An aerial view of a city map with a green color scheme. The map shows a grid of streets and a winding river. Several people are walking on the map, appearing as small figures from above. The text is overlaid on the map.

# The 2021 Mayor and London Assembly Elections

Election Review Working Group

**LONDONASSEMBLY**

## Election Review Working Group



At the GLA Oversight Committee on 25 May 2021, the Committee agreed the formation of a working group to undertake an investigation into the recent Mayoral and London Assembly elections, in order to assess issues arising during the voting and counting processes; and to make recommendations to encourage best practice at future elections. This is the Working Group's report.

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## Foreword



**Sian Berry AM**

**Chair of the Election Review Working Group**

The GLA elections scheduled for 7 May 2020 were postponed to 6 May 2021 due to the coronavirus pandemic. The subsequent challenges of the 2021 elections have stretched everyone involved and led to the most uniquely challenging elections since the GLA was founded.

The running of the Mayoral and Assembly elections by London Elects is a complex and resource-heavy operation. It is right that after every election there is a process of reflection to learn lessons that can make our city's democracy run efficiently and fairly in future. The Assembly's review plays a central role in that reflection, and our recommendations help to shape the way the election will be run next time.

In conducting this review, our Working Group wrote to each borough's electoral administration team, and the teams for each candidate for Mayor and each party standing in the Assembly election for their views on the practical delivery of the election.

We also received a report on the election from the GLA Electoral Returning Officer (GLRO) covering the costs of the election processes, the administration of the election on the day and the counting of the votes on the days that followed.

At a meeting in July 2021 we invited the GLRO and deputy GLRO to answer questions arising from their report and our other evidence, and asked candidates for Mayor and a representative of the London Branch of Electoral Administrators to give evidence. We particularly thank candidate Richard Hewison and Mark Hough the agent for candidate Steve Kelleher for their constructive contributions to this meeting.

Overall we are impressed that, despite the challenges of this election, the election ran largely smoothly with an increased budget, without risks to health in the midst of a pandemic, with a healthy turnout of voters, and with a clear and uncontested democratic result. These are the key outcomes of any election and we thank everyone involved for delivering this.

However, we do have concerns about some aspects of the election and have made 11 recommendations for how the next election could be run even better in terms of effectiveness, efficiency and democracy.

The Working Group's review of the 2016 elections resulted in a report by the Assembly's Elections Review Panel, which noted that overall the elections had been well run, whilst making several recommendations for improvement.<sup>1</sup>

Most of the recommendations of the Assembly's 2016 Election Review Panel were implemented for the 2021 election. The GLRO told us they believe these changes made a significant contribution to the successful delivery of the 2021 elections.<sup>2</sup>

Preparations are already under way for the 2024 elections. This report and our recommendations will be submitted to the GLRO to inform these and to the Government for response on relevant recommendations. The Assembly's GLA Oversight Committee will continue to monitor the progress of preparations up to the next elections.

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<sup>1</sup> London Assembly, [The 2016 Mayor and London Assembly Elections – Appendix 1](#)

<sup>2</sup> Report of the GLRO to the 29 July 2021 Election Working Group [https://www.london.gov.uk/about-us/londonassembly/meetings/documents/s91915/London Elects paper for 2021 Elections Review Group - final - updated template.pdf](https://www.london.gov.uk/about-us/londonassembly/meetings/documents/s91915/London%20Elects%20paper%20for%202021%20Elections%20Review%20Group%20-%20final%20-%20updated%20template.pdf)

## Executive Summary

The delayed election saw changes to a number of processes, including a reduction in the requirement to collect voter signatures for nominating candidates and a record 20 candidates standing for Mayor: a significant increase from the 12 candidates who stood in 2016. In total 249 candidates stood for election to the London Assembly, up from 205 candidates nominated in 2016.

The processes for the delivery of voting at polling stations, vote counting and the announcement of the results were all changed to protect participants from infection and to comply with the Government's COVID-19 regulations. It is the Working Group's view that these redesigned processes were largely successful, and there were no recorded infection outbreaks linked to any election activity.

The cost of delivering the elections was more than double that for the 2016 elections from £16 million to £38 million. Reasons for this increase include the delay. The 'sunk' costs already incurred or committed to for the 2020 elections which had to be repeated in 2021 were estimated at over £7 million, and the extension of the count to two days and additional administration costs for coronavirus protection added further costs. Based on our findings, we have made recommendations for how resources at the next election both can be saved and used to improve the delivery of future elections.

Given all the challenges, we believe the delivery of the election was largely successful and we have received no reports of significant failures or complaints from candidates or party teams. The turnout of 42 per cent of registered voters was encouragingly high: the third largest of the six elections so far, and approximately 7.8 million ballot papers were counted.

However, we are concerned about the record number of rejected ballots recorded in this election. There was a notable increase in the proportion of ballot papers that were rejected because people had voted for too many candidates for Mayor as first preference. It appears that a revised design for the Mayoral ballot paper caused confusion for voters about how to express their two preferences. The level of rejected ballots could not have altered the result in the vote for Mayor but may have obscured the precise margin of victory and relative levels of support for each candidate.

The large number of candidates meant that existing ballot paper designs were not able to be used and no alternative had been prepared by the London Elects team, leading to a late redesign to a two-column format in order to deliver ballot papers that the electronic vote counting machines could read. We are concerned that the design did not receive sufficient preparation or testing in advance and that communication to voters of how to cast two preferences for Mayor using this new design was inadequate, and have made recommendations for improvement in this area of planning and communication.

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The GLA and London borough electoral administrators are already preparing for the next Mayoral and London Assembly elections to be held in 2024 alongside the expected date of the next general election. Responses to our review have exposed grave concerns about the practicality of running both elections on the same day, which each use different voting systems, are administered by different ROs and use separate counting infrastructure. Therefore, we also believe there is therefore a strong case for the Mayoral and London Assembly elections in 2024 to be conducted on a different date to any general election.

## Recommendations

**Recommendation 1:** London Elects should reach out to the RNIB to address how better to support blind and partially sighted voters.

**Recommendation 2:** London Elects should refocus its messaging after the pandemic to look into ways of increasing turnout and raising more awareness of the London Assembly election.

**Recommendation 3:** The London Elects team should make sure appropriate resources are put into supporting boroughs, and in particular to make sure the flow of information is managed better through new systems and not concentrated through a single individual.

**Recommendation 4:** There is a need to work more collaboratively with London boroughs to ensure the efficient delivery of the elections. Working groups should be set up at least two years before the next election, consisting of borough representatives and election management system providers.

**Recommendation 5:** London Elects should deliver on its cost-saving plans for the 2024 election and use the savings to address the other recommendations in this report.

**Recommendation 6:** The Government should review whether the range of current subscriber requirements are proportionate and suggest that the number of voter signatures required to stand in the London Mayoral election should be increased to at least 330.

**Recommendation 7:** The additional £10,000 fee required from candidates to be included in the election booklet should be reconsidered.

**Recommendation 8:** Ensure all contingencies for ballot paper designs are extensively tested with voters well in advance of the election, and that communication of how to vote is included more extensively in promotional material.

**Recommendation 9:** More consistency in the voting rights of citizens of the different EU Member States is needed, so the Government should pursue further reciprocal agreements as quickly as possible, and include other nations outside the EU in this work, which could extend voting rights to more Londoners.

**Recommendation 10:** In the light of the wide range of risks identified that cannot be readily mitigated within the project plan for the GLA elections, the Government should review the risks of holding these polls on the same day as the general election and joint elections should be avoided. In the event that the Government chooses to hold a general election on a date that clashes with a GLA election period then it should move the GLA elections to a suitable alternative date.

**Recommendation 11<sup>3</sup>:** We do not support any change in the voting system for the Mayor of London. If a change is to be considered then, in the same way that Londoners gave consent for the current system, any new system should be subject to a city-wide referendum.

