

GREATER **LONDON** AUTHORITY

Request for Greater London Returning Officer (GLRO) Decision – DD GLR016-28

Title: Royal Mail Postal Vote Sweep

Executive Summary:

For all elections the Royal Mail offer a service under which they undertake a “sweep” of sorting offices on the evening of polling day and deliver any postal vote return envelopes to the relevant Returning Officer before the close of polls so that they can be included in the count. The purpose of this sweep is to maximise the participation in the election by ensuring postal votes in the system are counted.

Decision:

Under delegation from the GLRO, the Deputy GLRO to approve

- To approve expenditure of £13,500 so that the Royal Mail can undertake a “sweep” of sorting offices on the evening of polling day for final deliveries of postal votes.

Deputy Greater London Returning Officer

The above request has my approval.

Signature



Date

3/5/18

PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

For all Elections Royal Mail offer a 'sweep' service under which they collect all postal vote return envelopes and deliver them to the Returning Officer.

The Polling Day sweep will take place at agreed Mail Centers, in each London Borough (see list attached) and at the agreed times for the delivery of the extracted postal votes to the Returning Officer. The times indicated will maximise the impact of the postal vote and deliveries are due to take place before the end of the close of polls.

The GLA is procuring this service with Royal Mail directly – rather than individual Boroughs which will reduce the overall cost of the sweep. Boroughs are required to buy an individual Postal Voting Licence to access the service.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

Postal vote envelopes that arrive at mail centres on polling day will be collected and delivered to the Returning Officer at the time agreed by the Returning Officer.

3. Other considerations

a) Key risks and issues

Handover arrangements must be carefully managed to ensure delivery or collection is made prior to the close of poll. Discussions have taken place with each borough to agree the delivery times

b) Impact assessments and consultations.

London Boroughs have been consulted and have confirmed mail centre location and the times for delivery of postal votes.

4. Equality comments

Postal votes are an important part of the election process. Those unable to vote at polling stations are offered the opportunity to voice their vote through the postal vote system. The purpose of this sweep is to maximise the participation in the election by ensuring postal votes in the system are counted.

5. Financial comments

The expenditure of £13,500 is to cover the cost of Royal Mail Postal "sweeps". This expenditure will be contained within the 2016/17 Elections Budget.

6. Legal comments

By section 29 Greater London Authority Act 1999 the Greater London Returning Officer ("GLRO") is the person appointed as the proper officer for the purposes of section 35(2C) Representation of the People Act 1983 ("RotPA") (returning officer at elections of Mayor and London members). The Mayor and Assembly have appointed the Head of Paid Service the GLRO as part of his terms and conditions of employment.

The GLRO is the returning officer for the Mayoral and London Member elections, and constituency returning officers are the returning officers for the election of a Constituency Member of the Assembly. The Authority must, under section 36(4B) of RotPA, pay for all expenditure properly incurred by a returning officer in relation to the holding of an Authority election, in so far as it does not, in cases where there is a scale fixed by the Authority, exceed that scale.

The Authority's Scheme of Delegation enables the GLRO to incur expenditure for the purposes of the preparation or conduct of any anticipated election as he considers necessary or expedient for that purpose. He is also able to authorise entry into contracts, licences or other instruments, in connection with an anticipated election in accordance with the Authority's Contracts and Funding Code and Financial Regulations.

Officers should ensure that appropriate documentation is put in place and executed by the Authority and the supplier before the commencement of the services.

6. Planned delivery approach and next steps

Activity	Timeline
Procurement of contract	w.c 25/4/16
Announcement	n/a
Delivery Start Date	5/5/16
Final evaluation start and finish	n/a
Delivery End Date	5/5/16
Project Closure:	5/5/16

Appendices and supporting papers:

Details of borough postal vote sweeps

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 either be published 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

If YES, for what reason:

Until what date: (a date is required if deferring)

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

ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:

Drafting officer
to confirm the
following (✓)

Drafting officer:

Bharti Keshur 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 **Deputy GLRO** has reviewed the request and is satisfied that it is correct and can be referred to the GLRO for approval

✓

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RESOURCES:

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

Signature

M. J. Allge

Date

3.5.16