

Written submissions received for the Elections Review Committee's investigation into the 2012 London Mayoral and Assembly elections.

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Dear Ms Hughes

I am responding to Mr Duvall and Mr Boff's letter to Ms Seary concerning the Review of the 2012 Mayoral and London Assembly elections.

I can confirm that overall Bromley and Bexley had no significant issues with the current process and systems.

The Count venue worked well for us. We made some minor changes to procedures in order to allow for more multi-tasking by staff working on the count which resulted in less down time and ensured the count process ran smoothly, efficiently and quickly.

Should you require any further information please contact my office.

Yours sincerely

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REF: GD/sk
25th June 2012

Dear Ms Hughes

Review of the 2012 Mayoral and London Assembly Elections

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the management of the 2012 elections. My Deputy Constituency Returning Officers participated in an event organised by London Elects on 31 June at which several of the comments below were made.

Feedback at the above mentioned event was organised into a number of headings which seems a logical way of setting out our comments for submission to the Elections Review Working Group. The difficulties experienced at the count centre are identified below and raised serious concerns for the Brent and Harrow constituency. One issue, which will be commented on later in this letter regarding the count and caused particular concern, was the manner in which a press release was sent out in the evening without the agreement of the Constituency Returning Officer which gave partial information and was unhelpful, given energies of colleagues needed to be concentrating on troubleshooting the difficulty.

Regulations, Rules, Directions and Performance Standards

The light touch directions issued by the Greater London Returning Officer, and the manner in which they were communicated, were welcome. However it has come to light, with the publication of the Electoral Commission's report into Returning Officers' compliance with their performance standards, that several London Returning Officers, I understand it to be 9 out of the 14 constituencies, ourselves included, have been marked below standard because they followed the GLRO direction for distribution of poll cards at a slightly later date than that required by the Commission. I understand that the GLRO has raised this with the Commission who have commented that late delivery in this instance does not indicate satisfactory performance. Nevertheless my borough will be publicly named as being below standard. We accept that the Commission's standards provide a necessary baseline for performance but on this occasion the clear impression left with us at meetings with the GLRO was that compliance with his direction would satisfy the Commission. It is vital in future elections that GLRO directions are closely aligned with the performance standards to avoid this unnecessary embarrassment for local elections offices who take pride in their service and aim always to meet or exceed the Commission's standards. It is very unhelpful to have a situation where the directions given by the GLRO have not been co-ordinated or aligned with the Electoral Commission standards.



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Project Planning and Business Continuity

It is now normal practice for elections offices before every election to prepare a project plan, business continuity plan and risk assessment. Nonetheless the training day delivered by London Elects was very helpful to us in developing our skills. Having complied with the GLRO's direction to submit our project plan, we received no acknowledgement or confirmation of its suitability. It would have been helpful to have had further communication and dialogue in this regard.

Returning Officers were required to produce a business continuity plan that was essentially cost-free. In any case the GLRO would not reimburse expenditure incurred that was deemed unnecessary. While this is perhaps understandable, it was not entirely realistic that a CRO could, for example, provide alternative accommodation in the event of the count centre being unavailable. It was also exceedingly worrying when there were technical difficulties on the evening of the election that the contingency if the electrical fault was not dealt with, was to move on the day of the count to another venue.

Nominations

My office was happy with the arrangements for receiving mayoral nominations and check subscribers' register details. I understand that some other authorities felt that London Elects should have carried out this task but that would have meant all London authorities supplying their electoral register. In addition, local offices noted some apparent discrepancies on one nomination form which they were able to check on their electoral registration databases and report to London Elects.

Training

I would congratulate London Elects for the quality and range of training that was provided and the opportunities granted to all levels of election staff to take part. An important by-product for ourselves was that we thoroughly reviewed the content and style of training that we deliver using the knowledge gained at London Elects sessions. Feedback suggests that this was well regarded by our trainees. London Elects also marked our training for polling station staff as being excellent. Obviously I hope that this standard of training will continue at future elections.

Accreditation

Frankly the process for these elections was confusing. Processes were changed too often, admittedly often at the request of London boroughs, and it became both difficult to manage and to explain to local candidates and election agents. In our view, it would have been preferable for management to have been devolved as far as possible to individual CROs, many of whom have well-established different practices, for example in offering invitations to specific post-holders who are not automatically entitled to attend. Time spent resolving individual issues would have been saved if the system had been managed locally.

Supplies from London Elects

For the most part, the arrangements for receiving stationery and equipment worked well. Some items, notably the tactile voting device, were delivered too close to the day of the poll causing problems for training colleagues in polling stations.

Communication/information exchange

There was ample opportunity for London boroughs to communicate with London Elects through various channels and we were happy with the access to information that we were afforded.

PR resources, booklet, website

We were grateful for the opportunity to use London Elects' publicity at a local level and to create links on our own website to londonelects.org.uk. The advantage of this approach was a degree of conformity and the same message being delivered as far as possible to all voters regardless of the borough in which they lived.

Count - Managing the data and the communications process

Access to IntElect's web portal was late. There was also a lack of clarity in the guidance manual which led to uncertainty as to what exactly was required. The upload of data in the required .xml format failed to work and data had to be entered manually. At a crucial point in the election timetable, IntElect's helpline failed to respond satisfactorily when these problems occurred. Given the difficulties that occurred at the Alexandra Palace venue the lack of clarity in the guidance manual was unfortunate and extremely unhelpful.

Count Centres

A series of problems, concerning both the venue and the conduct of the count, occurred at Alexandra Palace which led to the late announcement of the results for our constituency. These are identified below and have already been the subject of a meeting between the GLRO and CRO.

Four constituencies counted their votes at Alexandra Palace.

Access to the count areas was delayed by Alexandra Palace security not allowing entry into the hall until approximately 7:15am. Once allowed through the first doors, staff were then directed into the Panorama room for breakfast which was freely handed out without the need in many cases to produce vouchers. However this meant that staff who had been told to be at the centre for 6.30 were waiting for over 30 minutes in a very crowded area without any information. For staff, this was a frustrating start to the day and what was a very long and tiring event. This start was problematic.

Security was inconsistent during the day and at 10:00am politicians attending for one of the by elections were being catered for in the Panorama room again without being required to show tickets.

A briefing for CRO's had been arranged for 7:30am but was brought forward to 6:45am without telling the CRO representatives present for the Brent and Harrow constituency, despite the fact that representatives were at the venue at that time. This led to an unfortunate start to the day and did not assist relationships between colleagues which was completely unnecessary.

The allocation of smart cards took place as staff familiarised themselves with the set-up.

At approximately 7:50am power to the count system was cut. This halted the process of issuing the smart cards.

There was no initial indication that the loss of power would cause any more of a problem than simply getting it restored. Hence everyone waited around for the power to be restored and the advice received was that this would take varying times of between 15 – 30 minutes. This advice continued until approximately 9:30am when all staff were told to take a break because it would be at least another 30 minutes. The advice received was that the power would be restored and each count would have to power up in sequence and it would take about 15 minutes per count centre. This meant Brent and Harrow expected to be up and running by about 10:15. An additional problem then occurred which meant that Brent and Harrow was the last constituency to have power restored, at about 11:10am. Whilst it is understood that there was lack of clarity about how the difficulty was to be resolved, the trickle of information caused further frustration to staff as they awaited to begin their roles. There was an added

further difficulty for Brent and Harrow constituency when the restart of the power tripped part way through the line of computers and meant it had to be restarted again

During the delay staff had been deployed to open the ballot boxes and transfer the ballot papers to the count trays and place the batch control sheets on top. There was some enthusiasm from staff to get started and this process involved more than absolutely necessary. At one point the agents had to ask for some of the staff to refrain from working the wrong side of the tables. This was quickly sorted out.

Once the power had been restored the issue of the smart cards had to be checked to ensure those already issued were still registered and to continue to issue the rest. In the meantime the amendments to the ward electorate figures had to be entered and the zero report run. Because of the system being down the day before it had not been possible to go through the full checking process and it had to be accepted that IntElect had verified the system and the sign off report was produced for signing.

Upon starting the count it was found that one of the computers was not functioning correctly and that one of the monitors was too small. The monitor was replaced but there was no spare PC that could be brought into use. This meant that Brent and Harrow were a computer down having started the last due to the electrical difficulties. The combination of these difficulties was most unfortunate and led to Brent and Harrow constituency starting at a serious disadvantage.

As the count started, the Deputy GLRO present at Alexandra Palace instructed that the verification tolerance should be zero, ie that the scan total should match exactly the total number of ballot papers reported as being in the ballot box by the Presiding Officer. Consequently 50% of boxes were being rejected and sent for re-scanning for being outside this tolerance. The tolerance was raised to +/- 2 around 3pm.

It had previously been identified that a large number of Brent postal votes had been inadvertently cut in the opening process to such an extent that they would not go through the scanners. It had been agreed that these ballot papers should be boxed separately in two boxes and processed by manual entry. These were marked as PV7 and PV8. These postal boxes were therefore put into the system early so that manual entry could begin quickly. About two hours into the count it became apparent that other Brent postal votes were being rejected by the scanners in significant numbers. This was because many of them had a sliver sliced from either the top or bottom of the ballot paper which was not apparent on first looking at them. Upon being alerted to this it was decided to set up more people to carry out manual entry so that it could keep pace with the number to be carried out throughout the day.

This action was identified with the IntElect team and agreed as the best way forward. In addition one of the deputy returning officers monitored the dashboards with the dedicated officer from IntElect throughout the day. No problem was identified that needed dealing with differently.

The count then proceeded well for the majority of the time, albeit that one scanner broke down and another two required regular maintenance. As the count progressed it was clear that the process of manual entry was keeping pace with the other operations and that this was not having a detrimental effect on carrying out standard adjudication and RO adjudication.

At about 6:00pm a concerted effort was made to deal with the "On Hold" boxes. Some had to be sent for re-scanning and with hindsight possibly a few of these boxes could have been dealt with slightly sooner. At about 7:30pm with the count appearing to be reaching a conclusion it was recognised that one remaining batch sent for re-scanning contained a large number of ballot papers that would not go through the scanner and so had to be entered manually. It was clear that this one batch would significantly delay the end of the count if only one work station could deal with it. IntElect staff suggested a number of possibilities for dealing with this but in the end only one was possible and that was to split the batch up in the system so that the manual entry could be carried out across a number of work stations. This was done by about 8:30pm and it was then thought that the count had finished barring the production and declaration of the result and the repacking of the boxes.

When it was clear that the count would continue beyond 8pm, it was necessary to build in breaks for staff to eat etc. Staff agreed to take only 20 minutes but this nevertheless meant that a significant percentage of scanners/PCs were not operating between 6.30 & 7.30 pm.

At about 9:00pm it was apparent that there was a problem with completing the count. The problem was not clear to anyone at this time and staff were left not knowing why the count could not be completed. There was then a great deal of confusion and a feeling of anxiety especially because the other constituencies had by that time all declared their results and packed away. A ballot box accidentally deleted from the system by IntElect staff and late manual entries necessitated discussions with the Brent and Harrow IntElect count support manager, his deputy, the area support manager and the overall count manager and occasionally the representative from the consultancy providing Quality Assurance to London Elects. While this may have been necessary it took a lot of time, and suggested that the appropriate people did not have the required level of knowledge of the system to promptly deal with the issues faced. Various discussions and phone calls took place for over an hour. Because all the staff were being kept waiting they were instructed to begin the process of returning the ballot papers to the ballot boxes. This operation was completed before it was finally identified that the system was showing that two boxes still had manual entries outstanding. Nothing could be done but to delete the batches from the system, pull them out from the ballot boxes and rescan them. This was done but one batch was particularly difficult to get through the scanner and resulted in a large number being rejected and needing to be manually entered. Once again the manual entry papers were split into smaller batches and allocated across multiple workstations to be entered. This operation was completed at about 10:30pm and the result declared at 11:05pm.