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<sup>3</sup> **Minority report from the GLA Conservatives**

The GLA Conservatives do not support **Recommendation 11** on the basis that the May 2021 London Mayoral elections, the Supplementary Vote system saw a record level of rejected ballots, reflecting voter confusion. First Past the Post is the world's most widely used electoral system. The change to First Past the Post will further strengthen the accountability of the Mayor to the electorate, making it easier for voters to express a clear choice.

## Chapter one – delivery of the 2021 elections

### Turnout and the voting experience

- Turnout was 40.9 per cent in the Mayoral election, down from 45.2 per cent in 2016.
- Turnout was 41.8 per cent in the Assembly London-wide election, down from 45.2 per cent in 2016.
- The constituency with the lowest turnout was City and East (33 per cent in the Mayoral election). South-west London had the highest turnout (46.1 per cent).<sup>4</sup>

Social distancing measures were in place for all local elections held on 6 May and for the subsequent count process, which will have contributed to the slightly longer time taken to count all votes last year.

With turnout for the elections in May 2021 comparable to the 2016 elections, this suggests that concerns about COVID-19 did not stop voters from taking part. Changes that were put in place by electoral administrators and the Government appear to have helped to support and reassure voters. People were confident that they could vote safely at the elections, and the overwhelming majority were able to vote using their preferred method.

Work was done jointly with the Electoral Commission on polling station safety. The London Elects team also worked to reposition the marketing campaign for the circumstances, focusing on the measures taken to keep voters safe and using alternative marketing channels as a result of the very light footfall on the London Underground at the time.

Campaigners also adapted their activities in response to public health restrictions and were able to communicate with voters face-to-face, online and through printed material.

Returning officers put in place new procedures in polling stations, based on guidance from public health bodies and the Electoral Commission, to comply with public health regulations and guidelines; and to ensure that voters could be confident that they could vote safely. Voters who didn't want to vote in person at the polling station could also choose to cast their vote by post or appoint a proxy.

Research by the Electoral Commission shows that Londoners had high levels of satisfaction with the process of registering to vote and voting, even with the challenging circumstance of these polls taking place during the pandemic.

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<sup>4</sup> House of Commons, [Briefing Paper Number CBP9231: London Elections 2021](#), 21 May 2021

A survey of voters shows that 88 per cent of people in London were satisfied with the process of registering to vote, and 85 per cent believed the elections were well run.<sup>5</sup> This is consistent with levels of satisfaction reported by people after the elections held in 2016.

The small minority of voters who were not confident that the elections were well run gave the following reasons:

- it was not safe to vote at polling stations because of the coronavirus pandemic
- there was not enough information about the candidates
- they did not like the voting system
- there was not enough information about the elections.

### Accessibility of the vote

People who did not want to vote in person at the polling station had the ability apply to cast their vote by post or appoint a proxy. If their situation changed close to an election due to work or disability, people can appoint an emergency proxy up to 5pm on polling day to vote on their behalf. The law was changed ahead of these elections so that anyone who had to self-isolate close to polling day because they had tested positive for COVID-19, or had been in close contact to someone who had tested positive, could also appoint a proxy.

The right to vote independently, and in secret, is a cornerstone of our democracy. Yet nearly 150 years after the Ballot Act, which guaranteed the right to vote in secret, blind and partially sighted people still face barriers in exercising their democratic right to vote. It was suggested that London Elects could follow the pilot in Norfolk's example of using an audio player. According to the RNIB's Turned Out report, about half of all blind and partially sighted voters are using the postal vote approach; only a fifth of blind voters say they can vote independently.<sup>6</sup>

The Working Group heard of one instance where a wheelchair user had to fill out their ballot paper in the street and pass it to somebody else to put into the ballot box, which had to be brought out from the polling station. Some of the polling station locations were changed at a late stage because of the pandemic safety arrangements. However, there remains a duty on borough returning officers across London to have accessible polling stations. It is also not sufficient for voters just to be access polling station buildings, it must be possible for them to navigate the whole voting process.

**Recommendation 1:** London Elects should reach out to the RNIB to address how better to support blind and partially sighted voters.

<sup>5</sup> Electoral Commission, [Report on the May 2021 elections in England](#)

<sup>6</sup> RNIB, Turned Out report 2021 <https://www.rnib.org.uk/campaigning/priority-campaigns/voting-and-elections/turned-out-2021-latest-research-voter-experiences>

## Communications with voters

The 2021 Mayor of London and London Assembly elections, postponed from 2020 due to COVID-19, took place against a backdrop of unprecedented challenges. Some of these affected how London Elects delivered the campaign.

The limited reach of the TfL outdoor advertising, such as posters in tube stations, caused by the pandemic led to a shift in focus to in-home media. Polling immediately before the campaign began showed that 49 per cent of Londoners were aware of the London Assembly election, and 74 per cent were aware of the Mayor of London election. Following the elections these figures rose to 81 per cent and 92 per cent respectively.

Driving awareness was only part of the challenge. The unique circumstances of 2021 required new messages, such as explanations of how to vote in a COVID-safe way; reminders about the postal vote application deadline; and explanations of how to complete ballot papers with an exceptionally high number of candidates (see chapter four).

As we look to the next election in 2024, this Working Group would like to see a refocusing of the primary messaging to include the following objectives:

- raising awareness to promote a higher turnout
- using messages that focus on the ballot papers in advance, to help with the understanding of how to vote
- raising awareness of the London Assembly generally
- raising awareness of the difference between London-wide and Constituency Assembly Members
- using a consistent terminology for London-wide Assembly Members.

**Recommendation 2:** London Elects should refocus its messaging after the pandemic to look into ways of increasing turnout and raising more awareness of the London Assembly election.

## The election on the ground

### Support from London Elects to boroughs

The borough electoral administrators we received feedback from were generally complimentary about how the GLRO and London Elects teams worked closely with boroughs to ensure that the elections were delivered in a collaborative way.

The GLRO responded to a recommendation made by the London Assembly's Election Review Panel in 2016<sup>7</sup> to employ an experienced electoral administrator, responsible for the day-to-day

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<sup>7</sup> The London Assembly, [The 2016 Mayor and London Assembly Elections – Appendix 1](#)

running of an election, as an integral part of the London Elects team. In addition a specialist information technology team member was employed to oversee the e-counting process.

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*We started with a very good resource plan. We took on board the recommendations that the equivalent panel had made back in 2016 and we made a number of changes. Of course, we ended up with me as GLRO, with getting on for 15 years' experience running elections at the time, as a returning officer. That had not been the case before. We brought in a programme director, a very experienced elections manager with a career in a London borough. We brought in a specialist information technology person to be our eyes and ears around the e-count. We also thought very hard about some of the lessons from 2016 in the resourcing.*

**Mary Harpley, GLRO**

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The Association of Electoral Administrators (AEA) has said that the electoral administrator also effectively performed the programme manager role. Election managers in the boroughs largely felt that this led to this individual undertaking a role whose work was equivalent to that of up to two to three people, with consequent risks to the programme.

In terms of communication, we heard that an approach using online project management tools and a system to handle queries online would be an effective way to reduce these risks, and that the GLRO intends to improve these systems in 2024.

The electoral administration staff were described as performing “incredibly well”<sup>8</sup> given the challenges. However, borough teams overall felt that London Elects was under-resourced.

This led to:

- a slow turnaround when some key decisions were needed, or where issues needed escalating
- the programme manager/election expert needing to be across too many issues, from providing key election knowledge and experience to chasing progress on almost every aspect of the election, such as IT portals, funding, personal protective equipment (PPE) provision, staffing, transport, count layouts and catering
- there was a sense that there was no fallback resource – if the administrator had fallen ill with COVID-19, for example, the entire election delivery would have been at risk.<sup>9</sup>

### **Practical issues with goods and services**

Goods and services provided last year, in some instances, were provided by organisations for whom elections were not their usual business. This led to some lack of understanding, which impacted on borough teams. In particular, there were assumptions about what the election management systems were capable of producing. There was also some lack of understanding

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<sup>8</sup> Response to the call for evidence for the London Assembly Elections Review Panel from the AEA, 9 July 2021

<sup>9</sup> Response to the call for evidence for the London Assembly Elections Review Panel from the AEA, 9 July 2021

around the impact and cumulative effect on boroughs of what appear to be many minor issues. These included ballot boxes, handles and seals being delivered late and separately.

