- 1 To the Returning Officer, or where appropriate a Deputy Returning Officer for carrying out all the duties assigned to him / her by the Returning Officer **for conducting the poll** and generally performing the duties required by any enactments relating to the poll for each parish/town £30

(If the Returning Officer or his/her duly appointed Deputy Returning Officer also carries out the functions specified in **items 2 and 3** of the scale he/she will be entitled to claim the total of the fees payable under both items)

- 2 To the Returning Officer, or a Deputy Returning Officer for services in connection with the preparation, **maintenance and issue of official poll cards**
a flat fee according to the number of electorate for each parish/town, or ward of a parish/town at which a poll is held as follows: -

Electorate which does not exceed 1000	£10
Electorate greater than 1000 but less than 5000	£15
Electorate greater than 500 but less than 10000	£20
Electorate greater than 10000	£25
- 3 To the Returning Officer, or a Deputy Returning Officer appointed for the purposes of making arrangements for **counting the votes and declaring the results of the poll**
a flat fee according to the number of electorate for each parish/town at which a poll is held as follows: -

Electorate which does not exceed 1000	£30
Electorate greater than 1000 but less than 5000	£40
Electorate greater than 500 but less than 10000	£50
Electorate greater than 10000	£60

(A Deputy Returning Officer appointed under **item 3** cannot also claim the fee payable under **items 2 and 3** of this scale)

B – Disbursements

- 4 For the employment of persons for **clerical and other assistance** a flat fee according to the number of electorate for each parish/town at which a poll is held as follows: -
- | | |
|---|-----|
| Electorate which does not exceed 1000 | £20 |
| Electorate greater than 1000 but less than 5000 | £30 |
| Electorate greater than 500 but less than 10000 | £40 |
| Electorate greater than 10000 | £50 |
- 5 For **printing and providing forms**, notices and other documents required for the poll, including the printing costs, computer charges and all associated costs, together with advertising expenses, postage, telephone calls and miscellaneous expenses (ad hoc printing) a flat fee according to the number of electorate for each parish/town at which a poll is held as follows: -
- | | |
|---|-----|
| Electorate which does not exceed 1000 | £25 |
| Electorate greater than 1000 but less than 5000 | £35 |
| Electorate greater than 500 but less than 10000 | £45 |
| Electorate greater than 10000 | £55 |
- 6 **Presiding Officer**, a fee of £80
- 7 **Poll Clerk**, a fee of £60
- (The fees for Presiding Officers and Poll Clerks include all expenses other than travelling expenses specified in **item 11** of this scale)
- An additional poll clerk may be employed full-time or part time at a polling station at the discretion of the Returning Officer or his/her duly appointed Deputy Returning Officer and may be paid an appropriate amount within the fee payable under **item 7** of this scale, such amount to be determined by the Returning Officer or his/her duly appointed Deputy Returning Officer.
- The Returning Officer may also retain reserve staff on a standby basis and pay them an appropriate amount within the fees payable under **items 6 and 7** of this scale.
- 8 To the Returning Officer or his/her duly appointed representatives, for **inspection and supervision of each polling station**, a fee per station of £20
- 9 **Count Supervisor**, a fee of £20
- 10 **Count Assistant**, a fee of £10

The Returning Officer may exercise discretion to pay higher fees in the case of longer counts.

11	Travelling expenses of the Returning Officer, Deputy Returning Officer, Assistants, Presiding Officer, Poll Clerks, Count Assistants, Polling Station Inspectors and any other person	HMRC rate
12	Fees associated with each polling station as follows: -	
	(a) Hire and associated costs (heating / electric) of polling station venue	Actual and necessary cost
	(b) Compensation payable in consequence of the cancellation of functions in order to make suitable premises available for use as polling stations	Actual and necessary cost
	(c) Booking halls, writing letters, arranging staff, preparation of ballot box and licence costs	Actual and necessary cost
	(d) Polling booth / screen delivery	Actual and necessary cost
	(e) Paper, stationery packs	Actual and necessary cost
	(f) Manual assistance (for moving ballot boxes and stationery)	Actual and necessary cost
	Note A - Some parish/town at which a poll is held may have more than one polling station.	
13	Printing of ballot papers	Actual and necessary cost
14	Printing and postage of poll cards	Actual and necessary cost
15	Fees associated with the count as follows: -	
	(a) Hire and associated costs (heating / electric) of count venue	Actual and necessary cost
	(b) Compensation payable in consequence of the cancellation of functions in order to make suitable premises available for use as count venue	Actual and necessary cost
	(c) Stationery and equipment for the count	Actual and necessary cost
	(d) Additional printing/notices for the count/grass skirts	Actual and necessary cost
16	Any other costs associated with the poll, such as advertising and any other miscellaneous costs	Actual and necessary cost
17	Copy of the register	Actual and necessary cost

Scale 4 - Scale of fees for neighbourhood planning referendums

Only the fees and disbursements specified below shall be chargeable. The fees payable to the Counting Officer or his/her duly appointed Deputy Counting Officer(s) shall include all payments which he/she makes from his/her fees to other persons by way of remuneration of services undertaken on his/her behalf.