There was considerable confusion as identified above and it was unclear why the information from IntElect was initially suggesting the Count was concluded but then identifying there were issues outstanding with two ballot boxes. Whilst this was being dealt with it was exceedingly unhelpful to the CRO to be told by individuals on the floor and seeing it on emails that a press release had come out from City Hall indicating that two ballot boxes had been misplaced. The press release appeared to be critical of Brent and Harrow at a time when staff were working extremely hard to find a solution and identify the problem after having experienced an exceedingly frustrating start with being kept out of the venue and the difficulty with the power outage. Whilst energies of all those at the Count Centre were working on the difficulty at hand and finding a solution the issue of a press release, when all the information had not been formulated or the problem understood, was premature, distracting and exceedingly unhelpful.

Conclusions

Arrangements made for the venue were not all adhered to resulting in:

- staff making the effort to get to the venue by 6:30 but not being let in until 7:00
- no reception desks for each constituency so having to share desks to hand out wristbands
- adherence to the catering ticket system being ad hoc throughout the day
- inconsistent security checks
- CRO briefing being brought forward from the agreed time of 7:30 without informing the Brent and Harrow officers

The power cut delayed the start of the counts for between 2 ½ and 3 ½ hours. There was no communication to explain the time implications of having to power up each count once power was restored.

Whilst corrective action was taken to deal with known damaged postal ballot papers it was not recognised that a large number of postal ballot papers had the top or bottom slightly shaved off meaning that what looked like perfectly good ballot papers would not go through the scanners.

Manual entry was very time consuming but was maintained throughout the count.

Some of the On Hold boxes were not dealt with as efficiently as they should have been, particularly to ensure that a damaged batch was not left to the end when it would produce a lot of papers requiring manual entry.

Constant attention was paid to the dashboard ensuring that all operations were being carried out to avoid a backlog and yet only at the end of the count did the system identify a large number of ballot papers still requiring manual entry. There appeared to be a fault in the system and the way that it was being displayed to the CRO. If the system had the information that there was a problem the mechanism to display this should have been triggered during the main period of the count and not at the end. This aspect of the system did not appear to meet the needs of the Count. This was replicated at City Hall where the GLRO, who was able to see the same screen as staff at the count, was asking his Deputy on site at Alexandra Palace why the CRO was not proceeding to a declaration.

Arrangements for the holding of the count at our venue, Alexandra Palace, felt somewhat haphazard. It did not appear to us that London Elects had a sufficient grip on what was required and for much of the time the process had to be pushed along by the boroughs rather than being properly led by London Elects. A count centre co-ordinator for our venue, Alexandra Palace, was appointed at a late stage by London Elects but it was never entirely clear what role this person was required to perform.

As with arrangements for accreditation, there were late changes to the planned arrangements, for example the reception desk at the count venue. This led to confusions on arrival and lack of clarity about what information would be given to count staff.

At the venue itself on the day of the count, staff were able to enter the building relatively easily albeit delayed but, rather than entering the count area and preparing for the day, were forced to remain in a waiting area with no explanation. Staff were also asked to leave coats in an unattended part of the catering hall. In the counting hall itself, in addition to the loss of power, we learnt that a leaking roof had compelled IntElect to fashion a gazebo in order to protect vital equipment. This did not lead to confidence in the venue, and left the feeling of a lack of professionalism, around the way the issues at the venue were dealt with.

The Count end-to-end process

The process was logical and easy to follow and was clearly described in the training DVD. There appeared to be questionable value in transferring ballot papers into a tray prior to being scanned, which was quite a labour-intensive activity, and subsequently returning them to a ballot box. In addition to some other ways in which boxes and trays were moved around at the count, some streamlining of duties at future counts are achievable.

IntElect support (a) prior to the count and (b) count day

Comments are made above about the web portal helpline. Otherwise liaison with IntElect staff worked well. Notice was given of delivery times and these were mostly adhered to. The large security seals for closing down ballot boxes at the close of poll were only delivered in the week of the poll.

On the day before the poll, the CRO was required to attend the count venue to approve the count layout. A number of Deputy CROs attended at the appointed time only to be asked to wait while technical issues were resolved. After some hours' delay, no solution was found and my colleagues returned to the office. As a result key election staff from my and I believe other constituencies were needlessly forced to be away from their borough for some of the busiest hours of polling and unavailable to attend to any situation that may have occurred.

Support from IntElect on the day was responsive and co-operative. However there was a lengthy period towards the close of the process when there appeared to be confusion about the status of the count being displayed on the reporting screens. While the CRO is clearly the person responsible for the

conduct of the count, he is wholly reliant on the efficacy of the software and support that he is obliged to administer. It was immensely frustrating therefore that our two boroughs was being held publicly responsible for the lateness of the declaration of the result by the use of a press release not providing all the information, when it was clear that colleagues from Intellect were trying hard to find a solution and understand what the problem was.

Training and the support products

The training session for our constituency was fine in itself and provided an early opportunity for staff from the two boroughs to meet and begin to develop a shared sense of purpose. Some more focus on and demonstration of the potential problems might have given us a more realistic expectation of what could occur, for example with damaged ballot papers.

Supplies including ballot papers

Although it did not appear to create any problems, the difference in the actual colour of the ballot papers from that displayed in London Elects' publicity was striking.

Yours sincerely



Gareth Daniel
Chief Executive

London Borough of Camden

Review of the running of the GLA Elections 3rd May 2012

Comments of London Borough of Camden

1. These comments relate specifically to our views on the GLA planning and co ordination as this affected Camden. We are conducting separately internal reviews of the running of the election in Camden and the joint arrangements with our constituency partner Barnet.
2. Comments have already been made by our Chief Executive Mike Cooke to the Greater London Returning Officer and this response amplifies many of his views.
3. Generally, the running of the elections in 2012 was seen as successful. However, the lower than anticipated turnout of 38% across London meant that systems were not fully tested to take account of the detailed planning which had been put in place for many issues since 2010, for example planning for dealing with queues at polling stations.
4. There have undoubtedly been some significant improvements over 2008. There was a welcome light touch to Regulations, with very few Directions issued compared to the overprescriptive approach adopted by the Electoral Commission to the Referendum . The establishment of a central training working group involving all the Boroughs led to the production of consistent training plans; the success of this initiative was shown by very few problems reported on polling day across London. The centrally co-ordinated police SPOC meeting enabled a co ordinated approach to integrity issues; and the emphasis on early project planning and risk management was welcome, with the project planning course for Boroughs well received. The supplier for the e count contract, IntElect, was relatively speaking seen as more effective than the supplier selected for the 2008 elections. The London Elects website was again excellent and provided an easy means to direct electors to information about the elections.
5. However, there are concerns about the effectiveness of the current London Elects team. All of the key members of the current team except the Communications lead are ex election managers. No new blood was introduced from 2008. At times the team appeared to be struggling with the demands placed upon them, This was manifested by late submission of key documents such as the count manual; late changes in instructions, ie the seal to be used for the sealing of boxes at the end of the count; lack of clarity on some key processes, ie the use of both ballot boxes at polling stations; and delays in finalising some contracts and arranging deliveries of equipment. There was also seen as inadequate liaison between London Elects and the ecount supplier IntElect.

6. Although Boroughs were asked to provide project plans and risk registers, there were no reciprocal arrangements with the GLA and for example their Business Continuity Plans were not available until a few weeks before the elections. It should be possible for the Boroughs to see and comment on the GLA project plans. There was also no feedback to individual Boroughs on the project planning information supplied by the Boroughs. Particular concern has been expressed that the planning arrangements required detailed attention to possible queues at polling stations and other emergency situations with no availability of contingency funds at GLA level.

7. Advice from London Elects on some issues took time to arise and should have been included in pre planning. For example, the supply of registers to independent candidates was an issue which caused problems in 2008, but clarity of advice for 2012 was not received in detail and again it was left to the Boroughs to decide on individual arrangements.

8. It is considered that London Elects would benefit from adopting more of a project planning approach with a dedicated project manager appointed to the team. Key appointments including project management level should be made now so that planning can start in earnest for 2016 at the earliest stage. This is particularly crucial for the next four years as the Boroughs' involvement will be more limited in the period from 2014 -2015 with the major elections in London plus the new registration system. The year 2013 will provide a good opportunity to get preliminary planning in place based on the lessons which can be learnt from 2012.

9. Adequate funding for the elections is key in ensuring that they are successfully run. The budget for 2012 was very tight and as mentioned previously had no provision for contingency planning for dealing with issues queues at polling stations for which the Boroughs were required to make detailed plans. The budget also did not allow the pre election communications initiatives on electoral registration across the capital which had been run in 2008, only permitting publicity to be concentrated on how to vote on polling day. This lack of funding for registration activity may have contributed to the lower than anticipated turnout.

10. In one sense, with the tight budget London has been fortunate in having low key elections this time round but 2016 could be much tougher and it is very much a matter of concern if budgetary provision is to be reduced in four years time.

11. We see a window of opportunity over the next nine months for the GLA to re appraise how it approaches the running of the elections and to provide proper internal funding for the central team, which needs to be full time from now up to 2016. Issues such as timing of contracts and problems with arrangements for supplies which were down to staffing problems in the current team needed to be resolved now. The lack of elections in 2013 gives an opportunity for detailed planning with the Boroughs before all our attentions are distracted by the major elections and changes to the registration system in 2014 and 2015.

The Count

12. As stated above , the selected ecount supplier IntElect was seen as more effective than the supplier used in 2008. Initially however IntElect did not inspire confidence as the portal for uploading data was not available until March and there were problems uploading from Electoral Management IT systems when this was available. The processes for submitting data were overcomplicated and many Boroughs had to submit data separately for uploading direct by IntElect.

13. An example of where better communications were required was over the production of the postal ballot papers. When these papers were supplied to us, it was found that there was a perforation on the fold of the ballot paper which carried the risk of the ballot paper being torn. Following discussions with IntElect, it was understood that this design feature was agreed at an early stage but not communicated to the Boroughs. Whilst in practice this caused very few problems, there was the potential for this to have led to read difficulties if the quality of the papers had been variable, and the Boroughs considered that they should have been consulted and shown samples at the earliest stage of planning.

14. There are concerns about the relationship between London Elects and IntElect not being strong enough. London Elects need a staff member who can take a stronger role on client liaison, eg at the training session for the ecount, IntElect had not logged Camden staff members on the system, and this could not be resolved by London Elects., The role of London Elects at the count venue Alexandra Palace was weak when problems occurred eg no report back to staff on what was happening.

15. Overall the equipment and the core process for the count worked more effectively than it did four years ago. There was better scanning equipment and the use of our own staff for scanning was a big improvement. It is understood there is the ability in the contract to retain IntElect for 2016 at a discounted price. It would be unfortunate if this option was pursued and the contractor was then reluctant to upgrade the processes based on learning from 2012. There are a number of learning points about improvements in the process which we would wish the contractor to take on board if retained, and we would not wish these to be held back on cost grounds.

16. Notwithstanding improvements in overall performance, it was worrying that the scanners were miscounting batches, necessitating re-scans and adding to the time; we understand from others that this was common across constituencies. For example, the batch identified for manual checking in Camden showed a discrepancy of 70 with the initial scan; a second scan produced the correct figure verified by the manual count.

17. Many of the processes are cumbersome, eg requiring ballot boxes to be emptied into trays; complicated labelling of ballot boxes; papers are in transit

for too many stages between initial verification and storage. There is a need for a complete review of the end to end process to try and simplify the flow where possible, and this means that a decision on ecounting and the choice of contractor for 2016 needs to be taken as soon as possible.

18. The arrangements at the start of the count at Alexandra Palace were particularly chaotic, with no proper reception arrangements beyond the security at the entrance. Long queues ensured for staff who had been asked to arrive at the venue at 6.30am for a day which could stretch well into the evening. This led to previously agreed arrangements for breakfast and cloakroom facilities not being used. Barnet and Camden staff had to place their coats and valuables in the actual count area which negated the security arrangements which had been agreed. There appeared to be no effective control of the situation by the London Elects count co-ordinator who was not visible to us throughout the day. There was no briefing from IntElect to staff to explain how the day would be run, and no explanations about the power outage and what action was being taken to get the system up and running again. Although matters improved during the day with better refreshment arrangements than 2008 and more reliable equipment once we were underway, these difficulties at the start of the day overshadowed the whole process. Other counts at the area of course experienced more problems later in the day.