Access to some count venues was poor, with some boroughs only able to access Olympia London, to deliver sealed ballot boxes, at around 6-7am on the Friday morning, after the close of polling at 10pm on the Thursday.

It should be noted the teams delivering the ballot boxes are almost always the same core election teams that would have been working since 6am the previous day (i.e. they would have been working for 24 hours). They would also have been managing the e-counts either an hour later that morning, or at some point the following day. The access problems were hopefully a one-off, driven mainly by coronavirus precautions, but they must not be repeated.

Overall, the impact of the pandemic and the delay on the administration of the election at borough level was significant. The GLRO has recognised that there are some areas where the GLA was particularly stretched, and highlighted the volume of communication and data requests going out from a single contact to all 33 boroughs, all the way through the process but particularly around the time of the election itself.

The GLRO has committed to putting some more resource into borough liaison and borough communication. There is also some potential to be smarter around how information flows. Email was heavily used, but that is now old-fashioned. The GLA should consider some more effective and efficient portals for the exchange of information.

### **The e-count process**

One of the consequences of an e-count that we heard about from a borough perspective, is the perception that the contractor is driving most of the decisions.

We also heard concerns from borough teams that the focus in the GLA elections on the e-count and the requirements of the contractors can be at the expense of other aspects of the elections. In terms of the day-to-day work of organising an election, boroughs do not have the usual control over the procurement and timing of delivery of goods and services. For these elections they must adapt locally well-rehearsed processes and procedures in order to accommodate the provider or supplier the GLA has procured to deliver.

Boroughs were asked to feed into discussions with the e-count contractor in the early stages of preparation for this election, and their experienced election managers made suggestions for improving the effectiveness of the e-count. The system for uploading data into the secure e-count portal also needs to be reviewed, as last year it was closed to finalise the count and was made inaccessible to borough staff much earlier than in earlier years. This could have been averted if borough colleagues were involved in the development of the strategy for how this process was intended to work.

However, feedback provided through the Association of Election Administrators said that many of the suggested changes to process and paperwork were not taken up. It is hoped that by the next election, more of these improvements can be considered and implemented.

This had an impact on boroughs' ability to make late changes and add final electorate figures. This again was likely due to the contractors' lack of experience in this area, and could have been averted if borough colleagues were involved in the development of the strategy for how this process was intended to work.

#### **Verification of the e-counting process**

The Assembly report on the 2016 election recommended greater transparency in the e-counting process and that random manual checking of samples of ballots should be carried out at all count centres.

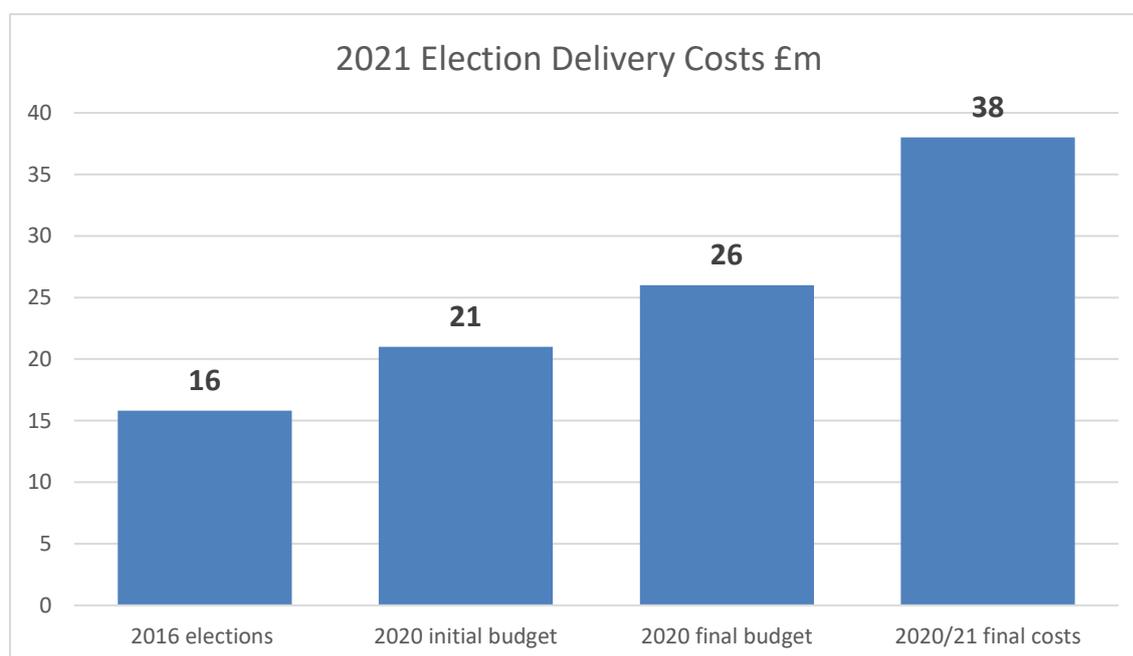
In 2021, random manual sampling of ballot papers was carried out successfully on each of the 14 constituency counts, and these demonstrated that the system was accurately recording and counting votes in every case.

**Recommendation 3:** The London Elects team should make sure appropriate resources are put into supporting boroughs, and in particular to make sure the flow of information is managed better through new systems and not concentrated through a single individual.

**Recommendation 4:** There is a need to work more collaboratively with London boroughs to ensure the efficient delivery of the elections. Working groups should be set up at least two years before the next election, consisting of borough representatives and election management system providers.

## Chapter two – the cost of the 2021 London elections

Even before the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, the budget for holding the 2020 elections had already increased by almost a third compared with 2016. The total projected cost of the postponed 2020 elections and the 2021 elections was anticipated to be over £38 million,<sup>10</sup> more than twice as much as in 2016. The following chart illustrates the cost escalation since the 2016 elections.<sup>11 12</sup>



We have found that the key reasons for the increase in cost from 2020 to 2021 were the late postponement of the elections and the additional regulations and precautions brought about by the pandemic.

### The cost of delay

The elections scheduled for 7 May 2020 were postponed on 13 March 2020. By this date equipment had already been hired, staff had already been employed and training had already taken place. Costs had already been incurred in hiring and preparing the three count centres at

<sup>10</sup> Report from the GLRO to the election review working group, [2021 Mayor of London and London Assembly Elections](#), 29 July 2021

<sup>11</sup> The GLA, [The Greater London Authority Consolidated Budget and Component Budgets for 2020-21](#), March 2020, p.17

<sup>12</sup> The GLA, [The Greater London Authority Consolidated Budget and Component Budgets for 2021-22](#), March 2021, p.20

Alexandra Palace, ExCel and Olympia London. There were also costs incurred for preparing the shelved election booklets.

In total the sunk costs of the postponed elections were over £7 million – see table below. The GLA has not been reimbursed by Government for the additional costs it has incurred, although the Government has provided around £3 million to boroughs for additional coronavirus measures which has been taken off the reclaimed costs the boroughs have requested from the GLA, and so this is reflected in the final figures.

### Additional coronavirus-related costs

Specific coronavirus precautions include moving to two-day counts, which increased the costs of hiring the count venues; protective screens at the venues; and PPE. Further costs included making polling stations COVID-19 secure in line with the Electoral Commission and Government guidance that was issued at the time.

That included allowing for the possibility of additional postal votes; having a COVID-19 marshal at each polling station; and, of course, having the relevant PPE and screens at each polling station.

### Cost of borough delivery

Final costs are expected to be around £38 million. The remaining area of uncertainty is the actual amount that boroughs will request in respect of election-related expenses, which are reimbursed by the GLA. The final total for borough expenses could be less or more than the £13.8 million shown below. Including the cost of the aborted election in 2020, the expected final cost consists of the following:

Item	Pre-2020 (£m)	2020 (£m)	2021 (£m)	Total (£m)
Electronic vote-counting system	9.0	4.7	2.3	16
Election count centre		0.8	2.2	3.0
Election booklet		0.5	2.4	2.9
Borough expenses		0.8	13.8	14.6
Salaries		0.4	0.3	0.7
Other – including communications		0.1	0.9	1.0
	<b>9.0</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>21.9</b>	<b>38.2</b>

### Reducing future costs

London Elects is considering options for reducing the cost of future GLA elections, including the option of using just one vote counting centre (possibly ExCel which is close to the new site of City Hall) and continuing with a two-day count to allow for this.

