

Reading Borough Council

Returning Officer Scale of Fees

Local Government Elections

Effective from 17 July 2026

Scale of expenditure fixed under section 36(4) and (5) of the Representation of the People Act 1983

PART 1: RETURNING OFFICER FEES

1. Interpretation

1.1 In this Appendix:

- “Returning Officer” (RO) means the officer appointed by the Council under the Representation of the People Act 1983;
- “Whole-council equivalent fee” means the fee that would be payable were all council seats contested at a single election;
- “Ordinary election” means an election conducted as part of the Council’s elections-by-thirds cycle.

2. Returning Officer Duties

2.1 Returning Officer fees for conducting a local election include the following duties:

- giving the prescribed notices;
- preparing and supplying nomination papers, distributing, filling up;
- verifying and adjudicating upon the same;
- Appointing Deputy Returning Officer(s);
- Arranging for or conducting the poll;
- Counting the votes and declaring the results.

In addition to the above duties, the Returning Officer will generally perform all the duties which a Returning Officer is required to perform under the Act or the Rules and Regulations made under it. This also includes all disbursements and expenses other than those for which special provision has been made. The scale of fees set out below

will remain in full force and be used for Local Government elections unless and until it is replaced.

3. Basis of Calculation

3.1 The Returning Officer fee shall be calculated by reference to:

- The total registered electorate, as published in the register in force on the last date for publication of the notice of election; and
- The applicable election type set out in section 4.

3.2 The fee is payable to the Returning Officer personally, in recognition of statutory responsibility, and is separate from all election expenses and staffing costs.

4. Scale of Fees

4.1 Whole-Council Equivalent

4.1.1 The whole-council equivalent fee shall be calculated as follows:

Returning Officer		Whole-council equivalent
Contested Local Elections		
(a)	For every 500 electors in each ward	£36.50
(b)	By-election fees: for every 100 electors per ward	£36.50
Uncontested Local Elections		
(c)	For every 500 electors in each ward	£25

4.2 Ordinary Elections (Election by Thirds)

4.2.1 For ordinary local government elections conducted as part of the elections-by-thirds cycle, the Returning Officer shall be paid 60% of the calculated whole-council equivalent fee.

4.2.2 This percentage reflects the reduced scale of contest while recognising the Returning Officer's continuing personal statutory responsibility:

Returning Officer		Election by Thirds
Contested Local Elections		
(a)	For every 500 electors in each ward	£21.90
(b)	By-election fees ¹ : for every 100 electors per ward	£21.90

¹ Where a by-election is held other than on an ordinary polling day.

Uncontested Local Elections		
(c)	For every 500 electors in each ward	£15

4.3 By-Elections (Local Government)

4.3.1 For a by-election affecting one or more wards:

- The fee shall be calculated using the electorate of the ward(s) concerned; and
- The same calculation in paragraph 4.1 shall apply.

4.3.2 Where multiple wards are contested on the same date, the electorates shall be aggregated for the purposes of calculating the fee.

5. Combined Elections

5.1 Where a local government election is held on the same day as a Parliamentary, Police and Crime Commissioner, Mayoral or other statutory election:

- The fee payable under this Appendix shall apply only to the local government election; and
- Any fees or charges payable for national or other polls shall be dealt with separately in accordance with the relevant statutory provisions.

6. Deputy Returning Officers

6.1 Any fees payable to Deputy Returning Officers are not included within this scale and shall be treated as election expenses, not as part of the Returning Officer's personal fee.

7. Review and Uprating

7.1 This scale of fees shall be reviewed annually or earlier where there are significant legislative, organisational or electoral changes.

7.2 The Council may approve annual uprating of the fees by reference to National Joint Council pay awards.

PART 2: ELECTION STAFF COSTS

The fees stated are the maximum amounts payable for the services of staff. The Returning Officer has the discretion to disburse funds on the different functions described below up to the maximum amount.

Role	Fee	Notes
DEPUTY RETURNING OFFICER(S)		
Verification & Count	£500	A separate fee is payable in respect of Polling Station Inspector duties.
POLLING STATION STAFF		
Polling Station Inspector	£350	
Presiding Officer	£360	Includes £20 for training
Poll Clerk	£255	Includes £20 for training
Poll Clerk Reserve	£40	£20 deducted from fee if called upon and paid for number of hours worked.
COUNT STAFF		
Top Table Supervisor	£338.80	Paid at 1.5 rate for overnight count.
Top Table Assistant	£202.08	Paid at 1.5 rate for overnight count.
Count Supervisor	£220	Includes £15 for training. Paid at 1.5 rate for overnight count.
Count Assistant	£136.08	Paid at 1.5 rate for overnight count.
Ballot Box Receipt	£75	Paid at 1.5 rate for overnight count.
Lifting & Shifting	£18.96 per hour	Paid at 1.5 rate for overnight count.
POSTAL VOTE HUB STAFF		
Postal Vote Scanning Manager + Deputy Returning Officer Duties	£1,650	
Postal Vote Opening Manager	£27.50 per hour	Paid at 1.5 rate for overnight count.