



<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Election Accounts – May, 2023</b>
<b>Date:</b>	24th November, 2023
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Nora Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Jim Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer

**Restricted Reports**

**Is this report restricted?** Yes  No

**Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.**

Insert number

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information)
4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter
5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained
6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction
7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

**If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?**

<b>After Committee Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>After Council Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sometime in the future</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Never</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Call-in**

**Is the decision eligible for Call-in?** Yes  No

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	To advise the Committee of the cost to the Council of the Local Government Elections held in May, 2023.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to note the report.
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
	<u>Key Issues</u>
3.1	The local council expenditure for delivering Local Government Elections is, under the provision of the Electoral Law Act (Northern Ireland) 1962, constrained by a scale of expenditure set by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.
3.2	The Local Election Fees and Expenses Scale for Belfast City Council for May, 2023 was £909,463. This excludes the cost of candidates' mailing, which is not included within that maximum. However, that cost still must be met by the Council.
3.3	The direct cost to the Council was £292,476.96 and the Electoral Office of Northern Ireland's costs charged to the Council were £551,858.00.
3.4	Therefore the cost of administering and delivering the election was £844,335, which was £65,127.68 under the budget set by the Northern Ireland Office (NIO).
3.5	With the additional cost of candidates' mailing being £26,345.28 this brings the total cost to the Council to £1,120,353.92.
3.6	Compared with the cost of the Elections in 2019 of £853,008.64, this is an increase of £267,345.28.
3.7	This increase is due principally to the general increase in costs since four years ago, particularly staffing costs. Given this increase, a review of how we administer and deliver the elections will be undertaken to identify any potential cost saving measures going forward.
3.8	A breakdown of the cost is attached to this report.
	<b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b>
3.9	None associated with this report. The Council sets, each year during the rate setting process, an amount into a specified reserve to cover the cost of elections and there was sufficient funding in the budget to cover this year's election.

3.10	<b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></b> None associated with this report.
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Document Attached</b>
	Election Account