The Working Group supports these savings initiatives and would like to see any savings used to address the other recommendations for improvements in this report.

We also heard that the requirement to send a hard-copy election booklet to every voter resulted in a cost during 2021 of £2.4 million. The Mayoral candidates are given the option to contribute £10,000 each to be included, and 17 chose to be included in the booklet, which resulted in a £170,000 contribution, or around 7 per cent of this cost.

At our meeting we discussed the costs and benefits of delivering multiple copies of the same booklet to each household where higher numbers of voters live, and whether there would be any benefit in moving all the information in the booklet online.

This Working Group supports the continuation of a paper booklet delivered to homes, in order to raise awareness of the election among all voters, not just those already engaged and able to access information online. This process also ensures all candidates, or at least those who pay the fee, can reach voters with basic information about their platform.

However, it could be explored whether it would be more rational or risk excluding voters if fewer copies of the booklet were to be delivered to households with multiple voters in residence. It should be noted that any change in this procedure would involve changes to legislation.

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*“This is one of the areas that we would like to look at – and other mayoral combined authorities are in a similar position of being obliged to produce a booklet that goes to every single voter – which means that every year we get letters from people saying, ‘Why have I been sent four copies of the same thing?’”*

**Alex Conway, Deputy GLRO**

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We heard it was likely that the potential extension of the e-counting contractor’s contract to 2024 might bring in future cost savings as infrastructure and technology would not need to be redesigned to deliver the next election. These savings would be welcomed.

In the longer-term, the use of e-counting machines, and the costs and benefits of switching to a manual count should also be kept under review. Both the possible switch to a first-past-the-post Mayoral election and the successful piloting (due to coronavirus concerns) of a multiple-day counting process potentially shift the balance in favour of manual counting.

The ability to make this change in time for 2024 has not yet passed. The GLA have until spring 2022 to decide on an e-count. While no decision has been taken, consideration of a 2024 manual count with stakeholders is already underway.

**Recommendation 5:** London Elects should deliver on its cost-saving plans for the 2024 election and use the savings to address the other recommendations in this report.

## Chapter three – the experience for candidates

A record number of 20 candidates stood in the 2021 Mayor of London election, alongside 249 candidates for election to the London Assembly. This was more than at the last elections in 2016, when there were 12 and 205 candidates respectively.

Our Working Group wanted to explore the experience of new candidates in this election, find out more about the reasons for this increase in the number of candidates and discuss with candidates and the elections team what could be done to make future elections appropriately fair and accessible to those wishing to stand, while remaining clear and accessible to voters.

Richard Hewison stood as a new candidate in this election, on behalf of the Rejoin EU Party. He told us:

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*I stood for this election because I believed that the cause I was standing for was not being taken up by any of the major political parties. I believe that there is a moral responsibility on citizens in a democracy, if they do not feel that their point is being represented, to stand up and do so ... My ambition was to make sure that my voice was heard in London and I feel that the way the London Assembly election was conducted enabled that to happen. In terms of what we achieved from it: we got our message across. I was able to put myself in a position where all the voters of London, if they chose to do so, were able to hear what I had to say.*

**Richard Hewison, candidate for Mayor, Rejoin EU Party**

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Of the candidates nominated for Mayor, six (30 per cent) were women, higher than the 25 per cent figure for 2016.<sup>13</sup>

### Support from London Elects

The candidates we received feedback from were generally complimentary about the service and support they received from the GLRO team during the nomination process.

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*I was blown away by how effective I thought London Elects was from the very first bid. I thought when I came in with my nomination papers it would be all bureaucracy. All the London Elects team was really keen, I felt, to help and make sure, rather than be a barrier, that they got you through the process. As one of the, shall I say, 16 candidates less likely to win in that election, I was made to feel that I was being treated just as seriously as all the other candidates, for which I would like to thank the staff.*

**Richard Hewison, candidate for Mayor, Rejoin EU Party**

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<sup>13</sup> House of Commons, [Briefing Paper Number CBP9231: London Elections 2021](#), 21 May 2021

## Gaining nomination signatures

In March 2021 the Government laid two statutory instruments that reduced the administrative requirements for being nominated as a candidate for Mayor of London.

- [The Mayoral and Police and Crime Commissioner Elections \(Coronavirus, Nomination of Candidates\) \(Amendment\) Order 2021<sup>14</sup>](#)
- [The Local and Greater London Authority Elections \(Coronavirus, Nomination of Candidates\) \(Amendment\) Rules 2021<sup>15</sup>](#)

Instead of ten voter signatures required in each borough to register a valid nomination as a candidate for Mayor of London, this was reduced to two signatures. The overall number of signatures required was therefore cut to 66, from the usual number of 330.

Our Working Group requested views from candidates on the impact of reducing the signature requirements in 2021, since it appears that the low requirement for signatures will have contributed to more candidates standing last year.

Candidate Richard Hewison told us that the hurdle to nomination created by requiring more signatures would not have been a deterrent to his candidacy:

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*If you got on the tube to go to the furthest borough from you in London and you have knocked on doors for two signatures, you are not going to stop knocking on doors for another eight signatures to do it. The people who are determined to get to the area for the two signatures will go on for ten. They will probably go on for 20 as well ... It is a barrier, but it is an enthusiasm barrier. It is one that is worth keeping as an enthusiasm barrier because it does give us genuine people who want to contribute.*

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### **Richard Hewison, candidate for Mayor, Rejoin EU Party**

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This Working Group supports the recommendation of the Electoral Commission to review the requirements for nominating candidates, to ensure they are proportionate to the degree of risk relating to different types of elections.<sup>16</sup> The requirement to collect signatures from subscribers ensures that candidates have some level of local support, and is intended to deter frivolous candidates and the level of requirements should be proportionate to that risk.

We are not in a position to judge whether any candidate is ‘serious’ or genuinely seeking election by appearing in the election, but we do believe that the requirement to gain the consent of a more significant number of voters should be restored as this demonstrates the willingness to campaign across the whole city on the ground.

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2021/9780348219913>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2021/160/contents/made>

<sup>16</sup> The Electoral Commission, [Report on the May 2021 elections in England](#), recommendation 3

Therefore we recommend that in considering future regulations the Government should look at increasing the required number of signatures from the pre-pandemic levels of 10. This would mean a total of at least 330 signatures would be required to appear on the Mayoral ballot paper.

**Recommendation 6:** The Government should review whether the range of current subscriber requirements are proportionate and suggest that the number of voter signatures required to stand in the London Mayoral election should be increased to at least 330.

### **Deposits and booklet fees**

No change was made to the requirement to pay a £10,000 deposit to appear on the ballot paper, which is returned to candidates who receive more than 5 per cent of the votes cast.

An optional further £10,000 could be paid by candidates who wished for a short manifesto to be included in the printed information booklet about the election that is circulated to every voter in London.

The setting of the appropriate level of the deposit requires careful consideration. Our Working Group requested views from candidates on the impact of having to raise a significant deposit on their willingness to stand, and we have also collated below the total expenditure reported from each Mayoral campaign.

This shows 11 candidates spent more than 50 per cent of their total election budget on their deposit and booklet fees. There is a considerable range in expenditure reported, showing that some individual candidates, while not being part of larger parties who can campaign through activists to reach voters, were able to expend considerable money on their campaigns in other ways, such as through advertising.

