

**Request for Greater London Returning Officer (GLRO) Decision – GLRO 24-12**

**Scale of fees – London Elects: GLA staff deployed in elections roles**

**Executive summary:**

For the 2024 Mayor of London and London Assembly Elections, the Greater London Returning Officer has established a scale of fees and related eligibility criteria, to be applied to the GLA staff supporting delivery of the election.

**Decision:**

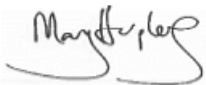
That the Greater London Returning Officer approves:

- the scale of fees, as set out in appendix 1, which details the eligibility criteria and the rates that are applied to eligible roles.
- use of the £60,000 Election Fees and Other budget for the payment of fees.

**Greater London Returning Officer**

The above request has my approval.

**Signature:**



**Date:**

19/03/2024

## **PART I – NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE TO THE GLRO**

### **Decision required – supporting report**

#### **1. Introduction and background**

- 1.1. The Greater London Returning Officer (GLRO) must have access to the required staff to deliver those parts of the Mayor of London and London Assembly elections for which they are directly responsible, taking all necessary steps to ensure resources are available to discharge their functions.
- 1.2. The London Elects team comprises GLA staff, and supports the GLRO to deliver the elections. Some of the team are dedicated full-time to the elections; others are managing or supporting workstream activity in addition to non-election roles at the GLA.
- 1.3. In addition to the core London Elects team, GLA staff who express an interest in supporting the elections are deployed in a range of roles without which the elections could not be effectively delivered.
- 1.4. For the 2021 elections, the GLRO agreed the ‘scale of fees’ criteria for payments. This same approach is being adopted for 2024. The criteria seeks to provide clarity for eligibility on payments, and consistency in application.
- 1.5. The scale of fees at appendix 1 sets out the rationale for the fees, which can be summarised as follows:
  - a) The Mayor of London and London Assembly elections are different from other activities that require deployment of GLA staff to carry out duties outside of their substantive posts.
  - b) The elections are a high profile, statutory obligation. Motivated and engaged staff are needed; this supports a unique approach being adopted.
  - c) The elections are outside the boundaries of the GLA’s policy on honorarium and recognition payments. The fees are agreed by the GLRO, and are not subject to the GLA’s corporate process for additional payments.
  - d) The 2024 scale of fees reflects the 2021 policy which was successfully implemented. The policy seeks to provide transparency and consistency.
  - e) The London borough staff working on the elections receive fees independent of the GLA, for the Mayoral and London Assembly elections and any other central/local elections that may be taking place at the same time (for example, in roles such as poll clerks or count assistants).
  - f) The majority of participating GLA staff will be deployed on verification and count day; and are likely to require adjustments to their normal start and/or finish times.
  - g) The core London Elects team is contracted to work standard office hours; evening or weekend working is not classed as business-as-usual.
- 1.6. The scale of fees sets out the principles for payment of a fee:
  - All roles eligible for a fee are assessed by workstream leads to assess:
    - the time commitment to the role
    - the level of responsibility and nature of the role

- the working pattern, requirements, and location of the role compared to business-as-usual arrangements and contracts.
- A guiding principle is that staff should not be paid twice for this additional work being undertaken. For example, staff should not receive an election fee and also an overtime payment or an out-of-hours allowance.
- There are two categories of fee: Fee 1 applies to staff deployed on verification and count day; Fee 2 applies to staff deployed in the planning and preparation for the election.
- Staff deployed in the planning and preparation for the election in advance of verification and count day, outside of their normal contractual/business-as-usual arrangements, may be eligible for Fee 2.
- However, staff may not be eligible for Fee 1 or Fee 2 if:
  - the role has become business-as-usual for a defined period
  - they are already in receipt of a fee for elections work
  - they are already in receipt of an out-of-hours allowances or overtime payment that can be applied to the election activity.

1.7. There are several changes to the 2024 scale of fees compared to 2021, including:

- an uplift of 10 per cent in the fee rates
- clarification that the fee is a daily rate
- time off in lieu arrangements apply only to the Bank holiday Monday (6th May 2024).
- inclusion of new guidance on the types of roles that are eligible for each fee, to provide added transparency.