19. The advance planning at the Camden/ Barnet meetings clearly had a benefit, as despite the problems caused by the early power failure, the Barnet/ Camden count started just before 10.30am and was the first at the venue to finish at 7.30pm. However, there was some good fortune involved as the IT equipment for two of the four counts at Alexandra Palace caused problems. Camden finished last in 2008 at the venue and therefore sympathises with those Boroughs which had problems. It is understood that the problems with the Barnet/ Harrow count have still not been explained by the contractor.

20. There is London wide concern at the late evening press release that was issued by London Elects; it was not neutral but arguably sought to distance London Elects from the situation in the Brent/Harrow count. We fully appreciate the massive media pressure at City Hall as the evening wore on but the content and tone have damaged relations between boroughs and London Elects.

21. Unfortunately it seems that Alexandra Palace is the worst venue in terms of facilities management and therefore more of an issue for Boroughs using this location than those using Excel or Olympia where far fewer problems were experienced. There is therefore a case for considering whether there is an alternative large North London venue which could be investigated, whilst recognising the scarcity of such locations.

22. Given that the count again finished just before midnight on the Friday and attracted criticism for the length of the process, more detailed consideration should be given to the feasibility of a manual count and what this would entail. Assuming that e counting continues to be used, given the successful model of

the Referendum counts being co ordinated on a regional basis in 2011, one scenario could be that Count Centres revert to a Constituency basis. There would be time to plan this before 2016.

23. Finally, we would add that Barnet and Camden put into place detailed project and process control planning for these elections which greatly contributed to their smooth running in this area. We are happy to share our experience and knowledge gained to assist others in planning for four year's time.

Mike Cooke Borough Returning Officer and Chief Executive Camden.

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Dear Messrs Duvall and Boff,

Review of the 2012 Mayoral and London Assembly Elections

Thank you for your letter of 30 May 2012 inviting views and contributions on the administration of the 2012 elections.

In doing so, it should not be overlooked that the London Mayoral and Assembly elections, when combined as they are, present an extreme administrative challenge to all those involved in the process. For electoral administrators, they are undoubtedly the most physically and mentally challenging set of elections faced and all too often, the stresses put on such individuals are not properly recognised or understood.

Being a pan-London set of elections, it is essential that their delivery in the 32 Boroughs and the City is both consistent and of the high quality standards Londoners deserve. This in itself creates a significant challenge.

For ease of reference, I have summarised our contributions below:

1. Following the decision taken to dispense with the role of Chief Executive, the GLA necessarily appointed one of its officers as Proper Officer for electoral matters, and therefore Greater London Returning Officer (GLRO). The unfortunate result of this is that the role of GLRO does not currently have the status previously accorded to it and, despite the obvious skills brought to the position by the incumbent, our perception is that this had a negative effect on the delivery of the elections.

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The London Elects Team, which is in our opinion essential to the smooth and consistent running of the elections, was constantly having to deal with barriers set by the organisation and did not have the reassurance of sufficient weight behind it to circumvent some of those issues. For example, the procurement framework caused significant challenges, wasting valuable officer time, whereas the team was not accommodated in the same location until significantly late in the planning process, causing unnecessary administrative headaches.

There were a number of instances of lack of information followed by information overload, which was not conducive to the smooth administration of the election. This applied equally to IntElect and to London Elects.

2. Having said that the London Elects Team is essential to the process, the GLA does need to ensure that it is properly staffed and resourced. Following the 2008 elections, the London Branch of the Association of Electoral Administrators recommended that a permanent team be appointed to manage all pan-London elections and referenda.

To its credit, the GLA did make such provision but unfortunately, one of the two posts has never been permanently filled, which negates the purpose of the original recommendation. It is in our opinion essential that planning for the 2016 elections commences now, and with the European Parliamentary elections also due in 2014, the benefits to be gained by coordinating election delivery across the capital are essential if quality and consistency are to prevail.

We would also criticise the lack of foresight in succession planning. In the main, London Elects has been staffed by the same individuals since at least 2004, who have served the GLA and the GLRO well. We would however question that the individuals concerned will be available in four years time, which could result in an entirely new team being in place with potentially no knowledge of how London Mayoral and Assembly elections are administered and the challenges to be faced.

It is therefore essential that the London Elects Team is fully staffed as soon as possible so that planning can commence and any issues caused by lack of continuity ironed out as soon as practically possible.

3. There are two specific areas in which we would like to commend the GLRO and the London Elects Team:
 - ✦ In the provision of a high quality training programme for use by Constituency and Borough Returning Officers;
 - ✦ The communications strategy and the joined-up working with Borough communications teams.

In both these areas, the staff involved delivered to the highest standards.

4. The issue of the non-designation of Borough Returning Officers (BRO) in the election rules has been raised following every election, but the role is still not recognised. However, we would contend that the GLA should press Parliament to have the role enshrined in legislation before any issues of withholding services occurs. The lack of certainty for Constituency Returning Officers (CRO), whose roles are enshrined, is worrying.

5. The GLRO should administer in full Mayoral nominations, as required to by law.

The practice at this and all other GLA elections has been that BROs have checked the nominations for their areas and faxed the details back to the GLRO. This process is inherently risky. The reason given that the London Elects Team is not sufficiently resourced to cope with the influx of such nominations is unsustainable.

6. The GLA should press for the issue of candidates (particularly Independents) not being permitted to receive a copy of the electoral register until they have had their nominations accepted to be addressed. At every GLA election, this issue rears its head, and CROs spend unnecessary amounts of time having to explain why such candidates cannot receive the register, which is needed to help with the completion of their nominations, until after they have had their nomination accepted.
7. Having said that training was a success, there was an issue with the sub-division of scanner operator training from all other count staff. This in effect created unnecessary barriers and misunderstandings within constituency count teams, particularly when CROs were endeavouring to work in a joined-up manner.

Future count training should be combined and undertaken closer to the election.

8. The management and coordination of count venues was problematic. Despite there being a number of on-site meetings, the circumstances on the ground at the Alexandra Palace did not reflect the agreements reached at those meetings, which completely negated the purpose of them and lead to wasted officer time. A good example of this was the onerous security measures in place at 6:30am on Friday 4 May which prevented any of the staff from accessing the count areas to get prepared.
9. The IntElect portal caused significant administrative headaches, all of which could have been avoided by a better testing regime. CROs and BROs were required to upload significant amounts of data to a system that did not work. This resulted in a great deal of manual entry of that data being required, which in itself presented risks into the process.

Linked to this was the perverse way that information from the ballot paper accounts needed to be produced ahead of the count. The process ended up

being manual in that following the checking of the ballot paper account figures, they needed to be transposed three times (one per each contest) onto the batch control headers and from there they were hard entered into the count system the following morning despite those same figures having been entered and checked on a spreadsheet at many CROs and BROs offices. This led to a great deal of duplicated effort inherent with the risks of the figures being transposed by tired staff. It should not be beyond the realms of wisdom to improve on that process.

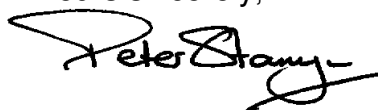
10. The perforations on the postal ballot papers caused significant issues both at the opening sessions and at the count. We do not recall them being perforated before and would question whether it is sensible to do so in the future.
11. We would have welcomed greater information as to the messages the GLRO was delivering to election agents at the central briefings if nothing more than to ensure consistency of approach. It was clear that some of the messages being given contradicted what CROs and BROs were doing, a classic example being the non-supply of registers to Independent candidates. This again demonstrates some issues with communication channels as referred to in 1. above.
12. The issues at the Alexandra Palace are well documented so I will not dwell on them again. However, needless to say, we in Enfield and Haringey were less than enamoured with the circumstances that prevailed, particularly with the lack of communication from both the GLRO and IntElect.

It was not until a London Managers' debrief on 31 May that we were given a full explanation as to why the problems had occurred, which is less than satisfactory. That information should have been provided on the day at the count rather than the piecemeal and inaccurate notifications we were given and therefore able to share with agents and staff.

In summary, the election itself was an administrative success clouded by the issues faced at the Alexandra Palace. That said, I do believe that there are clear lessons for the GLA, GLRO and Returning Officers to learn, not least that future elections should be treated seriously by all those involved, coordinated by London Elects in a professional and responsive manner and recognised as much for their successes as for any problems encountered.

I trust my comments are of some help. Should you wish to discuss any issues further or require any clarification, I would be more than happy to oblige.

Yours sincerely,



Peter Stanyon
Head of Electoral and Governance Services

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22 June 2012

Dear Sirs

Review of the 2012 Mayoral & Assembly Elections

Thank you for your invitation to contribute to your review of the above elections.

1. General Comments:

I understand that Martin Esom the Constituency Returning Officer for the North East will be making a response to your letter on behalf of the Constituency, but I wish to make the following observations from Hackney's perspective:

In general arrangements worked well here with project plan, risk register and contingency plans submitted to London Elects approximately six months before polling day. It would have been helpful however to have received feedback on these plans. In addition it should be pointed out that the GLA contingency plans were circulated very late.

Early planning here lead to a relatively successful process although it should be pointed out that 2011 was a relatively quiet year which allowed for a lot of advance planning. Looking forward to 2016 off the back of Parliamentary elections in 2015 and the introduction of IER then preparation time may be far less.

Constituency meetings worked well between the three authorities. Issues identified were taken away to be resolved with the GLRO and London Elects.

London Elect training sessions and meetings held with constituencies were all very helpful.

2. Regulations and Directions

Whilst it was appreciated that there were far less of these than say for the Referendum in 2011 there needs in future to be far more coordination between regulations issued by the GLRO and the Electoral Commission.

As stated following previous GLA elections the role of the Borough Returning Officer needs to be acknowledged in law.

3. Communications and Publicity

The Communications Officer Sarah Garrett was a very good point of contact with clear communications coming through. There were however a large amount of emails received from various London Elects officers who were very unclear and in many cases had no headings or contact details for the elections manager to respond to. Both the website and promotional materials were well received by voters and very informative, however the arrangements for the distribution of the Mayoral booklet to voters registering in April put additional pressures on the elections office.

4. Training

Despite limited resources training worked well and much better than in 2008. Training provided was taken up by election staff with good feedback. Some materials however were received very late and a number of amendments were required late in the day for training materials to be used by our trainers at poll staff training sessions. There were mixed messages about the use of a second ballot box at polling stations and when this should be used. This should be simplified in future as there is no reason to make it complicated.

5. The Count

In advance of the count the management of electoral data through the IntElect web portal was overly complicated and extremely problematic. I understand that problems occurred across London on this with all electoral management systems. The communications between London Elects and IntElect were poor at times.

The accreditation system for staff, observers etc into the count centre was overly complicated and arrangements continually changed throughout the process. Better results would be achieved by accreditation occurring at a local level.

As you will be aware there was a loss of power at Alexandra Palace which delayed the start of the count by about 2 hours. The reasons for the delay on the day were not communicated very well and there did not appear to be a backup plan in place in

the event of permanent power loss. Each count venue in future should have a back up second count venue.

There appeared to be a lot of physical effort in the movement of ballot papers around the count centre. It seemed overly complicated, and a new process needs to be developed to produce a better flow and reduce the physical movement of ballot papers.

The counting scanners appeared to work far slower than at the User Acceptance Test; however the actual counting time was impressively less than in 2008. This may of course be as a result of the aforementioned power failures and rebooting of servers back to full capacity.

The count centre was spacious and accessible. They were able to accommodate 4 by-elections on the day.

6. Funding

The budget, though it just covered expenditure, was very tight and did not allow for any contingencies. In particular, unlike 2008 there was no pre election communication budget.

