

BRIEFING NOTE REGARDING CHARGES FOR PARISH COUNCIL CASUAL ELECTIONS REPORT

This report was written after the Cambourne Parish Council casual election after it was realised that there was no recharge provision for officer time taken in administering the poll on the parish councils behalf. This election demanded at least 15 hours of officer time.

Having looked at other authorities recharge structure it was decided to propose a recharge based upon parish size – as this directly affects the time involved. Parish Councils could then be notified of this decision and make necessary provisions.

For reference we have only had three casual parish polls in the last three years, so this would not be an income generating decision, but rather one to offset costs currently covered by South Cambridgeshire District Council.

Copy of report follows for reference.

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Information and Customer Services
Portfolio Holder Meeting
AUTHOR/S: Electoral Services Manager

4 April 2006

CHARGES FOR PARISH COUNCIL CASUAL ELECTIONS

Purpose

1. To propose a formal charging structure for all Parish Council Casual Elections

Effect on Corporate Objectives

2.	Quality, Accessible Services	
	Village Life	
	Sustainability	
	Partnership	

Background

3. There are currently no provisions for payments to the District Council for costs incurred running a Parish Council casual election, other than direct payments (eg staffing, ballot papers, postages etc)

Considerations

4. The time it takes to administer a casual election has significantly increased, largely due to the number of postal voters we have (now almost 10% of electors),. Currently SCDC is not receiving any payment from the Parish Council for officer time taken in the administration of the election.

Options

5.
 - i To retain the current system of only charging for direct costs
 - ii To adopt a formal recharge for officer time and notify parish councils accordingly.

It is recommended that a sum of 5% of the direct costs be added to the charge levied on parish councils in respect of a casual election for parishes with less than 1,000 electors and 10% for parishes in excess of 1,000 electors.

Financial Implications

6. This will offset some off the Electoral Services salary budget, but the implications are limited as we do not have many casual elections.

Legal Implications

7. None

Staffing Implications

8. In some circumstances extra staff are needed to facilitate casual elections and the council should be able to recoup any costs incurred as a result.

Risk Management Implications

9. None

Consultations

10. None

Conclusions/Summary

11. Parish Councils do not currently incur all the costs associated with casual elections – with South Cambridgeshire District Council having to contribute the shortfall. In the wake of council tax capping it would be in the council's best interests to charge parish councils for this service.

Recommendations

12. To amend the policy for recharging a Parish Council for a casual election by the addition of 5% to the direct cost for parishes with less than 1,000 electors and 10% for parishes in excess of 1,000 electors

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