

**ORDINARY COUNCIL**

**22nd March 2023**

**Subject: New Electoral Arrangements for Castle Point Borough Council – Final Recommendations**

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**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 This report informs Council of the final recommendations of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's review of the electoral arrangements for Castle Point Borough Council.

**2. Links to Council's Priorities and Objectives**

- 2.1 As the electoral arrangements are fundamental to the delivery of the Council's priorities and objectives, this report links to all.

**3. Recommendations**

There are none. This item is for information.

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**4. Report**

- 4.1 In July 2021, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) met with the then Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, together with officers, to discuss the forthcoming electoral review of Castle Point Borough Council.
- 4.2 The previous review of electoral arrangements was carried out in 2000 and the LGBCE programmed this latest review as they are required to review the electoral arrangements of every council in England from 'time to time'. In addition, some councillors currently represent many more or fewer electors than others – described as 'electoral inequality'
- 4.3 An electoral review examines and proposes new electoral arrangements for a local authority. A local authority's electoral arrangements decide:
- How many councillors are needed;
  - How many wards or electoral divisions there should be, where their boundaries are and what they should be called; and
  - How many councillors should represent each ward or division.

- 4.4 When carrying out an electoral review the Commission has three main considerations:
- Improving electoral equality by equalising the number of electors that each councillor represents;
  - Ensuring that the recommendations reflect community identity; and
  - Providing arrangements that support effective and convenient local government.
- 4.5 As part of the process, the Council was required to provide data on the number of electors taken from the electoral register as published in December 2021. It should be noted that the review uses data on the current and forecast electorate and not population as these are not the same data sets.
- 4.6 This current (as at December 2021) electorate data was entered into a spreadsheet provided by the LGBCE which then calculated a projected electorate in 2028. The Council was asked to give consideration to new housing development expected in the Borough and how this might impact on the future size of the electorate. However, with a Local Plan that was no longer afforded support by the Members of the Council, there was high potential for prevention of, or at least significant delay to, its implementation. In turn, this would delay the delivery of new housing. Therefore, the forecast electorate figures were not amended to take into account potential for future development as included in the emerging Local Plan.
- 4.7 The Council was required to provide mapping files of any *potential* new significant development in the Borough for the LGBCE to take into account when considering the new pattern of wards and boundaries.
- 4.8 The review included the following activity:
- Briefings held by the LGBCE in September 2021 with: Group Leaders; Officers; and Full Council;
  - Two workshops held with Members in February and March 2022 to discuss the number of Councillors to be put forward in the proposal on Council size;
  - An initial consultation held by the LGBCE to gather views of local communities held from 10 May 2022 to 18 July 2022;
  - A further consultation held by the LGBCE on proposals for a new pattern of wards held from 4 October 2022 to 12 December 2022; and
  - Final recommendations report published on 7 March
- 4.9 A summary of submissions and consultation responses is as follows:
- Proposal for number of councillors*
- One submission from the local authority
  - One submission from a political group
- Initial consultation – views on local communities*

- One response from the local authority
- One response from a parish/town council
- One response from a political group
- 20 responses from local residents

#### *Consultation on draft proposals*

- One response from a political group
- 9 responses from councillors (8 Borough Councillors and one County Councillor)
- 33 responses from local residents

4.10 The final recommendations for Castle Point are as follows:

- Castle Point should be represented by 39 councillors, two fewer than there are now
- Castle Point should have 13 wards, one fewer than there are now
- The boundaries of all wards should change

4.11 The names and boundaries of the new wards are included in Appendix 1 to this report.

4.12 It should be noted that the LGBCE has no power to create new parishes or alter the external boundaries of existing parishes. However, sometimes they may alter the parish wards used for parish (or town council) elections. This happens when the LGBCE create new district or borough wards for the authority being reviewed which divide existing parishes. In that case, the law says that the LGBCE must change parish or town council wards so that they do not cross the new boundaries. The final recommendations include revised parish electoral arrangements for Canvey Island Town Council as set out in Table 1 below and a map of these arrangements in Appendix 2.

4.13 These proposals will now be put forward as a draft Order laid before Parliament which is the process to make them become law. The new electoral arrangements will come into force from May 2024, with an all-out election held in that year.