**Table 1: Mayoral candidate campaigning expenses**

Candidate	Total additional expenses reported	Total spent on deposit and booklet fees	Proportion of total budget to GLA for deposit and/or booklet	First preference votes received
Valerie BROWN (Burning Pink)	0	20,000	100%	5,305
Max FOSH (Independent)	456	10,000	96%	6,309
Kam BALAYEV (Renew)	19,699	20,000	50%	7,774
Steve KELLEHER (Social Democratic)	0	20,000	100%	8,764
Nims OBUNGE (Independent)	0	20,000	100%	9,682
David KURTEN (Heritage)	11,973	20,000	62%	11,025
Farah LONDON (Independent)	10,170	20,000	66%	11,869
Peter John GAMMONS (UKIP)	25,241	20,000	44%	14,393
Vanessa Helen HUDSON (Animal Welfare Party)	4,747	20,000	80%	16,826
Piers CORBYN (Let London Live)	2,396	20,000	89%	20,604
Mandu Kate REID (Women's Equality)	28,756	20,000	41%	21,182
Count BINFACE (Count Binface for Mayor of London)	0	10,000	100%	24,775
Richard John Howard HEWISON (RejoinEU)	15,160	20,000	57%	28,012
Brian Benedict ROSE (London Real)	405,996	20,000	5%	31,111
Laurence FOX (Reclaim)	362,154	20,000	5%	47,634
Niko OMILANA (Independent)	56,395	10,000	15%	49,628
Luisa Manon PORRITT (Lib Dem)	229,828	20,000	8%	111,716
Sian BERRY (Green)	67,256	20,000	23%	197,976
Shaun BAILEY (Conservative)	408,765	20,000	5%	893,051
Sadiq Aman KHAN (Labour)	402,478	20,000	5%	1,013,721

We conclude that the £10,000 deposit requirement has a significant impact on candidates from smaller parties and independent candidates alike. However, in the same way that collecting signatures requires campaigning activity across the city, raising this basic level of funding for a campaign can be achieved through contact (on the ground or online) with voters to ask them to

show enthusiasm for a platform and a desire to vote for it, which is also a positive part of democracy.

We did hear from candidates that the additional fee to appear in the booklet is not well understood in advance and it is not taken up by all candidates. Indeed, as the table above shows, only 17 candidates of the 20 nominated chose to pay to be included last year.

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*We put in a £10,000 deposit in the first place for people to get into the election. If you are in a party like mine, which has virtually no resources... that £10,000 is not trivial. Then to put on another £10,000 for someone who is already a candidate to actually have their voice heard is possibly an inappropriate barrier.*

**Richard Hewison, candidate for Mayor, Rejoin EU Party**

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Fees received from candidates only represent a small proportion of the overall cost of providing the booklets to voters, and we believe there is a case for all validly nominated candidates who have paid the relevant deposit to be included.

**Recommendation 7:** The additional £10,000 fee required from candidates to be included in the election booklet should be reconsidered.

### Impact of pandemic restrictions on campaigning

England was placed under new lockdown restrictions from early January 2021. This meant that campaigners had to adapt their plans for activities to reach voters. They had to comply with general public health restrictions, and the UK Government also published specific guidance on campaigning at the end of February:<sup>17</sup>

- Up to 8 March, door-to-door campaigning and leafleting by individual campaigners were not allowed under the lockdown regulations, and leafleting was only allowed to be carried out through existing commercial delivery services.
- From 8 March, the Government changed the lockdown regulations to support door-to-door campaigning activity by people who were campaigning for a specific electoral outcome. This included anyone who had been asked by a candidate, party or campaign organiser to participate. Hustings and public meetings could only take place remotely.
- From 29 March, six people, or two households, were able to meet outside to plan or deliver campaign activities, but campaigners were told not to enter voters' homes.

In April, campaigning was also briefly suspended as a mark of respect following the death of HRH the Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh.

When the Electoral Commission conducted in-depth interviews with candidates who stood in the London elections, the majority of participants said they did not feel well informed about these changes. However, overall, candidates said that changes to the restrictions were

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<sup>17</sup> Cabinet Office, [The Government's approach to elections and referendums during COVID-19, updated 25 March 2021](#)

reasonable and necessary. Given the healthy turnout and competitive nature of this election, we do not believe these restrictions in the end had any detrimental impact on the democratic process.

### **The count venues and the wait for results**

Some concerns were expressed by candidates who are members of the Working Group that facilities at the three count venues were very basic for candidates and their teams, despite day-long events. Pandemic restrictions meant that no catering facilities were available, and at Olympia there was even a reported shortage of places to sit down.

We hope these practical issues were purely one for last year during the pandemic, but hope this feedback will be used to improve facilities in future as this helps ensure access to the democratic process for candidates of all ages and abilities.

At City Hall, the numbers admitted to the overall count and announcement process were very limited. Initially only Mayoral candidates, agents and one guest were admitted until the Mayoral announcement was completed, with a second group allowed in later for the final Assembly count and announcement of London-wide members.

The late announcement of the Mayoral result (originally projected for 6pm but eventually made at 11pm) meant that a number of London-wide Assembly candidates and their teams waited for long periods outside, where there were no facilities and concerns about security with no separation between candidates and a number of protestors. We hope this feedback will also be taken into account when planning venues and security for the announcements associated with the next election at the new City Hall building.

## Chapter four – Rejected ballots and ballot paper design

Previous recommendations from the Assembly in our report on the 2016 election highlighted an existing concern around the large number of rejected ballot papers, often due to voters voting for too many candidates as their first choice. It was suggested, at that time, that it would be advisable to undertake further research to test voter understanding of how the voting system works, and to see if further guidance may be needed to improve voter comprehension of how to express their preferences for candidates.

The GLRO reported to us that all the recommendations of the 2016 report had been implemented. However, last year saw a record number of rejected ballots for this reason and this Working Group has tried to understand whether sufficient work was done in response to our previous recommendation, and whether significant risks were considered and mitigated in the management of this election.

### Rejected ballot numbers in this election

First Preference Mayoral votes totalling 114,201<sup>18</sup> were rejected in the 2021 election. This was around five per cent of the first preference votes cast and, while a range of candidates were affected and so it could not have affected the overall result, this raises concerns about whether voters' real preferences are reflected in the published results.

The number of rejected ballots was more than double the previous record number of 56,874 in 2004.<sup>19</sup>

Of the total rejected ballots in 2021, 87,214 were rejected due to more than one candidate being selected in the first-preference column, an increase from over 32,000 in 2016. It is thought that confusion around the two-column format may have contributed to the high number of rejected ballots, despite the Electoral Commission issuing advice to voters on this specific topic to Londoners in the lead-up to the elections.

This advice recognised that the ballot would be in two columns and urged Londoners to “read the instructions carefully” and noted that “Staff will be on hand in polling stations to answer any questions. Marking a ballot incorrectly could potentially mean your vote is rejected, so take your time and make sure your vote counts”.<sup>20</sup>

A further 265,000 second-preference votes were for the same candidate as the first preference. While not invalidating a voter's paper in the same way as voting twice in the first preference column, this does raise concerns about voter comprehension of how their first and second

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<sup>18</sup> London Elects [Mayoral Final Results 2021 \(3\).pdf](#)

<sup>19</sup> House of Commons, [Briefing Paper Number CBP9231: London Elections 2021](#), 21 May 2021

<sup>20</sup> The Electoral Commission, [Londoners urged to read ballot papers carefully at 6 May elections to ensure their vote counts](#), 27 April 2021

preference votes can be used. There were, however, a smaller number of blank second preference votes than in the last election, with more people using both preferences.

The number of rejected London-wide Assembly ballots was also higher than in the last election.

**Table 2: Total rejected ballots in each election in 2021**

	Rejected ballot papers – Mayor election (Number)	Rejected ballot papers – Mayor election (% of total)	Rejected ballot papers – London-wide Assembly (Number)	Rejected ballot papers – London-wide Assembly (% of total)
<b>2016</b>	49,871	1.9%	29,733	1.1%
<b>2021</b>	114,201	4.3%	54,931	2.1%

### Late changes to the ballot paper designs

Good ballot paper design is essential to help voters understand how to cast their votes without making errors.

