



Council

11th June 2008

14. BY-ELECTIONS – BUDGET ALLOCATION

(Report of Returning Officer)

1. Purpose of Report

Further to the declaration of By-Elections for the vacant seats in Batchley Ward and the Arrow Valley East County Electoral Division, to be held on the 17th of July 2008, to set the relevant budgets.

2. Recommendation

The Council is asked to RESOLVE that

- 1) **the sum of up to £9,000 be allocated from balances for the conduct of the Borough By-Election in the Batchley Ward; and**
- 2) **the sum of up to £18,000 be allocated for the conduct of the County Council By-Election in the Arrow Valley East Electoral Division, to be fully reimbursed in due course by the County Council.**

3. Financial, Legal, Policy and Risk Implications

Financial

- 3.1 The costs of administering both By-Elections, although trailed at budget-setting time last year, were not built into the budgets, as it was not known when the need to fill the vacant seats might arise.

Legal

- 3.2 The requirements are statutory under the Local Government Act 1972 and Representation of the People Acts, which provide for the conduct of By-Elections to fill "casual vacancies".
- 3.3 Had the vacancies arisen within 6 months of the next scheduled elections for the areas concerned, By-Elections would not have been triggered. The County term would have ended in May / June 2009 and the Borough Term in May 2010.

Policy

- 3.4 The matter is one of statutory requirement rather than of policy.
- 3.5 In accordance with normal policy, the Borough Returning Officer has been appointed by the County Returning Officer as his Deputy, with full powers to run the County By-Election on his behalf.

Risk

- 3.6 Elections need to be conducted within the required statutory framework, and failure to do this may have legal consequences. Adequate funding therefore needs to be agreed to enable the administration of the due processes.

Report**4. Background**

- 4.1 Following the sad death of Councillor Betty Passingham in May, two seats are left vacant: one of the Borough's Batchley Ward seats and one of the County's Arrow Valley East seats.
- 4.2 Arrow Valley East Division includes the three Borough Wards of Church Hill, Matchborough and Winyates.

5. Key Issues

- 5.1 The following budget figures have been estimated, based on expenditure on the 1st of May Borough Council elections:

	BATCHLEY	ARROW VALLEY EAST
Provisional Budget	£8,500	£18,000 *

- 5.2 * The Arrow Valley East By-Election is being run by the Borough's Returning Officer on behalf of the County Council.

Expenditure on this By-Election will therefore be subject in due course to full reimbursement by the County Council.

6. Other ImplicationsAsset Management

- 6.1 Some Council premises will need to be used for elections purposes; including the Civic Suite for Postal Votes, Verification and Count..

Community Safety

- 6.2 Community Safety issues are considered as part of the briefing instructions for Presiding Officers prior to Election Day.

Human Resources

- 6.3 In addition to the impact on Elections staff, some Borough staff will be appointed for elections duties; and other staff will assist the process in various ways, such as Contact Centre, One-Stop Shop, IT support; Caretaking and Technical staff, etc. .

Social Exclusion

- 6.4 There are some social exclusion issues, including access to Polling Stations issues. Hopefully this is an area where improvements are being seen. Otherwise every attempt is made to make the electoral process open equally to all.

Sustainability / Environmental

- 6.5 No significant Sustainability or Environmental implications have been identified.

7. Conclusion

The Committee is asked to approve the recommendations at Section 2 above.

8. Background Papers

Schedule of Fee & Charges
Costings from May local elections.

9. Consultation

Consultation has taken place with relevant Borough and County Council Officers in the preparation of this report.

10. Author of Report

The author of this report is Steve Skinner (Democratic Services Manager / Deputy Returning Officer), who can be contacted on extension 3256 (e-mail: steve.skinner@redditchbc.gov.uk) for more information.