4.14 Full details of the review, including the final recommendations report and a detailed final recommendations map can be found at:

<https://consultation.lgbce.org.uk/node/34394>

**Table 1 - Final recommendations for Canvey Island Town Council**

Final recommendations	
Canvey Island Town Council should comprise 11 councillors, as at present, representing six wards:	
Parish ward	Number of parish councillors
Canvey Island Central	2
Canvey Island East	2
Canvey Island North	2
Canvey Island South Central	2
Canvey Island South West	1
Canvey Island Winter Gardens	2

## **5. Corporate Implications**

### **Financial implications**

Any changes to the electoral arrangements in Castle Point Borough Council will have financial implications as electoral systems will need to be updated to ensure that any elections held from May 2024 are done so under the new arrangements. The Council was aware that the review would likely have financial implications for the running of elections, particularly in the first set of all-out elections and this has been built into the forecast budget for 2023/24, to be finalised as part of the budget setting process.

### **Legal implications**

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is an independent body set up by Parliament under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Final recommendations from reviews undertaken by the LGBCE are put before Parliament in the form of a draft order. The draft order, if made, gives effect to the final recommendations and is laid before Parliament for a period of 40 sitting days. Parliament can either accept or reject the recommendations.

Once these final recommendations have been laid before Parliament, the Council is obliged to follow these as they will have become law.

### **Human resources and equality implications**

#### **Human resources**

Implementation of the recommendations may require more human resources, particularly for the first set of elections under new arrangements in May 2024. These will be explored in more detail as planning for the elections commences.

**Equality implications**

There are no identified equality implications in the review. However, when planning for elections under the new arrangements, the Council will give full regard to equality implications as is always required when running elections.

**Timescale for implementation and risk factors**

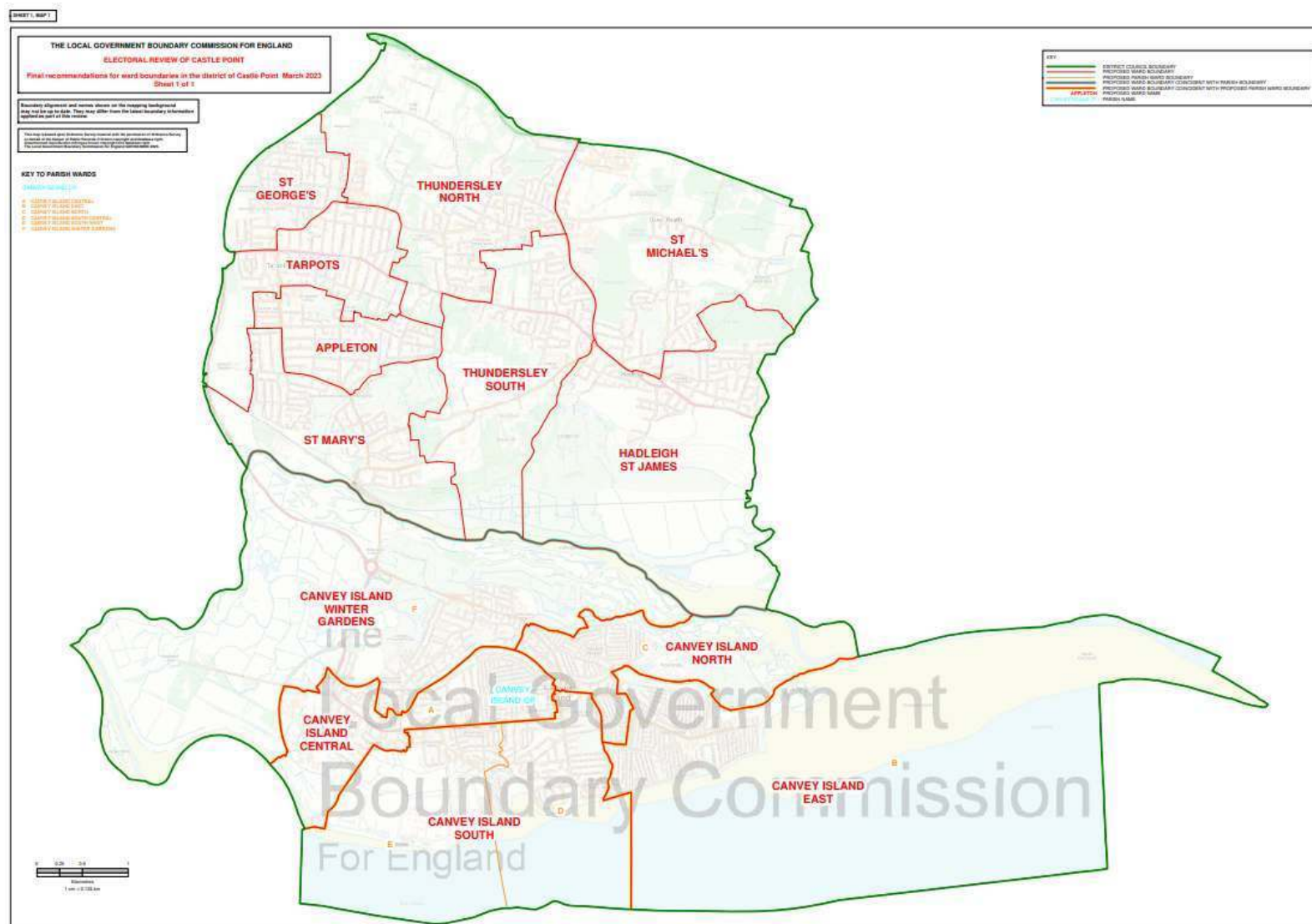
Subject to the legal process of laying these final recommendations before Parliament, the new electoral arrangements will apply from May 2024.