The number of candidates for Mayor and Assembly nominated in the 2021 election meant that the ballot papers for the Mayoral and London-wide Assembly contest required two columns in order to fit on the maximum length of ballot paper able to be used with the e-counting infrastructure that had already been procured.<sup>21</sup>

Previously, there had never been more than 12 Mayoral candidates and the ballot papers last year could have accommodated up to 15 candidates in a single column.

On the London-wide Assembly ballot paper, the maximum number of parties and independent candidates that could be accommodated in one column was 15, and a total of 18 party lists/independents were nominated.

When high numbers of candidates were nominated, the GLRO was presented with a difficult situation. She confirmed to the Working Group that no contingency planning had been made for a situation with more than 15 candidates, and that no two-column ballot designs had been created or tested before this situation arose.

This is despite the requirement from the GLRO in the nomination process for candidates for Mayor that each candidate must submit two versions of their ‘mini manifesto’ booklet page designs – in both two-page and one-page formats. The one page format is intended to be used if more than 15 candidates are nominated, and no candidate’s booklet application can be submitted without these two contingencies covered.

In the event, both ballot papers were redesigned at short notice and resulted in a complex Mayoral ballot paper that listed two columns of candidates alongside four columns of voting boxes, and a London-wide Assembly ballot with two columns of parties/independents with a single box next to each – see Appendix 1 of this report for the final ballot paper designs.

<sup>21</sup> BBC News, [London elections 2021: Record number of mayoral votes rejected](#), 10 May 2021

With the majority of invalid votes for Mayor consisting of voters putting both first and second preference votes in the first column of boxes next to the candidates' names, it is a fairly secure conclusion to reach that the design of this ballot paper was confusing to many voters. It also appears that some voters misinterpreted the two columns on the London-wide Assembly ballot and more of them than in 2016 cast two votes here as well.

To remove this additional confusion resulting from the two column designs would have required significant testing and redesigning of the ballot papers alongside clear communication with voters on how to use them, and user testing with the public would have also helped. Our Working Group heard that no significant testing of the new ballot papers design was carried out with potential voters, although the designs were shared with the Electoral Commission for comment.

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*I do not think any of us are in any doubt that the format that we ended up having to go with did have an impact on the overcounting and other issues on the ballot papers. I do not think there can be any doubt about that. As we know, we have always had a problem with rejected ballot papers over time, but the extent of the change this time must be something to do with that ballot paper design.*

**Mary Harpley, GLRO**

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### **Communication with voters on how to vote**

Some communication about how to vote using the ballot paper did take place with voters, although we believe this could also have been done better and in more volume. The booklet sent to every household also contained a section on the voting system and how to use first and second preferences which showed a sample copy of the ballot.

A report received from London Elects to the GLA Oversight Committee in February 2020 shows that a £340,000 paid media and production budget was planned intended to reach 94 per cent of voters with 35 opportunities to see the campaign during an eight week period. This campaign consisted primarily of media on TfL buses, posters on London Underground, alongside radio adverts and digital display (on websites) and social media advertising, as well as paid search results on Google.

For 2021, a revised campaign, taking into account the reduction of footfall on the London Underground, with extended social media reach and new opportunities within streamed television, was devised, with a total budget of £420,000, which reached an estimated 63 per cent or 8.7 million people of the 13.7 million people in the London Metropolitan Area.

The 2021 campaign reach was significantly lower than the reach achieved in 2016, but this was due to the drop in reach of outdoor media. While visibility was higher than at the height of lockdown, tube usage was still down 60 per cent and bus usage down 40 per cent on average.

We have also received copies of all the communications used to reach voters through poster advertising and online and this shows that only 1 out of 23 different executions of adverts aimed at voters showed the new two-column ballot paper.<sup>22</sup>

### Planning better for 2024

The GLRO confirmed that procurement of the e-counting infrastructure for future elections could be adjusted to allow for a longer ballot paper that takes up a single column, so this specific issue may not arise in the next election.

However, we support the Electoral Commission's recommendation that the GLRO should always test possible alternative design options for ballot papers for future Mayor of London elections, including two-column designs if these cannot be eliminated by changes to the e-count system.

**Recommendation 8:** Ensure all contingencies for ballot paper designs are extensively tested with voters well in advance of the election, and that communication of how to vote is included more extensively in promotional material.

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<sup>22</sup> Letter from GLRO 20 September 2021 [GLA Oversight 2 November](#)

## Chapter five – the 2024 elections

The scheduled date of the 2024 GLA elections bring the possibility of a combination of London Mayor and Assembly elections and a Parliamentary general election being held on the same day, with the same teams of administrators having to conduct two major elections at once.

The electoral landscape of the next set of GLA elections is also set to shift with the introduction of the Elections Bill and changes to voter registration and processes, including a late amendment to the Bill which proposes to switch the voting system for Mayors and Police and Crime Commissioners across England to first past the post.

Our Working Group has considered the practical and democratic implications of both these issues.

### **Holding the 2024 election alongside a general election**

Borough election administration teams having to administrate two major elections at once has the potential to add considerable complication, work and stress to the process.

The new legislation being proposed would also introduce new administrative requirements, such as checking voter ID, and changes in the franchise are being proposed that would exclude some EU citizens from voting in local elections for the first time, changes to absentee votes and overseas elector processes. All these changes will mean borough teams will have even less capacity to deal with any emerging issues relating to the GLA elections.

The 2020 London Mayoral and Assembly elections were initially planned on the assumption that they would take place on the same day as that of the general election. Concerns were highlighted in the 2016 report around the practicality of running both elections on the same day.

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*I think it would be incredibly difficult, actually even more difficult than it would have been in 2020, had it happened, because we will also have new parliamentary boundaries in effect for the first time in that poll, and potentially a whole raft of other bits of legislation like voter ID, changes to the number of people who can register as overseas electors, and thinks that take over our lives when running a general election. Adding a GLA election on top of that and putting those things together will be hugely significant and very, very challenging indeed.*

**Andrew Smith, Chair of the London Branch of Electoral Administrators**

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There is now a strong case for the Mayor of London and London Assembly elections of 2024 to be moved to a different date later in 2024, to avoid a clash with the general election and to

allow for any new administrative issues to be solved while administrating just one election and not two at once.

This issue is a matter for Government, although it has accepted the principle in legislating for five-year terms for the Scottish and Welsh Parliaments, and the Northern Ireland Assembly, to avoid clashing with the general election. An early decision would save money and time in planning for the next set of elections.

Given that this is a similar position to that anticipated in the 2016 election review, the Working Group's recommendation remains the same. The GLA's existing contract allows for contract negotiations to continue into early 2022. This uncertainty will need to be discussed with the contractor. The contract also allows for provision of ballot papers, so these can be changed to the extent that the procurement allows. These are all things that will need to be considered in the run-up to the next elections.

Under the Elections Bill proposals, those who enter the UK from 2021 will not have voting and candidacy rights in local elections from 2022. This will create an unequal situation where some EU citizens will have the right to vote while others will not. In a motion passed by the Assembly in November 2021, it was feared this complexity in voting eligibility may cause confusion and reduce voter turnout.<sup>23</sup>

**Recommendation 9:** More consistency in the voting rights of citizens of the different EU Member States is needed, so the Government should pursue further reciprocal agreements as quickly as possible, and include other nations outside the EU in this work, which could extend voting rights to more Londoners.