Budgets we know are tight and probable savings targets will place additional pressures in 2016. It would be a serious matter of concern if budgetary provisions are to be reduced still further in four years time.

Yours sincerely,



Tim Shields
Chief Executive

Review of the 2012 Mayoral and London Assembly Elections

Returning Officer Role and Responsibilities

1. We have now had GLA elections in 2000; 2004; 2008 and 2012 and it is incredible that legislation recognising the crucial role of Borough Returning Officers (BRO's) who deliver the Poll in their Borough is not yet acknowledged in law. This needs to be urgently addressed.
2. The GLA elections are run by the Greater London Returning Officer (GLRO) however the Performance Standards are set and were reported to the Electoral Commission (EC) at various odd intervals during the election process. The EC say that is so they can intervene if things are going awry.

However this did cause problems as the GLRO and the EC both issued a mass of guidance including slightly differing instructions.

The GLRO issued the following guidance materials:- The Guidance Manual - 36 pages minus appendices, the web portal guide - 20 pages, the Count Guidance Manual - 67 pages minus appendices.

The EC issued the following guidance materials:- Returning Officer role & responsibilities – 20 pages; Planning & Organisation – 27 pages; Administering the Poll – 31 pages; Absent Voting – 31 pages; Verifying & Counting the Votes – 27 pages; After Declaration of the Results – 12 pages.

In one example the EC picked an arbitrary date for the commencement of the delivery of poll cards of 21 March this was not mentioned in the Guidance Manual issued by the GLRO. However there was a directive from the GLRO when the delivery had to be completed. The rules only require the delivery to commence as soon as practicable after the publication of the Notice of Election which was the 20 March.

Because of this 9 of the 14 CRO's have been judged by the EC to be below the performance standard 2b, including Havering, as we didn't commence our delivery until the 23 March.

I don't know if there was any liaison between the EC and the GLRO before or during the election period on Performance Standards. I think it would have been helpful to have one set of combined guidance.

I also do not know what the protocol would be if a London Borough really was underperforming.

Perhaps this issue needs more clarity as it seems currently confusing.

3. It was appreciated that the GLRO set few Directions and set them early, recognising that situations may vary from Borough to Borough

Planning and Organisation

1. One of the real strengths of these elections, as in all GLA elections, was the training. Priority was given to high quality training for most roles.

The framework for Polling Station Staff training set by London Elects to be adapted for local circumstances was ideal recognising local differences and yet ensuring a consistent message was delivered to all polling staff across London.

2. We all recognise the need to provide savings and yet the Mayoral booklet is still delivered to all registered electors rather than to each household. I believe this is one area where huge savings can be achieved.
3. The London Elects website was far too late it should have been up and running from the beginning of the year.
4. A minor panic was caused to CRO's when a week or so before the Poll the GLRO sent out a letter questioning the insurance situation. The Boroughs had been assured right at the start of the process that insurance had been put in place, but apparently a change of Insurance supplier by City Hall called this into question.

Administering the Poll

1. Most of the materials provided for the polling stations were excellent.
2. The PDF of the Notices of Poll however could have been provided much earlier, so that they could have been bill-posted around the Borough, rather than just placed on the website.
3. Several changes made just days before the Poll such as providing orange labels for sealing the ballot box and monitoring the usage of the tactile devices was far too late to be included in staff training and meant additional notes had to be placed in ballot boxes, far from ideal.

Verifying and Counting the Votes

1. The problems experienced at Alexandra Palace convince me that there is wisdom in continuing to provide three separate Count venues across London.
2. The Count manual should have been provided much earlier, it would have assisted greatly in the planning process.

3. As you are aware Indra won the E-count contract in 2008, before that it was won by DRS. DRS joined with ERS to form Intellect who won the contract in 2012.

This was a problem as the lessons learned in 2008 were not shared by Intellect/DRS and so the E-count was like turning back the clock to the 2004 election.

4. In 2008 the ballot boxes were moved once to be scanned and then returned to the numbered shelving.

Whereas the Intellect model required the ballot papers to be removed from the ballot boxes and placed in brown trays. These brown trays had to be built the day before the Poll from flat-pack cardboard, from teams of people supplied from the Boroughs.

These brown trays when filled with the ballot papers were very heavy and had then to be carried:-

to registration and back to shelving,

to scanning and back to shelving,

to verification and back to shelving,

then possibly to manual entry and back to shelving, or to on-hold then back to scanning and back to shelving, then back to verification and back to shelving and finally all to storage shelving.

Then at the conclusion of the Count the exhausted staff had to replace the ballot papers in the ballot boxes.

All of this heavy manual handling was unnecessary as the red wallet and pink batch header were the only things that actually needed to go to Registration, Verification and Manual Entry.

The ballot papers only need to be moved once to be scanned and then replaced on their shelving. As the boxes are only moved once there would be no need to place the papers in the brown trays.

This would save money on:- providing the brown trays, the staff to build the brown trays, and only one set of racking would be required. This would have the knock-on advantage of also saving space.

5. The training for the E-count was good but could have been less time consuming especially as staff were not being paid to attend.

For example scanner supervisors and their deputies attended User Acceptance Testing (UAT) for two days in Milton Keynes in November and Managers one day. This could have been reduced to one day, the scanner supervisors and their deputies could have completed their training in the morning and the UAT by Managers could have been carried out in the afternoon.

Also the scanner operators had a whole days training in London and then attended a half day Constituency mock count training session in London. These one and a half days could easily be reduced to one day they could have been trained on the scanners in the morning and then attended the Constituency session in the afternoon.

6. Intellect were extremely late putting the portal in place, this was the system Boroughs used to input vital information such as polling

Also the EML exports from our Election management systems to input the information were not properly tested and did not work. I had to input all my data manually which was time consuming and could have led to errors.

7. Intellect were inflexible on changing the allocation for ballot papers for postal voters. This was particularly galling as we have no control over the number of postal vote applications we receive.

In Havering we had nearly 3,500 postal vote applications from the Conservative Party and several hundred from the Labour party. As we had not sent out these applications we have no idea of how many we might receive by the deadline which was 5pm on the 18 April.

Only an 80% allocation of ballot papers was made to the Boroughs and as 100% of postal vote ballots need to be provided I had to make a decision early in April as to how many postal vote ballots we had printed which meant I had left just over a 60% allocation for polling stations.

(Postal ballot papers cannot be used in the E-count process for polling station papers and vice versa).

8. The large perforations in the postal ballot papers meant they tore in the scanners and slowed down the scanning process considerably. They were not present in the papers used in the User Acceptance Testing or the Constituency mock count.
9. The information screens provided in the Count venues were extremely good.

After Declaration of Results

1. Apart from all the statutory requirements following an election, one of the most important things to do is to evaluate and begin planning for the next GLA election.

There is now a small core team of election experts at City Hall known as London Elects, however I am not sure how many of the current personnel will be there for the 2016 elections. It is vital that the importance of having this expertise at the centre is not taken for granted, and is maintained and valued.

2. I also think that despite the problems the E-count supplier should be used again for the 2016 elections, building on their experience from the 2012 Count which should allow them if not to reduce costs then keep any increase to a minimum.



Review of the 2102 Mayoral and London Assembly elections

Our comments below include contributions from Barry Quirk, Constituency Returning Officer, Kath Nicholson Deputy Borough Returning Officer and Malcolm Constable Electoral Services Manager.

Overall we believe that the elections were well planned, run professionally and achieved accurate and timely results in a transparent manner.

The comments below should be taken in that context.

1) The Count

Our main observation is the disparity in the time the various counts took. Ignoring the issue at Alexandra Palace the count in the other two count venues (Excel and Olympia) took between six and half and ten and a half hours. In Alexander Palace the variation between the first and last Constituency to declare was 4.75 hours. This indicates that, all other things being equal, (e.g. amount of equipment and counters being roughly proportionate to electorate), some of the count teams were perhaps better prepared/rehearsed than others or that there were some inherent weaknesses in the underlying count process that for whatever reason did not impact all counts equally. We believe that an analysis of the processes and procedures followed by all the count teams should be examined for best practice.

In the Greenwich and Lewisham Constituency the count went according to plan. This was largely due to the significant planning and resources provided by the GLRO's team that went into the training of scanner and PC operators and adjudicators. The equipment was robust and fit for purpose and we were well supported by the IntElect team on the count floor.

We believe however that certain aspects of the count should be reviewed to improve the flow of the count and prevent potential issues arising in future.

- Whilst significant resources were committed to the training on electronic processes at the count, the manual processes were largely ignored. It was left to the constituency teams to organise and plan for these. The GLA trainers repeatedly indicated that the count belonged to the CRO however the reality was that the structure of the count was driven by the electronic requirements over which the CRO had no control. This led to disparate practices being adopted by Count teams

across London in respect of ballot box opening, the physical movement and tracking of the count trays and the manner in which resources were committed to verification and manual entry processes.

- An example of this was that ballot box opening teams were not included in any GLA based training activities, yet these teams were responsible for the start of the count process. They had to open as many boxes as quickly as possible to get all the scanners operational by 8.45 am. If things such as labelling of count trays or separation of ballot boxes where two were used at the same polling station went wrong at this stage the consequences for later in the count could have been serious.
- The division of the count into three count centres meant that there were three count coordinators appointed from one of the lead boroughs for each centre. Whilst these three groups met and networked amongst themselves this did not routinely happen between the centres.
- We were only made fully aware of the Count processes and procedures to be adopted at the User Acceptance Test (UAT) in Milton Keynes in November 2011. Following this test a number of authorities, including ourselves, expressed concerns about the differences in the operating process between the 2008 elections and the 2012 elections – the latter mirroring the 2004 process. Whilst the scanners were regarded as more robust and the training of our own scanner operators proved to be a good thing concerns were expressed about the following aspects
 - Possible transcription errors – the ballot paper account data had to be transcribed to the control sheets manually after close of poll –between say 10.15am and the receipt of the last ballot box at 11.30 am. Once entered onto the control sheets they then had to be re-entered into the count system the following day. In 2008 the ballot paper accounts were entered directly into the system at the registration stage
 - The movement of count trays containing ballot papers, control sheets and manual entries within the count area – we had nearly 500 boxes at the count which were decanted into some 300 batch trays to be scanned. These boxes had to move from
 - Opening to registration
 - Registration to scanning
 - Scanning to verification
 - And from verification either to one of the following
 - i. on hold pending investigation of any discrepancy
 - ii. Manual entry if barcodes on some ballot papers could not be read
 - iii. Rescanning if required
 - iv. And finally to storage

In 2008 the contents of the boxes were moved once. The risk that trays would be misplaced, separated where two were necessary from the same polling station, or become separated from the underlying paperwork - either the control sheet and/or the manual entry folder(where there was no label or indication which count tray it had originated from) was significantly increased

It was therefore imperative that when all boxes reached the end storage rack that they were kept in strict borough and numerical order so that they could be easily located if they had missed part of the process. In this respect the electronic reporting system was good, however, if for example the manual entry folder was separated from the count tray it required senior IntElect support to track down which tray ballot papers had originated from.

- As a result of the UAT day at Milton Keynes in November these concerns had been raised, but we were told at the time that the process was hard wired and could not be changed. This indicates that whilst there had been considerable interaction between the GLA and IntElect, there was no such consultation between the GLA, IntElect and the end users – the Constituencies - who were running the counts in the various locations.

Given increasing pressure on costs, the timing differences between boroughs and apparent differences in expertise and practices there is a case for consolidating the count process at one venue, including the announcements of all the results.

This would ensure:

- All the ICT expertise was in one place
- The GLRO team was in the same place so that if any issues arose they would be in direct contact with on the spot knowledge-particularly important when dealing with the press.
- Experienced resources would be in one place
- Best operating practices could be shared.
- Constituencies that finished early could assist/ offer advice to slower constituencies

2) Timetable, Nominations, and ballot papers

There was a 30 working day timetable for these elections, which is longer than normal Local Government elections, (25 working days). This in part is to ensure that the nomination period closes in time to prepare ballot papers for an electronic count and distribute them ahead of the issue of postal votes and polling stations. The ballot papers were delivered very late in the process. The Postal ballot papers were only delivered to our printers Saturday 14 April ahead of the issue of postal votes on the 20 April. We had planned on issuing

on the 19 April the day after cut off for registrations and applications for postal votes. However, our checking process had to be curtailed and the postage date put back one day.