**6. Conclusions**

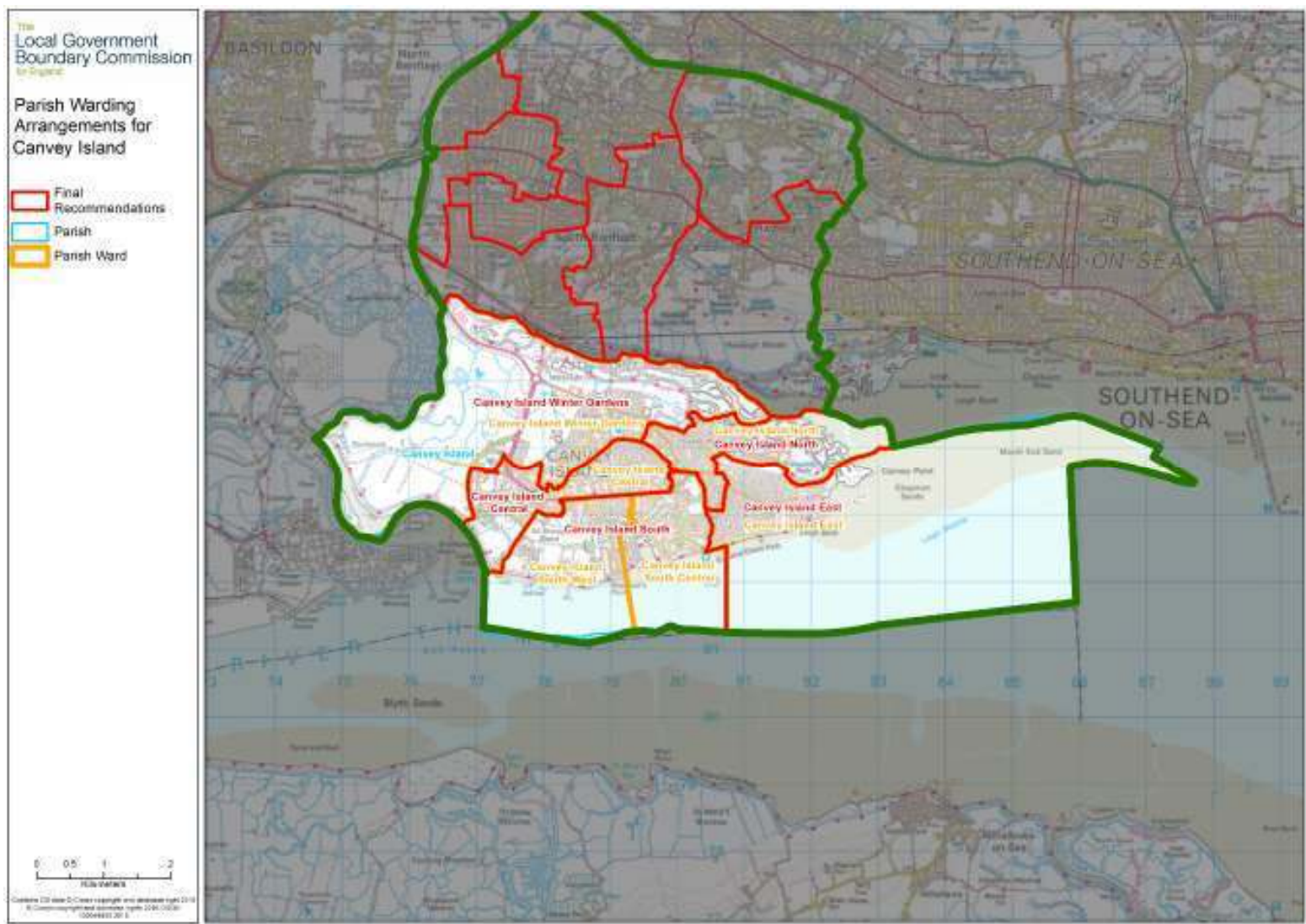
Council should note the recommendations set out in this report and in the final recommendations report from the LGBCE, for discussion.