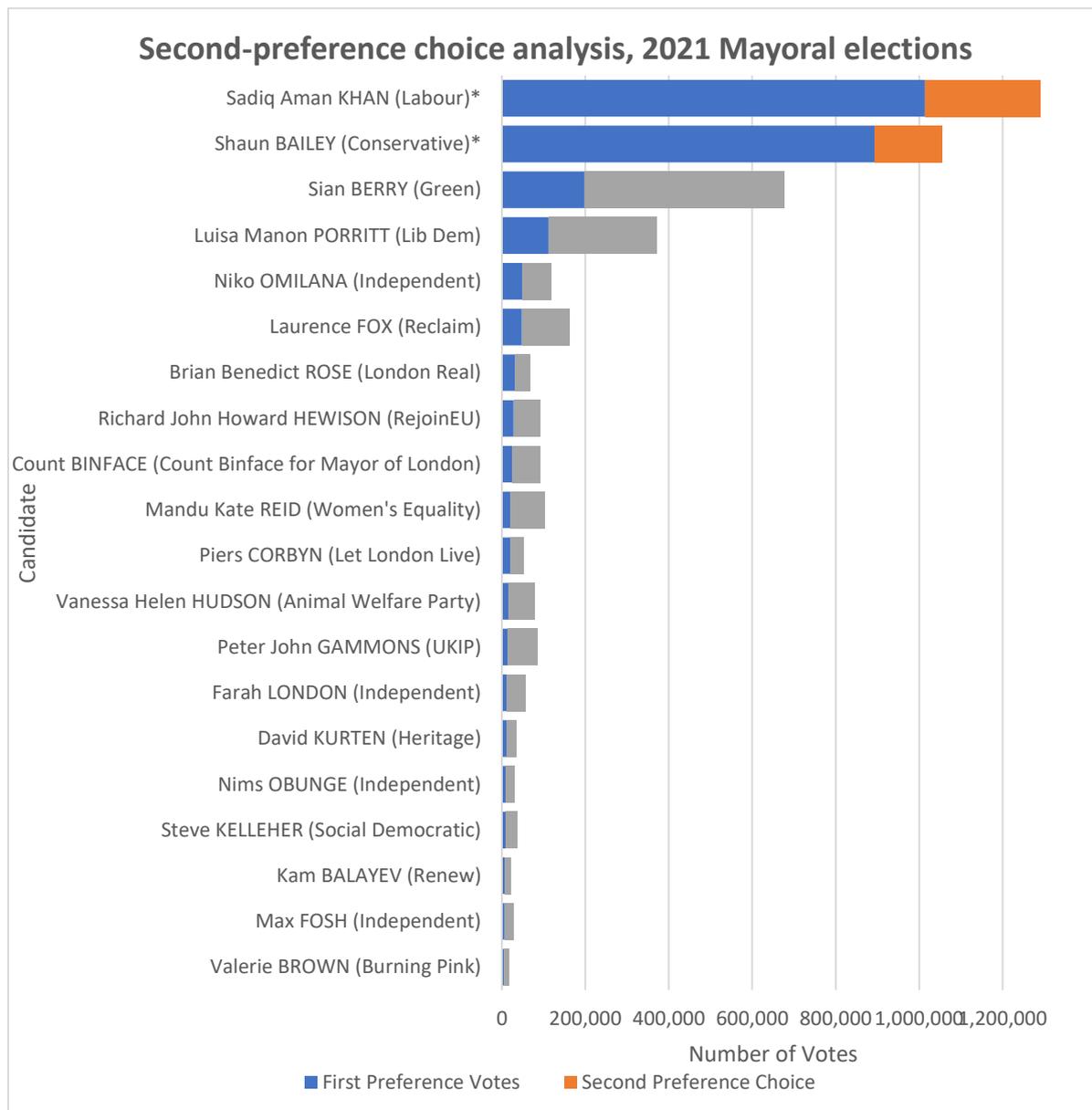
**Recommendation 10:** In the light of the wide range of risks identified that cannot be readily mitigated within the project plan for the GLA elections, the Government should review the risks of holding these polls on the same day as the general election and joint elections should be avoided. In the event that the Government chooses to hold a general election on a date that clashes with a GLA election period then it should move the GLA elections to a suitable alternative date.

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<sup>23</sup> <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/assembly/eu-citizen-voting-rights-for-the-2022-elections>

### The future of the supplementary vote

The chart below illustrates the total number of first and second-preference choices in the 2021 Mayoral election, and shows how second-preference votes cast for the first and second placed candidates in round one contributed to the eventual outcome and winning margin.



An amendment to the Elections Bill currently before Parliament aims to amend the Greater London Authority Act 1999 to change the system for electing the Mayor of London.<sup>24</sup>

This amendment would remove the ability of voters to choose a first and second preference, and the Assembly passed a motion in November 2021 which expressed concern about this change being a backwards step, depriving Londoners of their second preference votes and the ability fully to express their choices for Mayor.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Amendment NC1, Elections Bill 2021 <https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3020/publications>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/assembly/calls-for-the-withdrawal-of-mayoral-voting-changes>

The Assembly motion expressed the view that, the fact the elected Mayor must win the support of a majority of those casting both first and second preference votes, strengthens democracy and the accountability of the office of the Mayor of London to voters.

The original founding of the GLA was supported by a referendum of Londoners. The proposals put to referendum were explicit about the voting system to use and it followed a consultation where the majority of responses were against the use of the first-past-the-post system to elect the Mayor, and which gave strong support for a system which would give the winning candidate a clear majority.

**Recommendation 11:** We do not support any change in the voting system for the Mayor of London. If a change is to be considered then, in the same way that Londoners gave consent for the current system, any new system should be subject to a city-wide referendum.<sup>26</sup>

### Minority report from the GLA Conservatives

The GLA Conservatives do not support **Recommendation 11** on the basis that the May 2021 London Mayoral elections, the Supplementary Vote system saw a record level of rejected ballots, reflecting voter confusion. First Past the Post is the world's most widely used electoral system. The change to First Past the Post will further strengthen the accountability of the Mayor to the electorate, making it easier for voters to express a clear choice.

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<sup>26</sup> White paper on the introduction of a Mayor and Assembly for London, Chapter 4 Electoral Arrangements <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20000919075159/http://www.london-decides.detr.gov.uk:80/whitepaper/chapter4.htm>

## Appendix 1 – the voting systems for Mayor and Assembly

In the elections held on 6 May 2021, voters elected the Mayor of London and 25 London Assembly Members using three separate ballot papers.

### Ballot paper 1 – Mayor of London

**Election of the Mayor of London**

**Vote once [X] in column A for your first choice, and  
Vote once [X] in column B for your second choice**

Column A 1st choice		Column B 2nd choice	Column A 1st choice		Column B 2nd choice
SURNAME, First Name Party	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SURNAME, First Name Party	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SURNAME, First Name Party	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SURNAME, First Name Independent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SURNAME, First Name Independent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SURNAME, First Name Party	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SURNAME, First Name Party	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SURNAME, First Name Party	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SURNAME, First Name Party	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SURNAME, First Name Party	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SURNAME, First Name Party	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SURNAME, First Name Independent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SURNAME, First Name Party	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SURNAME, First Name Party	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SURNAME, First Name Independent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SURNAME, First Name Party	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SURNAME, First Name Party	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SURNAME, First Name Party	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SURNAME, First Name Party	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SURNAME, First Name Party	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The Mayor is elected by a supplementary vote system.

Each voter has a first and second choice vote. If a candidate receives more than half of all the first-choice votes, they are elected. If this does not happen, the two candidates with the most first-choice votes go through to a second round and all other candidates are eliminated.

The second-choice votes of everyone whose first choice has been eliminated are then counted. Any votes for the remaining two candidates are added to their first-round totals.

The candidate with the highest combined total of first and second choice votes wins.

**Ballot paper 2 – London Assembly constituency members**

**Election of the London Assembly Constituency Member**  
for the constituency of Constituency Name

**Vote for only one candidate by putting a cross [X] next to your choice**

SURNAME, First Name Party	<input type="checkbox"/>

There are 14 constituencies covering the whole of London.

London Assembly constituency members are elected using the first-past-the-post system.

The candidate with the most votes is elected as a London Assembly member for that constituency.

**Ballot paper 3 - London Assembly London-wide members**

**Election of the London Assembly**  
London Member

**Vote only once by putting a cross [X] in the box next to your choice**

Party	<input type="checkbox"/>	Party	<input type="checkbox"/>
Party	<input type="checkbox"/>	Party	<input type="checkbox"/>
Party	<input type="checkbox"/>	Party	<input type="checkbox"/>
Party	<input type="checkbox"/>	Party	<input type="checkbox"/>
Party	<input type="checkbox"/>	Party	<input type="checkbox"/>
Party	<input type="checkbox"/>	Party	<input type="checkbox"/>
Party	<input type="checkbox"/>	Party	<input type="checkbox"/>
Party	<input type="checkbox"/>	Party	<input type="checkbox"/>
Party	<input type="checkbox"/>	Party	<input type="checkbox"/>

The 11 London-wide Assembly Members are elected using a form of proportional representation. This is used to ensure the 25 Assembly Members elected overall reflect the votes of Londoners.