The delivery of the polling station ballot papers on the 26 April, during the postal vote opening period, put considerable pressure on the core team to check them and allocate them ahead of the pick up by Presiding Officers on 2 May. This only gave us three working days to process nearly 540,000 ballot papers ahead of issue. Fortunately we found no errors with the printing or numbering of the ballot papers.

The packaging of the ballot papers, loose and wrapped by a thin paper band in bundles of 100 within boxes of 500, meant that considerable time was spent in building additional boxes to account for the splits and allocating the ballot papers.

Some concern was expressed to the GLRO at the outset about the continued practice of only printing sufficient ballot papers to cover 80% of the electorate, despite the Electoral Commissions best practice guidance to print and supply 100%. This was explained by a need to manage costs down. The ballot paper numbering system that distinguished between postal vote and polling station ballot papers meant that surplus postal ballot papers could not be used in polling stations and vice versa.

100% has to be allocated to postal voters, which in our case meant that our polling station allocation fell to 73%. We had advised the GLRO about our experiences in the Referendum concerning postal voting campaigns and the take up of postal votes. Ultimately, whilst it did not impact us, we understand that one or two boroughs had to request additional ballot papers despite having built contingency factors into their numbers which were supplied before Christmas.

3) Core election teams

Most authorities run elections with a small core team, supplemented by temporary resources, whose expertise and experience is spread fairly thinly. The 11 day registration rule, the exception processes in dealing with lost or spoilt postal votes, emergency proxy applications and an almost continual postal vote opening process on the day of poll puts these teams under considerable pressure. The late arrival of ballot papers, the requirement to provide resources to build count trays at the count the day before polling day – a job that could easily have been contracted out – and sending a senior team member to sign off the Count set up all adds pressure. Processes and procedures should be reviewed to reduce pressure on core elections teams at critical times.

4) Resources

In the main most of the equipment coming from GLA procured sources or via IntElect arrived late and with quantities were pared down to the bare

minimum. There were clearly errors made in allocating equipment e.g. “ballot box peripherals” where we did not receive sufficient seals, handles for the ballot boxes. In allocating materials little account was taken of the fact that most authorities needed some spares for their polling station inspectors and training , as well as contingencies.

5) Communication

Electoral service managers are seen as the single point of contact by the GLRO team however our view was that the GLRO’s team were stretched and did not provide the continuity of contact we would normally expect. This manifested itself in finding out things late and in a somewhat random fashion. While these could be seen as trivial examples, together with the delay in receiving materials, they led to some considerable frustration around the network. Examples were

- Late and miscommunications of ballot paper numbering by IntElect
- Confusion over whether ballot papers were being delivered in boxes of 400 or 500
- Confusion over the maximum number of ballot papers that should be placed in a ballot box on the day of poll
- Hearing about larger ballot box seals for close of poll from people attending train the trainer sessions but not having this confirmed until the 19 April

6) Planning, Electoral Commission performance standards and GLRO Directions and the role of the BRO

Of concern was the apparent misalignment between the Electoral Commissions’ performance standards regime and the GLRO’s directions This has manifested itself in some BROs across London being marked down as below standard relating to mailing out of poll cards as they followed a GLRO direction

There was also some confusion around who should be reporting what to whom caused by the non statutory role of the BRO. The EC were expecting reports from CROs when the reality was that they can really only self assess the borough in which they have direct control over. At present a memorandum of understating spells out the role of the BRO which needs to be statutorily defined.

In the main the light touch directions regime followed by the GLRO was welcomed

7) IntElect portal

Whilst our experience of the IntElect team was good, one aspect, that whilst it did not in the end cause any apparent problems, did cause considerable frustration to electoral services teams across London.

We had been promised at the outset that requests for data , electorate, and nomination details could be handled by simple file uploads from our electoral management systems to a secure portal operated by IntElect. This was promised for early January.

It was released in March with

- minimal operating instructions,
- little support, despite being advised a helpline was available, this initially was not responsive and appeared under resourced.
- no details of minimum system operating requirements were provided (some authorities could not see the pages on the web as it required a minimum browser version).
- the file uploads did not working despite having been assured that software suppliers had been engaged in the process – which they had - and that it had been tested by end users , electoral services teams, - which it clearly had not.

As a result electoral services teams were forced to manually re-key data, send e-mail file attachments or spreadsheets in excel format for inputting by IntElect. None of these were satisfactory given the time sensitivity for nominations and the production of ballot papers and the risk of transposition errors. The data then had to be carefully re-checked to ensure that it had been transcribed correctly.

It took about 3.5 hours to key the data into the system. Not in itself a problem but the time and effort spent trying to get the system to work at critical times far exceeded this and the lack of response from IntElect was very frustrating.

A review of this issue with our software provider indicated that

- The upload files were available on our software system in November
- IntElect had changed their data structures subsequently without keeping software providers updated
- Our software providers had queried the use of XML file formats when there were already perfectly good files on the system in excel format from the 2008 elections.

Report prepared by

Malcolm Constable
Electoral Services Manager
London Borough of Lewisham

21 June 2012

Dear Janet

Apologies for the late submission but here are a few issues that I think need consideration:

- The London Elects team is too small and becomes full-time too late in the process.
- Much of the procurement seemed to be done late in the day.
- Many of the items procured by London Elects were supplied in insufficient quantities, no spares were supplied.
- There was no contingency for the supply , where necessary, of additional ballot boxes or ballot papers.
- The portal for the upload of election data did not work.
- Some clarity is required on what should be dealt with by London Elects and what should be dealt with by the Constituency Returning Officer e.g. supply of registers, nomination etc.
- The role of Borough Returning Officers should be recognised in law.
- Perhaps a greater organisational role for the lead boroughs should be considered.

Regards

Paul

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Janet Hughes
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Our ref:
Your ref:
Date: 20 June 2012

Dear Janet Hughes,

Review of the 2012 Mayoral and London Assembly elections

I am replying to the letter from the Elections Working Group on the Review of the 2012 Mayoral and London Assembly elections on behalf of the London Borough of Wandsworth.

Please note that some of the criticisms given in this document are aimed at what could be perceived as quite minor details. However, I would like to emphasise that these details should be considered in the overall management of these elections and that the sum of the frustrations each one incurred was substantial for those of us responsible at a local level for administering the elections.

Roles and Responsibilities

Compared with the 2008 elections, communication from London Elects was not good. In 2008, London Elects issued weekly updates with answers to FAQs, which did not happen this time. Important deadlines and tasks were buried in emails with different subject headers or without subject headers completely. This made it difficult to keep track of what we were expected to do and when.

The GLRO was slow to respond to our request to delay by one week the delivery of poll cards (the date of which was a GLRO direction) to a Ward that had a by-election the Thursday before the scheduled delivery. This was a straightforward request that should not have taken a long time to consider. We would also query why the GLRO, as the person in charge of these elections, felt it was necessary to take the lengthy step of consulting with the Electoral Commission and get their approval on this?

London Elects must be sufficiently staffed, some on a permanent, full-time basis well in advance of the election taking place. It appeared that a full team was in place only nine weeks before the election, which meant that they were not able to provide the comprehensive service required. Some thought also needs to be given to succession planning, as the advancing years of some of the London Elects staff is a concern. If a whole new team is to be recruited for 2016, this must be done now to allow for handover to take place, rather than leaving new members of staff without sufficient lead-in time. On a positive note, we were very impressed with the calibre of Sarah

www.wandsworth.gov.uk/vote

Assistant Director of Administration (Support and Democratic Services) – Patrick Watson

Garrett, the Communications Manager for London Elects. Her correspondence was timely, thorough and pleasant, and she always gave a response when requested, which did not always happen with other London Elects staff. Some emails from certain members of the London Elects team were not formatted properly, which made them difficult to read on screen; such basic tasks are not beyond the team and could have made communicating with them a lot easier. Very few members of the team put their direct phone numbers in their email signature, which made it harder to contact them in an emergency.

The relationship between the CRO and the BRO at Merton was successful.

Training and Guidance

User Acceptance Training (UAT) days in November 2011 could have been condensed into a half day session as there was a lot of time wasted doing nothing.

The full one day Constituency training (16 March 2012) for all the count staff was not rated very highly. It was a great opportunity for staff to be familiarised with the e-counting process and to see a comprehensive demonstration of how the equipment would operate on the day. The run through was based on straightforward ballot papers being received, but the volume of ballot papers provided for scanning at the training was quite small and in our case we requested that we go through the process a second time as to provide more hands on time for the staff. Despite this second run through, few staff were given the opportunity to see how more complicated processes such as 'on hold' and manual entries were dealt with. Again there was a great deal of wasted time and this could have been condensed. This took council staff away from their day to day work for an unnecessarily long period. The lack of an adequate volume of ballot papers meant that a valuable training session was underused and staff left the session ill-prepared for the count; in the end, we had to make up this shortfall internally.

There were differences between the guidance issued by the Electoral Commission and London Elects, including a mistake by London Elects on the colour of tendered ballot papers for a particular contest, which could have caused great confusion in the polling station, had statutory forms such as the ballot paper account been incorrect.

Much guidance was issued late or too late to take effect. For example, the ballot box assembly instructions were issued at least two weeks after the ballot boxes were delivered and after training had commenced, so we had to assemble some prototype boxes without guidance in order to write our own instructions to be handed out at training sessions. Additionally, London Elects asked us at the last minute to monitor how many tactile voting devices were used by blind or visually impaired electors, as the devices are expensive to produce. We managed to do this by issuing a form to polling stations, but it was too late to be included in guidance issued to polling station staff.

The training for the management aspects of the e-counting system was inadequate and forced us to learn on the day of the count itself. The final technical arrangements for collating and finalising the constituency result were not known in advance, which did cause some confusion and took up valuable time.

Registration and Voter Information

The London Elects website was excellent and the promotional posters on the sides of buses etc. were very good. However, the London Elects travelling ballot box campaign wasn't highly visible in this borough and Electoral Services were not aware which date had been chosen for its appearance in the area.

Resources

The notices and other materials provided by London Elects were, on the whole, of a high standard. Most items were delivered on the specified date and there was adequate communication on delivery arrangements. However, we had concerns that not enough contingency was provided. For example, we have 166 polling stations; only 170 notices (all types), totem poles etc. were delivered, leaving a contingency of just four of each. When we provide our own materials, we always allow for a greater contingency as part of our risk register and project plan, but the restrictions placed upon us by London Elects meant we could not fulfil this requirement. Additionally, there was very little flexibility when it came to placing orders for items such as ballot boxes. We had to submit our final number very early, which we wanted to alter later on in the process; this request was refused and an arbitrary deadline was given as the reason for the refusal, which we did not accept and pursued until we received the amount we required.

We also found that some of the resources issued by London Elects were not professionally laid out and actually contained omissions and spelling errors. For example, the nomination forms were quite poorly produced, with poor formatting which affected the layout. Additionally, several notices had to be reissued by London Elects once quite fundamental errors had been highlighted to them. If they had procedures in place for checking accuracy, this would not have been a problem.

The Count and IntElect

The power failure at Alexandra Palace demonstrated the importance of having contingency plans in place to deal with emergencies. There wasn't a generator at Olympia, so all counts held there would have been subject to lengthy delays had the same thing happened there. London Elects were not prepared to fund the back up generator stating that it was not provided at the 2008 elections and dismissed requests for this to be provided stating that there were not enough funds and that it was not needed in 2008. This must be addressed for future elections if Olympia is to remain as a count centre.

