

COUNTY COUNCIL ELECTIONS 2017

To: **General Purposes Committee**

Meeting Date: **26 July 2016**

From: **Director, Customer Service and Transformation**

Electoral division(s): **All**

Forward Plan ref: **N/A**

Key decision: **No**

Purpose: **The Committee is asked to note the timetable of activity required to prepare for the County Council elections in 2017 and approve funding in order to carry the elections out.**

Recommendation: **The Committee is asked to:**

- a) Support the County Returning Officer to work with Deputy County Returning Officers across Cambridgeshire to plan for the 2017 County Elections; and**
- b) Note that funding will be built into the 2017/18 budget to administer the 2017 County Elections.**

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1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Full County Council elections are held every four years across the whole country and are due again for this Council in May 2017. At this point the Council's current term will end, all Council seats will be subject to an election, and as a result a new Council term will begin.
- 1.2 This is a significant exercise for the Council to undertake because of its importance to local democracy, its profile, and also its cost. General Purposes Committee is therefore asked to note at this early stage the impact of preparing for this election and to note the allocation of necessary funding to undertake it.

2 DETERMING A TIMETABLE OF ACTIVITY

- 2.1 Although the election is not held until May 2017 there is a significant programme of activity required from this point forwards to ensure that it is delivered successfully.
- 2.2 A meeting of the County Returning Officer and Deputy County Returning Officers (District and City based) will be held over the summer to determine a detailed timetable for the year ahead, which will be made up of:
 - Agreeing a Memorandum of Understanding for all partners involved
 - Communications Strategy and website arrangements
 - Training needs of officers
 - Agreeing standard documentation across the county
 - Briefings for Election Agents and Candidates
 - Identifying suppliers of election materials (e.g. poll cards, ballot papers)
 - Confirming polling station details
 - Processes for verifying and counting votes
 - Declaration details
 - Arrangement following the election, e.g. Member Inductions
- 2.3 The County Returning Officer, Sue Grace, will liaise with Group Leaders throughout the year to update on progress and raise any issues that arise.

3 BOUNDARY COMMISSION REVIEW

- 3.1 The electoral division boundaries are currently being reviewed by the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBC). The review is in its final stage with the last period of consultation closing on the 20th May. The final recommendations will be published by the commission on the 6th September.

4 COST OF IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 The County Council election is administered on a district by district basis, which means that the County Council calls upon District Councils and the City Council to undertake the election for all County Divisions within their areas.
- 4.2 Following consultation with District and City Councils the cost estimates below have been provided. Each year the County Council allocates a budget for elections which makes allowance for by-elections within that year. The funding from these years that is not called upon is then pooled for use against the full County Council election every four years.

- 4.3 Cambridgeshire County Council has recently moved to a new committee management system called CMIS (Committee Management Information System). This system is also used by the Council's LGSS partners – Northamptonshire County Council and Milton Keynes Council. CMIS has an election results module and the company which owns CMIS has established a demand to build upon the existing functionality in order to provide an enhanced elections results module. Cambridgeshire County Council, along with the other partners, has been invited to be part of the development process for this enhanced module. This would mean we would be able to publish the results online quickly and more effectively than in previous years.

Funds held from annual election budget:	£
Brought forward	-180,496
15-16 contribution	-144,779
16-17 budget	-165,078
17-18 budget	-167,049
Total available	-657,402
Cost estimates for 2017 election: provided by partners:	
CCC	110,000
ECDC	160,000
FDC	205,000
HDC	250,500
SCDC	245,000
Total	970,500
Cost for software to administer the election	TBC
Total cost (including 5% contingency)	£1,019,025
Shortfall to be built into 2017/18 budget	£361,623 *

*plus the cost for software to administer the election

- 4.4 Based upon all the above, General Purposes Committee is asked to note the funding that will be built into the 2017/18 budget to administer the County Election.
- 4.5 The Council is currently engaged in discussions with local partners and Government around a potential devolution deal. Depending on the outcome of these discussions, there is a possibility that Mayoral elections for a combined authority would be taking place in May 2017 also. If that were the case, then the Council would work with relevant local partners to establish levels of contribution to administer these aspects of the May 2017 elections.

5 ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

5.1 Developing the local economy for the benefit of all

There are no significant implications for this priority.

5.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives

There are no significant implications for this priority.

5.3 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people

There are no significant implications for this priority.

6. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Resource Implications

The resource implications of the May 2017 elections are detailed within the content of this report, particularly in paragraph 4.3.

6.2 Statutory, Risk and Legal Implications

The report above outlines that there are potentially a number of statutory, risk and legal implications of administering the May 2017 elections, and these will be detailed as part of the project that will be established,

6.3 Equality and Diversity Implications

There are no significant implications for this area.

6.4 Engagement and Consultation Implications

There are no significant implications for this area.

6.5 Localism and Local Member Involvement

There are no significant implications for this area.

6.6 Public Health Implications

There are no significant implications for this area.

Source Documents	Location
None	Box Number SH1102 Shire Hall Cambridge