**Report Author:** Ann Horgan – Head of Governance

## Appendix 1 – Final recommendation for ward boundaries in the Castle Point Borough



Appendix 2 – Parish warding arrangements for Canvey Island





**ORDINARY COUNCIL**

**22nd MARCH 2023**

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**Subject: Report of the Returning Officer - Elections Fees and Expenses 2023/24 ; Appointment of Deputy Electoral Registration Officer**

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**1. Purpose of Report**

**1.1 This report is presented by the Returning Officer to Council to note the Returning Officer's scale of fees and associated expenses for Elections taking place during 2023/24, as shown in Appendix 1.**

**1.2 Council is also requested to agree the appointment of a Deputy Electoral Registration Officer, (DERO) with full powers for the Castle Point area.**

**2. Links to Council's Priorities and Objectives**  
**This links to all and particularly as Enablers.**

**3. Recommendations**

- 1. To note the fees to be paid to the Returning Officer as identified as Appendix 1, Table A.**
- 2. To note the Election Staff Fees to be paid as set out in Appendix 1, Table B for financial year 2023/24.**
- 3. To note the fees for the Clerical Allowance as identified at Appendix 1, Table C.**
- 4. To agree the appointment of a Deputy Electoral Registration Officer, (DERO) with full powers for the Castle Point area.**
- 5. To delegate to the ERO the power to appoint one or more deputies and to revoke or vary such appointments as necessary.**

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**4. Background**

**Election Fees and Expenses**

**4.1** The Representation of the People Act 1983 requires each Council to appoint an officer of the authority as Returning Officer to undertake various statutory duties in relation to election procedures. In addition, the Council must provide the Returning Officer with the necessary resources to enable efficient and lawful delivery of the elections.



- 4.2 On appointment as Chief Executive Ms Angela Hutchings took up the appointments of Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer.
- 4.3 At the Special Council meeting on 15th February 2023, Council approved the budget provision for Borough Elections taking place this year. The Returning Officer will also administer the town council Elections taking place this year.

#### **Appointment of Deputy Electoral Registration Officer**

- 4.4 Electoral Commission guidance recommends the appointment of a Deputy ERO to carry out the functions of the ERO and be available to act in their absence. The ERO is responsible for maintaining and publishing the register of Electors for the area.
- 4.5 Under Section 52(2) Representation of the People Act 1983, Council may approve the appointment of Deputy EROs to perform and exercise any of the duties and powers of the ERO.

### **5. Proposals**

- 5.1 The Returning Officer is held personally responsible for the organisation and conduct of every election held within the Borough. For national elections and referendums, the fee paid to the Returning Officer is set by statute and paid by central Government. For local elections the fee is paid by the local authority.
- 5.2 The Returning Officer fee for Borough and Town Council elections is calculated using the formula shown at Appendix 1, Table A.
- 5.3 A fee is also paid to staff in the election office in recognition of the additional responsibilities associated with serving as Deputy Returning Officers with either full or limited powers. This payment is at the discretion of the Returning Officer and is drawn from the clerical allowance, which is calculated as shown at Appendix 1, Table B.
- 5.4 It is necessary to increase some of the fees payable to staff working in polling stations and on other electoral duties in order to meet the requirements of the National Minimum Wage. These increased fees have also been benchmarked with neighbouring authorities to ensure parity and preserve the Council's ability to attract staff to work additional hours in the run up to and on the day of the local election. Appendix 1, Table C lists the scale of fees proposed to be implemented. This list needs to be reviewed annually in order to ensure that the rates paid remain competitive.

#### **Appointment of Deputy Electoral Registration Officer**

- 5.5 The opportunity is also being taken given the requirements of the Elections Act 2022 to formally appoint a Deputy Electoral Registration Officer. The Elections Act has placed further obligations on the ERO which it would be more practical for a deputy to undertake. Unlike the appointment of Deputy Returning Officer, the ERO cannot appoint a deputy unless power to do so has been delegated by Council.