Count planning would have been made easier if there had been testing of the Intelect Portal ahead of the live data being required. We experienced considerable difficulties communicating with the e-count contractor, IntElect regarding the Portal, who were very poor at reply to emails and telephone calls, and did not give messages consistent with those issued by London Elects. For example, despite repeated assurances to the contrary, the amended staff details and electorate figures were not updated on the IntElect system in advance, so a lot of time was spent on polling day at the count site inputting these details and ensuring accuracy for the following day. Furthermore, it emerged the following day once the count was in progress that staffing details (for smartcard access) could not be altered, which contradicted the information we had

been given at the training day by London Elects and IntElect. This justified our decision to spend the substantial amount of time we did on polling day at the count site updating details on the system; had we left it until the count, we would have had serious difficulties and lengthened the duration of the count considerably.

They also changed the parameters of the data export from our election management software (Express) into their portal, which they did not inform Express about prior to the upload taking place. Consequently, the data export did not work and we had to input a lot of information manually. Furthermore, we were not advised that the portal would be disabled after the final deadline for changes had passed and we would not be able to gain access in order to view the information we had entered. Another struggle we had with the portal was that when entering data, there was no submit button in order to indicate that the inputted information was complete and correct; we just had to assume that the information had been saved on the portal as it was.

We were very fortunate to be allocated two very competent excellent members of staff from IntElect on the day of the count itself; it was due to them and their technical abilities that we did not experience any major difficulties with the e-counting system. We would suggest that ahead of the 2016 elections that a working party is formed, consisting of staff from different boroughs with different software suppliers, London Elects staff and Intelect staff.

When ballot boxes were taken to the count site, there were problems with the access to our section of the venue, as it was quite far away from the designated entrance and permission was refused to open up an access door closer to the pen. This meant that it took quite a while to transport the ballot boxes from the trucks to the pen.

The issue of smartcards on the day of the count was slow and a great deal of time was wasted.

Fees and Charges

At the meeting on 31 May 2012 GLRO indicated that there will be a tighter budget in 2016 and if this is to be the case then all information ascertained about inadequacies in the budget for 2012 must be taken on board in order be able to administer these elections.

Conclusion

We have tried to be constructive in our response whilst highlighting issues of concern which are felt to be justified, and was hope that our feedback can assist in the planning of the 2016 elections. We would be happy to provide further information or meet to discuss if required.

Yours sincerely



Neil Kennett
Head of Electoral Services

This matter is being dealt with by:

Martin Pyroyiannos

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Fax No: (020) 7641 2917

Minicom: (020) 7641 5912

Email: mpyroyiannos@westminster.gov.uk

Date: 8 June 2012

Elections Working Group

Re Review of the 2012 Mayoral and London Assembly elections

I have sought to include some top-level feedback rather than give you a long list of things which did not work perfectly, some of which would have been of a distinctly local bent. I hope the sub-headings are useful.

Roles and responsibilities

The central coordination by the GLRO and London Elects team was good. I think that the GLRO and the London Elects team are best placed to advise on what did not work as well as they had hoped it would do. All boroughs were given the opportunity to feedback to London Elects at a recent City Hall meeting. Westminster(West Central constituency) had a largely positive election experience but we acknowledge that this was not necessarily the case in other constituencies. The use of light touch directions by the GLRO was welcomed and we had a good working relationship with the GLRO and his team. The relationship between the boroughs in our constituency was also an excellent one. I understand that this may not necessarily have been the case in some other constituencies. For this reason, consideration may need to be given as to whether the CRO should have a power to direct any BRO within his constituency and whether, for example, the GLRO should seek proof that CROs are holding proper planning meetings with the other boroughs making up their constituency. There were issues with some of the GLRO's directions not aligning with the performance standards set by the Electoral Commission. An example here would be the date by which poll cards should have been despatched. Clarity in respect of this should be provided to Returning Officers at future elections.

Training and Guidance

I thought the training sessions provided by London Elects were excellent and that the training materials were of a very high standard. The e-count training material arrived a little later than it perhaps should have done and the e-count hands-on constituency training should have included an end to end live environment to it. The training took place a number of weeks before the 4 May and was focused almost entirely on the PC element of the e-count. There was no opening of ballot boxes work or any real focus on the areas of delivery which were likely to prove problematic.

Registration and voting

The Electoral Commission and London Elects registration campaigns worked. Because these campaigns were so well resourced, and were having an obvious effect, we did not feel an urgent need to put in place any additional local registration activities, over and above those we had already planned for. A significant challenge was presented by the Conservative Party sending out postal vote application forms to a large percentage of our voters. The number of postal voters at this election was over 4,000 higher than we would ordinarily expect the number

to be. We were grateful that Conservative Party HQ kept us in the loop on what they were doing and on the number of their postal applications which were likely to come our way. As a direct result of this we were able to put in place proper contingency plans. London Elects can help to reinforce the message sent to political parties that keeping boroughs in the loop on their canvassing activity is really important.

The nomination process

In terms of Mayoral nominations, the process seemed to work smoothly. I know that there is a school of thought that the GLRO should check the names on Mayoral nominations rather than have the boroughs do this.

Absent voting

We did not experience any significant problems at any stage, and on the basis of feedback from our postal voters, the packs were delivered when we had hoped for them to be delivered. We had no fraud related issues to investigate.

We achieved a 100% check of personal identifiers on postal voting statements. Agents and a number of observers were present throughout long periods of the opening of postal votes process. In terms of budgeting for improving any of our local process, i.e having more scanners and making more opening staff available, in order to speed up the process, it is unlikely that the budget at future elections will permit us to scale up our resource. The opening of postal votes and the 100% checks needed are time consuming and result in key staff having to be deployed away from other critical areas.

Polling Day

We were very happy with how our polling day went. We struggled initially with finding enough staff and then just worked towards finding enough people with the skills required. We did not have any significant issues to attend to on polling day. A few voters complained about tellers being able to ask for poll numbers on a voter's way-in. We had no queues. This set of elections was quite complex in terms of the issuing of ballots, display of statutory notices, and the ballot box used. Polling staff, as a consequence, had quite a lot of information to take on board. Perhaps there is a need to not over complicate things in future and to try to keep the processes simple.

Verification and count

We were concerned that we were not able to sign off our count layout and systems on polling day, the day before the count. This was a worry. The transportation to and storage of ballots at our count venue of Olympia worked. The security arrangements for 4 May were rather officious and I am not convinced that using wristbands for accreditation worked. Our count worked, but the counts at Alexandra Place did not. There seemed to be a rather nebulous stream of information coming our way as why those counts were in trouble. This was a worry, as we were not sure whether the same thing would happen to us. Perhaps there was a role here to be played by the Deputy GLRO at our venue. Our candidates and agents were content with what we delivered. The e-counting processes brought with them a number of attendant risks and there seems to have been a commonality across constituencies, as to what could have worked better. Some of the issues were ones which had previously been identified in the weeks leading up to polling day as likely to present a significant challenge. I am not sure that we were always listened to. There was an unbending feel about some of the replies to our concerns raised in respect of the count. The web portal used by IntElect, the e-count supplier, to capture information needed to produce ballot papers and populate the fields of their e-counting system was cumbersome, not at all user friendly, and should not be used in future.

Election integrity

We attended a meeting with the police, organised by London Elects and the Electoral Commission. This proved to be a very useful meeting. Our local police were incredibly helpful,

especially on polling day itself, when they made regular visits to all our polling stations. We carried out a number of integrity checks on our voter registration and postal vote applications and on all our lists. We were very conscious that just one or two erroneous applications getting in under the wire could have created huge issues for us in terms of undermining voter confidence. We did not have to report any allegations of electoral fraud.

Voters

We had very few complaints from voters. Some of the issues raised included, the practices of tellers (see above) , how we could be sure that a voter registered in two different constituencies had not voted twice, and that postal votes were made too freely available.

If you need any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Pyroyiannos', written in a cursive style.

Martin Pyroyiannos

Manager, Legal and Electoral Services Support
Deputy Constituency Returning Officer

GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY

Head of Paid Service

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Our ref: duvallboff220612

Date: 22 June 2012

Elections Review Working Group

London Assembly
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London SE1 2AA

Dear Len and Andrew

Review of the 2012 Elections

Thank you for your letter of 30 May about the 2012 GLA elections. I welcome the review

As you will know, my formal responsibilities in relation to the Elections relate to providing the staffing support the Greater London Returning Officer (GLRO) requires to conduct his role. There is clearly a balance to be struck between ensuring the GLRO's independence in these matters (quite appropriately) and making best use of the corporate staffing resources already in place at the GLA. More generally, it is important that there are good corporate liaison arrangements in place within the Authority so that help and advice can be provided as necessary, for example on finance matters, and to ensure good communications.

Yours sincerely
Jeff Jacobs

Jeff Jacobs
Head of Paid Service

Resources

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Our ref: duvallboff220612

Date: 22 June 2012

Elections Review Working Group

London Assembly
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London SE1 2AA

Dear Len and Andrew

Thank you for your letter of 30 May regarding the 2012 GLA elections.

I understand that you are interested in whether there are any particular issues I have from a chief finance officer perspective.

I can advise that over the past four years, spending on the elections totalled £20.3m and I am currently expecting a small underspend of around £0.2m. By comparison, the 2008 elections underspend was £0.1m against a budget of £18.7m.

Looking forward in terms of future spend, in the current financial climate we need to ensure that the costs incurred on future GLA elections are minimised. One possibility (which would require legislative change) would be to reduce circulation of the election information booklet to one per household, down from the current position of one per elector. Another option would be to look at what further use could be made of the GLA's existing corporate resources.

If you would like any further information please let me know.

Yours sincerely



PP Martin Clarke
Executive Director

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Len Duvall AM and Andrew Boff AM

Elections Working Group
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Our ref:

Date: 20th June 2012

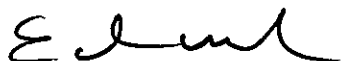
Dear Len and Andrew

Thank you for your letter of 30 May regarding the 2012 GLA elections. I welcome the review you are leading. I would of course be happy to contribute to your review as you see fit.

One observation I have is that it is important for the GLA to have a process in place to ensure that all the election literature it issues is seen to be impartial. I assume you will be getting more views on that from the political parties involved. Beyond that, I think there is a broad consensus that the following issues should be examined:

- Communications with boroughs;
- Timing of the announcement of the election result along with the commitments given to the press about that; and
- Resources required going forward.

Yours sincerely



Sir Edward Lister

Chief of Staff and Deputy Mayor, Policy & Planning

Mr Len Duvall AM and Mr Andrew Boff AM
Elections Working Group
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London
SE1 2AA

19th June 2012

Dear Sirs

Review of the 2012 Mayoral & Assembly Elections

Thank you for your invitation to contribute to your review of the above elections.

The following was collated during a "wash-up" meeting of the London Branch AEA on May 31st with London Elects. We have added subsequent comments in further consultation with our colleagues.

Our purpose was to be as comprehensive as possible and also forward looking. It should be noted that some of the feedback issues identified below may be as much for the Electoral Commission as for "London Elects."

It should also be emphasised that Election professionals generally had and have high confidence in, and a feeling of considerable support from, London Elects regardless of whatever specific issues there may be for the future.

Not every administrator from every Borough is absolutely agreed on every point, but this paper seeks to identify all the detailed points made nonetheless and there remains considerable consensus on many, if not all.

At the May meeting, meeting, the London elects team identified what were for them three key issues:

- budget had been tight , and this would be an issue for 2016 as the budget may be further reduced;
- accommodation problems at City Hall – the team were only together in one space nine weeks before the election;
- requirement to use GLA procurement processes via TFL was restrictive and time consuming and led to some contracts being awarded late in the process.

London Elects however felt there had been some clear improvements over 2008 :

- training working group involving all the Boroughs to produce consistent training plans; success shown by very few problems reported on polling day across London;
- centrally co-ordinated SPOC (Police Single Point of Contact) meeting;

- project planning course at early stage in process.

It was acknowledged that some key documentation had been circulated later than was satisfactory.

A general point was made by the Boroughs that the relatively quiet year of 2011 had allowed time for a large amount of advance planning to take place, but this would be much more constrained in 2016 as the elections would be coming after the Parliamentary Election year and during the implementation period of IER (Individual electoral Registration, a dramatic transformation of Register methodology).