Voters choose a single party list or independent candidate on the ballot paper. Where a party list is nominated, the candidates standing in that list are given alongside the party name.

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The 11 seats are allocated using a mathematical formula – the modified d’Hondt method. The formula uses the votes cast in the London Assembly (London-wide) Member contest.

Eleven rounds of calculations take place to fill the 11 vacant Assembly Member seats. The party or independent candidate with the highest result at each round is allocated the seat, taking into account of the number of London Assembly constituency seats in round 1, and in later rounds also the London-wide members allocated already to each party.

## Appendix 2 – 2021 election results

All votes were counted electronically at Constituency level. In 2021, seven Constituency counts were held on 7 May, and the remaining seven constituencies were counted on 8 May. As the counting finished in each of the 14 constituencies, the vote totals for Mayor of London and London-wide Assembly were sent to the GLRO and the totals were added together.

The results and winners were announced by the GLRO, Mary Harpley, at City Hall on the evening of 8 May.<sup>27</sup>

### Mayor of London

Labour candidate Sadiq Khan was re-elected as Mayor of London. He won 1,013,721 first-preference votes (40.0 per cent), compared with 893,051 for Conservative Party candidate Shaun Bailey (35.5 per cent).

After valid second-preference votes were allocated, votes cast for Sadiq Khan rose to 1,206,034, making him the winner ahead of Shaun Bailey on 977,601 votes.<sup>28</sup>

### London Assembly - constituencies

The Labour Party won 11 of the 25 seats in the London Assembly elections, one fewer than in 2016. The 14 constituency seats were shared between Labour with 9 and the Conservatives with 5.

**Table 3: Constituency Assembly Member votes<sup>29</sup>**

Name of Registered Political Party or Independent	Total Votes
Labour	1,083,215
Conservative	833,021
Green	336,840
Liberal Democrats	266,595
Reform UK	62,263
Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition	8,011
Let London Live	6,834
Independent	2,871
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,599,650</b>

<sup>27</sup> London Elects, [Factsheet: The results of the Mayor of London and London Assembly elections 2021](#)

<sup>28</sup> House of Commons, [Briefing Paper Number CBP9231: London Elections 2021](#), 21 May 2021

<sup>29</sup> London Elects [Results 2021 | London Elects](#)

**Table 4: Constituency Assembly Members<sup>30</sup>**

Constituency	Winning candidate	Party
Barnet and Camden	CLARKE Anne Marie Bates	Labour
Bexley and Bromley	FORTUNE Peter Timothy	Conservative
Brent and Harrow	HIRANI Krupesh	Labour
City and East	DESAI Unmesh	Labour
Croydon and Sutton	GARRATT Neil Robert	Conservative
Ealing and Hillingdon	SAHOTA Onkar Singh	Labour
Enfield and Haringey	MCCARTNEY Joanne	Labour
Greenwich and Lewisham	DUVALL Len	Labour
Havering and Redbridge	PRINCE Keith Anthony	Conservative
Lambeth and Southwark	AHMAD Marina Masuma	Labour
Merton and Wandsworth	COOPER Léonie Alison	Labour
North East	MOEMA Sem	Labour
South West	ROGERS Nicholas James	Conservative
West Central	DEVENISH Tony	Conservative

**London Assembly – London-wide**

In the London-wide vote, the highest vote share was again for the Labour Party, followed by the Conservative Party. As these parties already held constituency seats, they were allocated fewer of the London-wide seats.

The overall vote and allocation of London-wide member seats was as follows:

**Table 5: Overall London-wide Assembly Member votes<sup>31</sup>**

Name of Registered Political Party or Independent	Total Votes
Animal Welfare Party - People, Animals, Environment	44,667
Christian Peoples Alliance	28,878
Communist Party of Britain	8,787
Conservatives	795,081
Green Party	305,452
Heritage Party - Free Speech and Liberty	13,534
Labour Party	986,609
Let London Live	15,755
Liberal Democrats	189,522
Londependence	5,746
London Real Party	18,395
National Liberal Party - Self-determination for all!	2,860
ReformUK - London Deserves Better	25,009
Rejoin EU	49,389

<sup>30</sup> London Elects, [Factsheet: The results of the Mayor of London and London Assembly elections 2021](#)

<sup>31</sup> London Elects [Final Results](#)

Social Democratic Party	7,782
Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition	9,004
UKIP	27,114
Vote Women's Equality Party on orange	55,684
<b>Total number of good votes</b>	<b>2,589,268</b>

**Table 6: London-wide Assembly Member Allocation**

Seat Number	Name of Registered Political Party	
1	Green Party	BERRY Siân
2	Liberal Democrats	PIDGEON Caroline Valerie
3	Green Party	RUSSELL Caroline
4	Conservatives	BAILEY Shaun
5	Green Party	POLANSKI Zack
6	Conservatives	BOFF Andrew
7	Conservatives	HALL Susan Mary
8	Labour Party	BAKER Elly
9	Liberal Democrats	BOKHARI Hina
10	Labour Party	SHEIKH Sakina Zahra
11	Conservatives	BEST Emma Dawn

### Assembly Members

The Assembly's composition is now: Labour 11 seats, Conservatives 9, Greens 3, Liberal Democrats 2.

The Conservative Party, Green Party and Liberal Democrats all gained one seat compared with 2016, while the Labour Party's representation went down by one.<sup>32</sup>

The 2021 elections saw the highest number of new Assembly Members elected since the London Assembly's formation in 2000, with 12 new Assembly Members in total. This was in part due to a significant number of Assembly Members standing down or retiring.

The change in Assembly Members has resulted in eight members from Black, Asian and other minority ethnic groups elected, an increase of two, to make up 33 per cent of the 2016-21 Assembly. The number of Assembly Members who are women has gone up to 13, from 10 in the 2016-21 Assembly, and is now 52 per cent of members.

New members include the first three Muslim women to become Assembly Members: Marina Ahmad, Hina Bokhari and Sakina Sheikh.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>32</sup> London Elects, [Factsheet: The results of the Mayor of London and London Assembly elections 2021](#)

<sup>33</sup> On London, [Joshua Neicho: Meet the new members of the London Assembly](#), 16 May 2021

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### Vietnamese

Nếu ông (bà) muốn nội dung văn bản này được dịch sang tiếng Việt, xin vui lòng liên hệ với chúng tôi bằng điện thoại, thư hoặc thư điện tử theo địa chỉ ở trên.

### Greek

*Εάν επιθυμείτε περίληψη αυτού του κειμένου στην γλώσσα σας, παρακαλώ καλέστε τον αριθμό ή επικοινωνήστε μαζί μας στην ανωτέρω ταχυδρομική ή την ηλεκτρονική διεύθυνση.*

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### Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਦਾ ਸੰਖੇਪ ਆਪਣੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਸ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜਾਂ ਉਪਰ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਡਾਕ ਜਾਂ ਈਮੇਲ ਪਤੇ 'ਤੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

### Hindi

यदि आपको इस दस्तावेज का सारांश अपनी भाषा में चाहिए तो उपर दिये हुए नंबर पर फोन करें या उपर दिये गये डाक पते या ई मेल पते पर हम से संपर्क करें।

### Bengali

আপনি যদি এই দলিলের একটা সারাংশ নিজের ভাষায় পেতে চান, তাহলে দয়া করে ফো করবেন অথবা উল্লেখিত ডাক ঠিকানায় বা ই-মেইল ঠিকানায় আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করবেন।

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اگر آپ کو اس دستاویز کا خلاصہ اپنی زبان میں درکار ہو تو، براہ کرم نمبر پر فون کریں یا منکورہ بالا ڈاک کے پتے یا ای میل پتے پر ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

### Arabic

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الالكتروني أعلاه.

### Gujarati

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