In no case shall a charge exceed the sum actually and necessarily paid or payable by the Counting Officer. Subject to this, the maximum charges are set out in the scale.

A – Fees

1	To the Counting Officer, or where appropriate a Deputy Counting Officer for carrying out all the duties assigned to him / her by the Counting Officer for conducting the referendum and generally performing the duties required by any enactments relating to the referendum	
	for each parish/town, a flat fee: -	
	Towns including Chinnor	£50
	Larger village parishes	£40
	Smaller village parishes	£30
	(If the Counting Officer or his/her duly appointed Deputy Counting Officer also carries out the functions specified in items 2 and 3 of the scale he/she will be entitled to claim the total of the fees payable under both items)	
2	To the Counting Officer, or a Deputy Counting Officer for services in connection with the preparation, maintenance and issue of official poll cards a flat fee as follows:	
	Towns including Chinnor	£20
	Larger village parishes	£15
	Smaller village parishes	£10
3	To the Counting Officer, or a Deputy Counting Officer appointed for the purposes of making arrangements for the issue and opening of postal votes a flat fee as follows:	
	Towns including Chinnor	£30
	Larger village parishes	£25
	Smaller village parishes	£20
	(A Deputy Counting Officer appointed under items 2 and 3 cannot also claim the fee payable under items 9 and 10 of this scale)	
4	To the Counting Officer, or a Deputy Counting Officer appointed for the purposes of making arrangements for counting the votes and declaring the results of the referendum	
	Towns including Chinnor	£50
	Larger village parishes	£40
	Smaller village parishes	£30
	(A Deputy Counting Officer appointed under item 3 cannot also claim the fee payable under items 10 and 11 of this scale)	

B – Disbursements

- 4 For the employment of persons for **clerical and other assistance** a flat fee as follows:
- | | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Towns | £40 |
| Larger village parishes | £30 |
| Smaller village parishes | £20 |
- 5 For **printing and providing forms**, notices and other documents required for the referendum, including the printing costs, computer charges and all associated costs, together with advertising expenses, postage, telephone calls and miscellaneous expenses (adhoc printing) a flat fee £35
- 6 **Presiding Officer**, a fee of £195
or where a referendum is combined with any other poll a fee of £220
- 7 **Poll Clerk**, a fee of £115
or where a referendum is combined with any other poll a fee of £135
(The fees for Presiding Officers and Poll Clerks include all expenses other than travelling expenses specified in **item 12** of this scale)
- 8 To the Counting Officer or his/her duly appointed representatives, for **inspection and supervision of each polling station**, a fee per station of £20

9	For the employment of persons in connection with the issue and receipt of postal ballot papers.	
	(a) postal vote supervisors	£12.50 per hour
	(b) postal vote count assistants	£10 per hour

- 10 **Count Supervisor**, a fee of £20 per hour
- 11 **Count Assistant** , a fee of £10 per hour
- 12 **Travelling expenses** of the Counting Officer, Deputy Counting Officer, Assistants, Presiding Officer, Poll Clerks, Count Assistants, Polling Station Inspectors and any other person HMRC rate
- 13 Fees associated with each **polling station** as follows: -
- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| (a) Hire and associated costs (heating / electric) of polling station venue | Actual and necessary cost |
| (b) Compensation payable in consequence of the cancellation of functions in order to make suitable premises available for use as polling stations | Actual and necessary cost |
| (c) Booking halls, writing letters, arranging staff, preparation of ballot box and licence costs | Actual and necessary cost |
| (d) Polling booth / screen delivery | Actual and necessary |

	(e) Paper, stationery packs	cost Actual and necessary cost
	(f) Manual assistance (for moving ballot boxes and stationery)	Actual and necessary cost
14	Printing of ballot papers	Actual and necessary cost
15	Printing and postage of poll cards	Actual and necessary cost
16	Fees associated with the count as follows: -	
	(a) Hire and associated costs (heating / electric) of count venue	Actual and necessary cost
	(b) Compensation payable in consequence of the cancellation of functions in order to make suitable premises available for use as count venue	Actual and necessary cost
	(c) Stationery and equipment for the count	Actual and necessary cost
	(d) Additional printing/notices for the count	Actual and necessary cost
17	Any other costs associated with the referendum, such as advertising and any other miscellaneous costs	Actual and necessary cost

	<p>Note</p> <p>In the event of a neighbourhood planning referendum being combined with another poll the costs are to be shared on an equal basis, unless a particular expense can actually be allocated to a specific election/referendum.</p> <p>In the case of costs associated with postal vote opening, recharges will be calculated based on the number of postal votes issued as a percentage of the total number of postal votes returned.</p>	
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