The meeting moved on from this point to tabulate the following analysis.

FEEDBACK ISSUES – UP TO POLLING DAY

Issue	What went well	Learning Points
Regulations/ Directions	Light touch approach compared with the Referendum. GLRO direction on poll cards more sensible than EC	Need co-ordination between regs and EC Performance Standards. Role of BRO needs to be acknowledged in legislation. Clarification of rules on availability of register to independent candidates. No feedback on real time Performance Standards submissions from Commission.
Project Planning	Involvement of Boroughs at early stage and early submission of plans	Some key documents were late, eg Count manual. GLRO plans should have been seen earlier and detailed London Elects project plans not made available. Could have been real time as with Performance Standards. No funds for Borough contingency planning. Over emphasis on planning for queues. Weaknesses in London Elects – team should be drawn from London Borough managers. E count contract should be for multiple elections.
Nominations	Went smoothly Packs were well received	Lack of knowledge locally on what was sent centrally to candidates and agents/ key messages given out to candidates/ agents from London Elects. View that mayoral nominations could all be dealt with at City Hall.

		Move away from faxes to scanning and email for confirmations (but not all agree with this)
Accreditation	Centralised process worked well for media Wristband arrangements worked well.	General view that some of the arrangements for the count centres were over complicated. Constituency accreditation should be at local level. Feedback from 2008 exercise not used. Too many late changes in processes
Supplies	Ballot boxes were better design than 2008 Totem poles well received, but should have been reusable.	Some deliveries were late. Better organisation needed, as some Boroughs received wrong amounts or delivered to wrong place.
Communications	Sarah Garrett provided an excellent point of contact with clear communications to the Boroughs	IntElect portal was problematic throughout the process. Too many emails from different London Elects team members, so unclear who to refer back to. Too much pressure on Pat Parker. Some emails were circulated with no headings or contact details. Copy Elections Managers in to all emails
Publicity	Website very good Bus and street panel posters good, some thought best ever	Mayoral booklet to households only. Arrangements for late Mayoral booklets put pressure on Boroughs. Export of data for booklet caused problems as a number of changes in requirements.
Training	Courses well attended Project plans and risk registers submitted early Slides good and allowed local flexibility. Train the Trainer and Advanced trainer courses well received. No problems on polling day.	Went well despite limited resources. Look at distance learning for 2016. Lesson plans and handbooks need to be better co-ordinated. Timing of delivery of some materials could have been better. Mixed messages about when the second ballot box should be used in stations. Assessment from observers was not consistent.

FEEDBACK ISSUES – THE COUNT

Issue	What went well	Learning Points
Managing data through the portal and the communications process		<p>Generally the processes for submitting data to the Portal were seen as over complicated. The Portal had been ready for use too late.</p> <p>Problems with collection of data from all EMS systems for the portal.</p> <p>Ballot Box numbering could have been simplified.</p> <p>Information from IntElect to Count Centre Managers not circulated until the day of the count.</p> <p>Communications poor between London Elects and IntElect.</p> <p>No information to agents on the count day about progress and how problems were to be resolved.</p>

Count Centres	<p>Refreshments good</p> <p>Use of own staff as scanner operators was a big improvement over 2008.</p> <p>Some centres had good IntElect staff.</p> <p>Excel was a good venue</p>	<p>Different views on keeping three Count Centres or moving to 14 local count centres.</p> <p>The four Counts at Alexandra Palace experienced delays, the most obvious media issue on the day. Loss of power an unforeseen problem as it was understood emergency arrangements would kick in (see detailed note later).</p> <p>Pre meetings at count centres on polling day not as useful as should have been.</p>
Supplies	<p>Ballot paper delivery and packaging good.</p> <p>Right amounts and good quality.</p>	<p>Perforations on postals not consulted on and could cause problems of “manual entry”.</p> <p>Bands around ballot paper bundles split easily.</p> <p>Colours were not consistent with those shown in printed materials.</p> <p>CNLs – template was not as good as printing from Boroughs’ EMS systems so didn’t save time.</p> <p>Sometimes Insufficient seals.</p>

		Can we do away from ballot trays and go straight from boxes to pc entry/ scanning.
IntElect	Some individual staff at different centres were excellent	Mixed views on level of support and competence levels. Need proper early contact at start of count with centre co ordinators and CROs. Lack of specialist knowledge of election processes.
Data Collection		Portal was a major issue. Not user friendly. Unclear what was required to be uploaded for different parts of the Portal. Should have been possible to upload BPA data to system rather than having to handwrite to control sheets.
Training	UAT well received. Support materials – DVD, CD – good. Hercules house training worked well after teething problems at first session.	Too much time out of office. Scanner operators felt that their training could have been done in a couple of hours.
Count end to end process	Better than in 2008. Visual displays good Higher confidence levels in process from candidates and agents. Use of CI staff as scanner operators.	Do we need ballot trays? Overall, seen as over complicated and process needs to review to flow better. Reduce physical movement of papers through the process. Problems at Alexandra Palace not explained at time or since. More screens need for RO adjudication. More allowance for local tolerance of figures. No backup for broken scanners. Manual entry button not well placed on RO adjudication screen,
Post election reports	Good cross Borough working	Figures could have been circulated earlier. Verification reports confusing. Couldn't check against batch header information.

IntElect Response

The meeting included input from IntElect and this is the London Branch interpretation of what they said. We are sure you will be seeking their views separately.

A major project, so will be learning points. From their perspective, there were successes. Where counts had no problems, it was possible to complete in under six hours. Outside observers were impressed. Scanners worked well generally and use of Council staff as operators was a success. Assumptions had been for 3600 papers to be scanned by each machine per hour and the actual performance was nearer 4000 per contact hour.

Acknowledged that portal did not work as planned and problems on data collection would need more early work with EMS suppliers. Agreed there should have been more pre-count briefing at Centres.

Count process and work flow will be worked on to look at suggestions, but this will take time.

NB the Branch noted that there is an option, under the terms of the e-count contract, to use IntElect for 2016 at competitive price. There is concern that budget considerations may preclude development of improvements which are being sought in count processes, if same contractor is selected.

Time of results

It was obvious that results came in more quickly from eXcel and Olympia than from the counts located at Alexandra Palace.

A variety of explanations have been advanced for this – power outages, problems of rebooting count servers, specific issues at constituency level – and it is probably best for others who were closer to these issues to account for them.

The encouraging thing is that whilst the servers were actually up and running, scanning times at Alexandra Palace were just as “competitive” as at the other two count centres so the difficulties encountered are not insurmountable.

There remain considerable logistical and security benefits from using more than one count centre.

Obviously the point of e-counting three types of ballot paper with three types of electoral system is to achieve a result more quickly than would have been the case had hand-counting been utilised. It probably did still achieve this but of course there is a cost-benefit consideration which deserves to be dealt with seriously and it should not be forgotten that more complex electoral systems do take longer to count by whatever methodology is used.

It may well be that the expectations placed upon e-counting were actually too great. Unfavourable comparisons were made in parts of the press with the relative speed at which the French presidential election was counted and with a higher turnout – but it should be said that that is a much simpler system and that the results of each stage was not formally called until several *days* had elapsed.

Funding and resources for 2016

Adequate funding for the elections is key in ensuring that they are successfully run.

The budget for 2012 was very tight and had no provision for contingency planning.

It also did not allow the level of pre election communications initiatives on electoral registration across the capital which had been run in 2008, permitting a narrower focus on how to vote on polling day. Several Boroughs used the London Elects “How do you like your London ?” template but begged other budgets in order to be able to do so and meet their participation obligations. This lack of funding for registration activity may have contributed to the lower than anticipated turnout.

Of course a lower turnout reduces costs , so it might appear that savings have been made on some headings – but a 2008 level of turnout, the continuing expansion of postal votes and the considerable increase in Royal Mail costs which did not apply this time will create additional pressures next time. Across London, Election core teams are still having to find savings and 2016 could be much tougher. It is very much a matter of concern if budgetary provision is to be reduced in four years time.

It should also be said that we were disappointed that despite the issues raised following the 2008 elections, the GLA core team was not properly established. London Elects still seems to overly rely on the expertise and advice of professionals brought in on short-term contracts and general clerical support. There remains a clear need for additional full-time professional support to the manager as well as a more focused administrative resource. Electoral administration has changed enormously since the first GLA elections in 2000 and the GLA’s team has perhaps not kept pace. This is a risk both to the conduct of the elections to the relationships with the boroughs. Nor is this simply about 2016 – the team will be crucial to the 2014 European elections when the boroughs will need to concentrate more on their full council elections.

We see a window of opportunity over the next nine months for the GLA to re-appraise how it approaches the running of the elections and to provide proper internal funding for the central team, which needs to be full time from now up to 2016. Issues such as timing of contracts and better logistical planning which caused pressures in the current team need to be resolved . The lack of elections in 2013 gives an opportunity for detailed planning with the Boroughs

before all our attentions are engaged with new challenges of the elections and changes to the registration system in 2014 and 2015.

We trust the above is of some help but of course we are prepared to clarify any points as required.

Yours sincerely

George Cooper
Chair, London AEA

Richard Lefley
Hon. Secretary, London AEA

For and on behalf of the London Branch, Association of Electoral Administrators

Lessons Learned from 2008

London Elects Report

	Recommendations	Consideration	Solution Implemented	Reasons	Post 2012 review of effectiveness
1	Any amendment to the Rules should be in place at least six months before the elections. (Also rec 1 of ERC, rec 1 of EC) ¹	Forwarded to and discussed with the Cabinet Office	Following discussion with the Cabinet Office rule changes are due to be laid in autumn 2011.	Following the UKPGE in May 2010 the coalition government's proposals for electoral law took precedence.	Satisfactory but should continue to press for Rules to be in place six months before elections.
2	It would be sensible for the 'Borough Returning Officers' to be recognised in law and each given responsibility for local activity in his or her own borough. This requires primary legislation but is necessary for the sake of transparency and accountability. (Also rec 2 of EC, rec 4 of AEA)	Forwarded to and discussed with the Cabinet Office	No change forthcoming in legislation. Memorandum of Understanding between GLRO / CROs / BEROs* (as to who will undertake which tasks) to be reviewed and put in place before the Notice of Election. [* BEROs are the Borough Electoral Registration/Returning Officers, i.e. the proper officers of the non-lead boroughs in each constituency.] Electoral Commission published new Performance Standards for ROs in January 2012 but these necessarily focused on the statutory responsibilities rather than the practice of task allocations.	Government's legal advice is that BEROs are not 'returning officers' in the sense of responsibility for electing ('returning') any members and a 3-tier RO hierarchy is in any event unprecedented.	The retention of the situation where the law fails to recognise the reality of "who does what" is surely unsustainable. In European and the new Police elections the law recognises Local ROs who, similarly, do not themselves "return" the successful candidate(s).
3	Candidates are entitled to receive copies of the electoral registers from boroughs' electoral registration officers. Some of the smaller parties and independent candidates reported problems with some boroughs in getting copies. Practice should be standardised and there should be clarity as to when parties and independents may receive the registers. (Also rec 8 of EC, rec 13 of AEA)	Referred to and discussed with Cabinet Office and Electoral Commission	No change forthcoming in legislation. Electoral Commission issued guidance for potential candidates as to their right to copies of the register and its use. This guidance followed the letter of the law. London Elects issued guidance that those potential candidates without pre-NoE access to the full registers to collect (if they wished) electors' signatures pre-NoE along with their addresses, and then use the right of inspection of the registers to check entries and confirm electors' register numbers.	Legislation not considered appropriate at this stage GLRO to encourage consistency across London and in particular, within a constituency	EROs are entitled to take their own decisions locally as to access to the electoral register and the government should review the inconsistency that arises for independent candidates, compared with those from the main political parties. Some boroughs assisted prospective candidates by undertaking these checks by telephone but others required them to attend the office and inspect the registers themselves.

