

Report to:	Council
Relevant Officer:	Neil Jack, Chief Executive
Relevant Cabinet Member	Councillor Blackburn, Leader of the Council
Date of Meeting	11 March 2015

COUNCIL'S PAY POLICY STATEMENT

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To consider the Council's Pay Policy Statement and the scale of fees for elections.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To approve the Pay Policy Statement and the scale of fees for elections, as recommended by the Chief Officers Employment Committee.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 The Council has a duty to agree a pay policy statement before 31st March each year. It is also good practice to review the scale of fees for elections before a major election and these have not been reviewed since 2012.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

The Council has a duty to agree a pay policy statement and the proposed one is consistent with the guidance from the Department of Communities and Local Government. In relation to the election fees some minor changes are recommended which do not alter the overall budget. Other changes could be made but the Returning Officer does not wish to increase the overall costs and believes that the fees proposed are consistent with other similar Councils.

4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 The relevant Council Priority is "Deliver quality services through a professional, well-rewarded and motivated workforce."

5.0 Background Information

5.1 The Council is required to produce a pay policy statement which must be in place for the year 2015/2016 and have received full Council approval before the start of that financial year.

5.2 The statement must set out the Council's policy on:

- I. Chief Officer Remuneration (at recruitment, salary, bonus, performance related pay, charges, fees, allowances, benefits in kind, enhancement to pension at termination).
- II. Remuneration of its lowest paid employees (elements as above), the definition used for this group and the reason for adopting that definition.
- III. The relationship between chief officer remuneration and that of other staff.

This however is a minimum requirement and Councils can do more if they so wish.

5.3 The guidance from the Department for Communities and Local Government has added that they expect the policy statement to cover:

- I. The opportunity for full Council to vote on senior remuneration packages with a value over £100,000 prior to an offer of appointment being made.
- II. Policies should explain the planned relationship between Chief Officer remuneration and that of other staff and the ratio between the highest paid and median salary that the authority aims to achieve and maintain.
- III. The value of the system of earn back pay with an element of their basic pay at risk each year to be earned back through meeting pre-agreed objectives.
- IV. Any decision that the Authority takes in relation to the award of severance to an individual Chief Officer.
- V. An explicit statement on whether or not they permit an individual to be in receipt of a pension in addition to receiving a salary.
- VI. Policies to deal with those who may have returned to the authority under a contract of service of any type having already received a severance or redundancy payment.

5.4 In addition to this guidance, it should be noted that the recommended practice for Local Authorities on data transparency states that the Council should disclose publicly:

- I. Senior employees salaries (that earn £50,000 and above). This includes disclosing their names, details of their remuneration, a list of responsibilities, for example the services and functions they are responsible for, budget held and number of staff.
- II. An organisation chart.
- III. The pay multiple which is the ratio between the highest paid salary and the median average salary of the whole authority's workforce.

5.5 Blackpool Council - Pay Policy Statement

The Pay Policy Statement is attached at Appendix 8 (a). Central to the statement is recognition that it is acknowledged that jobs have a value in terms of scope, specialist skills and knowledge, size and impact and the Council uses equality tested job evaluation schemes to ensure that this is done correctly and applied to an appropriate pay scale. Beyond that, the Council's employee benefits policies are universally applied wherever possible and the financial arrangements for all employees leaving the organisation for whatever reason are based on the same principles regardless of grade.

5.6 Scale of Fees – Local Elections

The draft Pay Policy Statement incorporates the fee paid to the Chief Executive in his personal role as Returning Officer. The Returning Officer has a personal liability for running the local election and in doing so employs staff for assistance in that purpose (rather than the Council) and pays them accordingly. In carrying out the role the Returning Officer is accountable to his statutory responsibility, not to the Council (in other words, the appointment is separate from his appointment as an officer of the Council).