1.8. The budget for the fees will come from the £60,000 Election Fees and Other<sup>1</sup> budget. In 2024 fewer volunteers will be required than in 2021 and the total fees cost is expected to be covered by this budget.

## **2. Objectives and expected outcomes**

2.1. The objective of the scale of fees and associated expenditure is to support the effective delivery of the 2024 Mayoral and London Assembly elections. This is the first time that a manual count, managed by the London boroughs, is being undertaken. Previously electronic counts were managed by the GLA. As such there are some differences in the policy compared to 2021. These are highlighted in the scale of fees by the guidance provided on the types of roles eligible for the different fee rates. Fewer GLA staff in a narrower range of roles are therefore required overall.

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<sup>1</sup> This budget is also known as the General Election Fund budget. Despite the name it is not linked to parliamentary elections.

### **3. Other considerations**

#### Key risks and issues

- 3.1. The GLRO wishes to incentivise and recognise staff's contribution to the delivery of the election. Otherwise, there is a risk the election will not be delivered effectively.

#### Impact assessments and consultations.

- 3.2. The 2024 scale of fees builds on the 2021 policy, but the number and range of roles that will be eligible for the fee is reduced given that there will be a manual count (undertaken by London boroughs) rather than an electronic count (managed by the GLA).
- 3.3. The Elections Working Group, chaired by the GLRO Mary Harpley, includes workstream leads who were consulted in the development of the 2024 scale of fees.
- 3.4. UNISON has been consulted and confirmed its support for the scale of fees.

#### Conflicts of interest

- 3.5. The officer drafting this decision is likely to benefit from its approval as they may be eligible for a fee for elections work. However, they play no role in the decision itself.

### **4. Equality comments**

- 4.1. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (the Equality Act), a public authority must have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and any conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act; and to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not. A person who is not a public authority, but who exercises public functions, such as the GLRO, must, in the exercise of those functions, have due regard to those matters.
- 4.2. Based on the scale of fees and eligibility criteria, it is not considered that this decision will have any particular impact on those with protected characteristics within the scope of the Equality Act.

### **5. Financial comments**

- 5.1. GLRO approval is sought for agreeing the scale of fees, as set out in appendix 1, which sets out the eligibility criteria and the rates that can be applied to eligible roles. The cost of paying these fees to staff deployed in roles that support delivery of the 2024 elections will be met by the £60,000 Election Fees and Other budget.

### **6. Legal comments**

- 6.1. The proposal - a payment to staff for performing additional duties in relation to the election - falls within the GLRO's functions.
- 6.2. The proposed payment of a fee is permissible under the contracts of employment of the eligible staff and processes are in place to ensure that staff are not paid twice by receiving the fee and also receiving another payment under their contracts of employment.

## 7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

7.1. If this decision is approved, next steps are as follows:

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Implementation of the policy	From March 2024
Payment of fees to staff	Expected as part of the June 2024 payroll

### **Appendices and supporting papers:**

Appendix 1 – Scale of Fees

**Public access to information**

Although the GLRO is not subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI Act), the information in this form will be published on the GLA website within one working day of approval.

If immediate publication risks compromising the implementation of the decision (for example, to complete a procurement process), it will be deferred until a specific date. Deferral periods will be kept to the shortest length strictly necessary.

**Note:** This form (Part 1) will be published either within one working day after approval or on the defer date.

**Part 1 Deferral:**

**Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? NO**

**Part 2 Confidentiality:** Only the facts or advice whose publication may be prejudicial or commercially sensitive should be in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

**Is there a part 2 form? NO**

<b>ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:</b>	Drafting officer to confirm the following (✓)
Drafting officer: Stuart Scott has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms that the Finance and Legal teams have commented on this proposal as required, and this decision reflects their comments.	✓
The <b>Deputy GLRO</b> has reviewed the request and is satisfied that it is correct and can be referred to the GLRO for approval.	✓

**INTERIM CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER:**

I confirm that financial and legal implications have been appropriately considered in the preparation of this report.

**Signature:**



**Date:**

19/03/2024