- 5.6 Electoral Commission guidance further recommends that 'Any deputies appointed should have the skills and knowledge required to carry out the functions they have been assigned.'

## **6. Corporate Implications**

### **(a) Financial Implications**

At the Special Council meeting on 15th February 2023, Council approved the budget provision for Borough Elections taking place this year.

### **(b) Legal Implications**

The Council has a statutory obligation under the Representation of the People Act 1983 to provide the necessary resources to the Returning Officer to carry out his duties and deliver an efficient and lawful election.

Under Section 52(2) Representation of the People Act 1983, Council may approve the appointment of Deputy EROs to perform and exercise any of the duties and powers of the ERO.

### **(c) Human Resources and Equality Implications**

It is essential that the Council can recruit and retain sufficient temporary staff to undertake the various statutory duties at election times.

### **(d) IT and Asset Management Implications**

There are none to be addressed by this report

## **7. Timescale for implementation and Risk Factors**

Delivery of a democratically sound and effective election is the overriding objective of the Returning Officer and the Council's Elections Team. Achievement of that objective is heavily dependent on the work undertaken by numerous temporary staff recruited to assist in various activities in the run up to and during election day. Failing to offer appropriate remuneration to those temporary staff could result in fewer people wanting to work and so jeopardise the ability of the Council to deliver the election. Failing to meet the requirements of the National Minimum Wage would, of course, put the Council in breach of a statutory obligation.

Appointment of a deputy ERO will assist the discharge of responsibility of the ERO.

## **8. Background Papers**

None

### **Report Author:**

Ms Angela Hutchings Returning Officer; Electoral Registration Officer.

**FEES AND CHARGES FOR CASTLE POINT BOROUGH COUNCIL ELECTIONS**  
**4 MAY 2003**

**A. Returning Officer's Fees**

	<b>CPBC</b>	<b>CITC</b>
For each contested Borough / Town council ward	£130.00	£130.00
Plus for each 1000 electors or part thereof	£50.00	£50.00
For each uncontested Borough/Town Council Ward	£60.00	£60.00
Total for contested elections	£5320.00	£2230.00

**B. Election Staff Fees**

<b>Role</b>	<b>Payment</b>
Presiding Officer Fee	£255.00
Presiding Officer Fee CITC	£306.00
Presiding Officer Training (50% online)	£34.00
Presiding Officer Travel	£18.00
Poll Clerk Fee	£175.00
Poll Clerk Fee CITC	£210.00
Poll Clerk Training (50% online)	£34.00
Poll Clerk Travel	£10.00
Polling Station Inspector	£200.00
Postal Vote Opener - hourly rate	£11.00 ph
Postal Vote Supervisor - hourly rate	£14.00 ph
Poll Card Deliverer - per card	£0.30 per card
Count Assistant (day)	£13.00 ph
Count Assistant (night)	£17.50 ph
Count Supervisor (day)	£14.00 ph
Count Supervisor (night)	£150.00 flat fee
Count TL/Supervisor Training	£20.00 ph
Count Set up/ Take down Supervisor	£15.00 ph
Count set up/ Take down assistant	£15.00 ph
Count General Assistants	£12.00 ph
Count Media Officer	£14.00 ph
Count Ballot Box Receipt Assistant	£12.00 ph
Count Security	£12.00 ph
Count Reception staff	£12.00 ph
Count Staff - IT support	£14.00 ph

## C Clerical Allowance

<b>Core Team Additional Roles/Payment</b>	<b>Fee</b>
Casual Admin Support (including staffing)	£12.50ph
Ballot Box Equipment / Issuing Assistant	£12.50ph
Ballot Box Equipment / Issue Supervisor	£15.00ph
Ballot Box Receipt Supervisor	£15.00ph
Collection and prep of Equipment	£15.00ph
Poll Card Printing	£12.50ph
Letters Printing	£12.50ph
Poll Card Prep and Issue Assistant	£12.50ph
Poll Card Prep and Issue Supervisor	£15.00ph
Postal Vote Prep & Issue Assistant	£12.50ph
Postal Vote Prep & Issue Supervisor	£15.00ph
Unused ballot papers checking and verification	£15.00ph
Staff payments / payroll	£16.75ph
Postal Vote Signature Adjudicators	£16.75ph
Top Table assistant/data officer	£16.75ph
Bookkeeping	£12.50 ph
Overtime	Employee standard hourly rate