5.7 Section 28(5) of the 1983 Representation of the People Act (as amended by paragraph 6(b) of Schedule 4 to the Act of 1985 and Schedule 16 to the 1994 Act) requires Councils to assign officers of the Council to assist the Returning Officer in carrying out all or any of his duties at an election. A scale of fees was agreed by Council in March 2012, for paying staff who work in this connection and this has been the basis of payments to staff who worked on national based elections and referendums with funding provided through external grant (e.g. Parliamentary and European elections and the Alternative vote referendum) and these fees have been accepted by the Government's Electoral Claims Unit, as a basis for paying staff.

5.8 The Returning Officer would also need to 'buy' in any other support directly related to the election (local or national based) (e.g. IT, customer services and operational services). These would be paid on the basis of reasonable and actual cost and again can be claimed back for national based elections/ referenda.

5.9 The scale of fees (Appendix 8(b)) includes set fees for certain tasks and hourly payments for other duties in accordance with a spinal column point on the Council's pay scales, commensurate to the duties to be undertaken. Any Council staff used in this connection do not accrue flexi time or time off in lieu. Since they were last reviewed in 2012, the following minor changes are proposed.

- 5.10 Reduction Postal Opening Room Supervisor rate from SCP 37 to 33 and a similar reduction anyone for the providing/ delivering training, as it would be more proportionate to both these roles based on the experience of recent elections.
- 5.11 With regard to the count, some minor changes are proposed. For counts taking place out of working hours (e.g. after 10pm) then it is recommended that the first hour (including pre training) is paid at double time to assist with recruitment externally, (rather than time and a half). Many authorities use a 'retainer' for the first hour of either a set fee or a particular rate. A new rate for a Deputy Table Supervisor allowance is proposed to assist the Table Supervisor and identify 'doubtfuls' and consequently a reduction in the Table Supervisor rate is suggested from SCP 37 to 33 as a result. With regard to clerical / poll cards, it is recommended that these payments be paid at the individuals own SCP rate, up to a maximum of SCP 30.
- 5.12 The Proposed Pay Policy Statement and the scale of Election Fees were considered by the Chief Officers Employment Committee at its meeting on Wednesday 25th February and that Committee recommended them to Council for approval.

Does the information submitted include any exempt information?

No

List of Appendices:

Appendix 8 (a) – Draft pay Policy Statement.

Appendix 8 (b) – Schedule of Election fees.

6.0 Legal considerations:

- 6.1 All legal duties concerned with this matter have been included in the Statement. It is considered good practice to have the Scale of Election fees for Local Elections agreed by or on behalf of the Council.

7.0 Human Resources considerations:

- 7.1 The Council's Pay Policy statement covers Chief Officer Remuneration in various forms and also its relationship with that of other staff. The Returning Officer has a personal liability for running the local election and in doing so employs staff for assistance in that purpose (rather than the Council).

8.0 Equalities considerations:

- 8.1 The Council has gone through a pay review process and as part of that review it has introduced two robust job evaluation schemes which are designed to ensure fairness and equity in terms of pay. These schemes and the desire to ensure fairness and transparency around pay form the basis of the Council's Pay Policy Statement. The Council complies with the recommended practice for Local Authorities on data transparency already.

9.0 Financial considerations:

9.1 No changes to the Council's financial arrangements have been made as a result of the introduction of this statement. The next all out Local Elections are scheduled for 7th May 2015 and the budget for that is set to accommodate any fees paid to staff who work on the local elections. With the Parliamentary Election being held on that same date, then the Council's costs will reduce accordingly, due to it being a combined election.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 The most significant risks around pay relate to the increased costs of employment and balancing the need to pay an appropriate salary that will mean that the roles the Council needs to fill to discharge its duties as a Local Authority can be filled by skilled, appropriately qualified staff. To mitigate against the first risk the Council ensures that its budgets are managed effectively and to deal with the second risk, there is a policy to deal with market supplements if they can be objectively justified.

11.0 Ethical considerations:

11.1 The Council's values of accountability are important in this report in that the Council is stating its pay rationale and the Returning Officer is also setting down the election fees paid.

12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

12.1 Consultation has previously taken place with Trade Union Representatives on the policies referred to in the pay policy statement.

13.0 Background papers:

13.1 None.