¹ LE =London Elects Report, ERC = Report of London Assembly Elections Review Committee, EC = Report of Electoral Commission, AEA = Report of AEA London Branch.

4	Consideration to be given to: the appropriateness of deposits and whether the fee for the Mayoral booklet be raised, or abandoned?	Forwarded to and discussed with the Cabinet Office	No change forthcoming in legislation at this stage	Will review again in the future	Merits further discussion in the context of the requirements for other types of election across the country.
5	Should papers with identifying marks on the back of the paper be rejected?	Forwarded to and discussed with the Cabinet Office. Although there is no opportunity under e-counting for a counting agent or observer to correlate the votes on a ballot paper with identifying marks on the back (because of the speed with which paper pass through the scanners and in a single orientation), any individual paper can be retrieved for human inspection during the count, or all might be reviewed in the event of an election petition.	No change forthcoming in legislation	Result must be the same whether counting undertaken by scanning or manually, and case law has determined that identifying marks on the back of the paper requires its rejection.	No objection received.
6	Quality assurance through borough staff training and liaison is vital and must be given even greater emphasis	Continuous improvement in training strategy and delivery	Further 'training the trainer' programme for borough staff. Review of training materials. QA process for training delivery including independent assessors and participant feedback	Need to avoid micro-managing the detail of operations	Training the Trainer programme was well received. CBT materials were distributed later than we would have wished and this affected its usefulness to some Boroughs. Improved training for the e-count staff significantly improved performance over 2008, particularly through Borough staff undertaking the scanner operation role. Further collaborative development of the training strategy should be useful for 2016.
7	For the procurement process, accuracy should be sought in all aspects of the specification – e.g. reasoned estimates of the likely electorate for the elections – and the contract should be awarded at least 15 months before the poll.	TfL assumed responsibility for procurement in autumn 2010 so all lead times reviewed and revised.	E-counting specification reviewed with provision for updating electorates post-December 2012. Contract awarded in August 2010 (ie 21 months before the elections).	All contracts need to be based on most up to date and accurate information. However, statutory quinquennial review of postal voter lists was scheduled from January 2012, with potential impact on estimated numbers requiring postal vote packs.	Contract awarded in good time and this worked well. However, the lead time for printing 15m ballot papers required boroughs to estimate their electorates and numbers of postal voters in December and it was possible that these would prove inaccurate, resulting in practice in additional printing being required in response to a late surge in registration/postal vote applications. To be kept under review in the light of the method of counting agreed for 2016 and the impact of the introduction of IER, if Parliament so agrees..

8	Before BAFO stage, external stakeholders should be consulted on relevant aspects, eg. size of ballot paper to fit one piece mailer, time lines to be taken into account, and percentage of ballot papers to be printed.	Early contact with external suppliers of postal packs to London Boroughs Cost implications are a consideration	London Elects have had continued dialogue with suppliers on size of ballot papers. The number of ballot papers to be printed increased from 75% to 80%	Ensure Boroughs have sufficient postal and polling station ballot papers with costs taken into consideration	See above as to numbers of ballot papers. Discussion required with boroughs and postal vote fulfilment houses re size of envelopes.
9	Independent auditing of the software and system should be repeated and should be undertaken at the earliest possible stage. (Also rec 5 of ERC, rec 5 of EC)	Assessed duration of e-counting contract over which independent testing would add value.	An independent auditor, Actica, was appointed in January 2011 (ie 16 months before deployment of the system) to audit the following aspects of the e-counting contract: project management, technical architecture, organisation and processes, and testing. Actica's reports will be published.	Perceived need to benefit from independent commentary and recommendations from blueprint stage, through the whole of the development phase, to delivery and post-election operations.	Full and thorough auditing undertaken throughout development, build and delivery phases to provide optimum assurance. If the e-counting system does not change fundamentally in 2016 some of the testing may not need to be repeated.
10	Ballot Paper Production - London Elects staff should be present throughout production at each site and should liaise with any foreign jurisdictions through which the shipments would pass.	Staff were present during production in 2008 but liaison with foreign jurisdictions was incomplete.	Following award of contract that provided for production of ballot papers in the UK, the only necessary measure was to repeat attendance during the print / packaging process.	Production undertaken in the UK and so liaison with foreign jurisdictions was unnecessary.	Senior staff present during printing (day and night) and thus able to give immediate clearance or instruction, as necessary. Standard operating practice for the future.
11	Whether a small number of sub-regional count centres is preferable to 10/14 centres, as in 2004.	Economic considerations are as material as practicalities of deployment of e-counting solutions across multiple sites.	The same three venues were retained for 2012 although a different space was contracted at Olympia and one constituency was moved from Olympia to ExCel.	E-counting system communications are easier and more robust when operated between City Hall and three sites, and there are financial benefits from streamlined infrastructure.	Review of whether 1, 2 or 3 count centres would be most effective, to be supported by full cost benefit analysis.
12	Whether, if the answer is yes, there should be an attempt to find one or two smaller centres south of the River (there was none available for 2008 for 4+ constituencies)?	Geographical spread and ease of access for candidates, agents and media.	No suitable venues could be identified south of the river and so, following consultation with local authorities and political parties, Lambeth & Southwark constituency was moved from Olympia to ExCel - and the transfer worked successfully.	Lambeth & Southwark constituency was moved from Olympia to ExCel in order to improve public transport access, eg via the Jubilee Line.	Periodic searches for suitable venues south of the River will continue to be undertaken.
13	Count centre planning should in future be included in the e-counting contract, eg timescales for producing lay out plans. In addition, the Authority needs to be explicit in its expectations of the contractor in regard to the count centres.	ITT to reflect need for comprehensive service including layout etc planning consistent with contractor's needs	Contractor's preferred layouts have had to be reviewed in terms of H&S and fire safety provisions	Licensing and other requirements of the management companies for the three venues have to be observed, together with the need for adequate access to the counting process by agents and observers.	Layout planning will remain part of the service specification, and associated cost/other implications will continue to be assessed on a site-specific basis.
14	CROs / lead boroughs should in future be involved earlier in count centre planning.	Effective contribution to planning and early resolution of identified issues	Creation in July 2011 of working groups based on each count centre for consultation and networking	Aim to avoid unintended consequences of decisions taken centrally ahead of borough consultations.	Steering groups for each count venue – including reps of all CROs, contractors, London Elects and site management – proved valuable and will be continued.

15	Adequate time should in future be allowed to set up the centres (minimum 2 days) to ensure that all furniture and equipment is installed and fully tested before handover to the CROs.	Cost of extended build time would be prohibitive so ITT for 2012 based still on 2 days	Contract provides for contractor to build systems on site in 2 days.	Rental costs for any longer period would be prohibitive.	2 days proved scarcely sufficient on this occasion and this will be reviewed for future events – to consider either a longer set-up period or overnight working.
16	A member of the Authority's FM staff, if available, should in future be allocated to assist with procurement of count centre equipment. (Also rec 12 AEA)	Transfer of procurement management to TfL changed relationships and opened up new possibilities within existing frameworks	All avenues pursued, including extension of existing GLA contracts as well as fresh procurement exercises.	Pursuit of most economically advantageous tenders.	The operation of the TfL procurement route entailed some abortive tendering exercises and this will be reviewed for future events to ensure tendering is restricted to appropriate companies and to guarantee adequate timescales to allow for re-tendering where necessary. The unique characteristics and timelines of an election cannot always be accommodated within standard procurement procedures.
17	Security was slightly different in each centre as a result of local decisions in the light of site management requirements, local police advice and CROs' views. Boroughs should in future be given earlier advice of the draft admissions policy discussed with MPS centrally	Large numbers of people arrive at Count Centres at the same time causing delays to staff/candidates/agents etc with the possibility of the count not starting on time. The responsibility for admittance is shared between the GLRO and CRO	Discussions with CROs commenced in the summer 2011 to produce best practice to ease queues with the option of staggered admittance times but enabling the count to start on time	Any arrangement not to affect the security levels advised by the police and taking into account health and safety issues affecting each of the count centres	As MPS final security assessments were not – and never will be – available until a short period before the count, initial arrangements were locally and reviewed at the start of the week. This procedure will be maintained.
18	Staffing should in future be reviewed in the light of experience in May. The need for one CRO to take overall charge, the role of the count centre coordinators, the nature and number of the contractors' staff, and media management presence all need to be reviewed.	Need to ensure effective co-ordination between independent CROs, venue management companies, contractors and GLRO who enters into the main contracts for goods and services on-site.	DGLRO for each count centre, supported by count centre co-ordinator (London Elects). IntElect appointed a count centre manager for each constituency. Advance planning dealt with through consultative group for each count centre, comprising representatives from all constituencies, IntElect and London Elects.	Advance planning and building networks are important to ensure that events on the day run as smoothly as possible.	There was general support from CROs for the on-site DGLROs, count centre co-ordinators, assistants and media liaison staff provided by London Elects.
19	The specification should provide for double-checking every data packet within every transmission.	Ensure that all data transmitted from count centres is received accurately at City Hall.	Specification included in the e-counting ITT and contract.	Need for 100% accuracy of results.	This requirement is now standard practice.
20	Seals - A more rigorous testing regime must be followed for all materials. (Also rec 4 of ERC and rec 10 of EC)	Ballot boxes must remain sealed until formally opened in front of agents etc at start of count.	Design of ballot boxes reverts to 2004 model, and much larger tamper proof seal will be used in 2012	Security of ballot papers in ballot boxes particularly in transit from polling station to count centre	The larger final seal proved sufficient and will be retained whenever single-use ballot boxes are deployed.

21	Postal Votes - The checking of personal identifiers should continue to be targeted at the 100% level (Also rec 9 of EC)	Statute requires minimum 20% checking but good practice is to check all PIs. Election management systems must be robust enough to deliver this level of service.	GLRO direction to plan for 100% checking.	Direction framed to allow that a borough's election management system may conceivably fail and manual checking would take a disproportionate amount of time.	100% checking was achieved on this occasion. Upcoming legislation is likely to make it mandatory to check 100%.
22	Postal Voting - London Elects should take the lead in co-ordinating action across all boroughs to ensure timely discussion, training and preparations.	Differing election management systems used by boroughs. Work practices within each borough different depending on number of postal voters. Refreshing of Postal vote identifiers due to commence early in 2012.	General Purposes Working Group made up of Borough representatives set up in August 2011 and currently reviewing postal vote arrangements with a view to issuing good practice guidance	Consistency across London Boroughs and in particular within Constituencies	In spite of the significant increase in postal voting compared with previous years, the only problem encountered was with instances of electronic envelope openers cutting the ballot papers. We will investigate whether the use of larger envelopes would help to solve this issue.
23	Communications - It is recommended to desist with the requirement for candidates to pay a £10,000 contribution to the booklet printing costs.	Forwarded to and discussed with the Cabinet Office	No change forthcoming in legislation at this stage	Will review again in the future	For further discussion with the Cabinet Office. The cost of the booklet was some £1.7m and this will increase for 2016 as the size of the electorate grows and as a result of increased Royal Mail charges. The candidates' contributions of £10,000 each (£70,000 in (total) were not excessive. However, in future there may be options in terms of the extent of distribution of the booklet and/or the use of the internet for electors to receive all necessary information,
24	Owing to the systems London boroughs use to manage their electoral registers, collating large batches of data is close to impossible. Large amounts of officer time were spent sorting and cleaning data for a) the find your polling station tool and b) to gather the mailing list for the booklet. These are databases containing literally millions of cells of data and should never have to be ordered and sorted by hand.	Investigating the feasibility of a common format being used by boroughs to ease the burden of large amounts of data being analysed manually	London Elects currently reviewing the best way to gather electors' names/addresses with the appropriate contractors	Ensure all qualified voters receive their mayoral booklet in a timely fashion. Provide a means to allow electors to search for their polling station online.	Different electoral management systems (EMS) output data in different formats so London Elects funded adaptations to achieve a single data format. More work is required to ensure that other EMS data is transferable for e-counting purposes, e.g. electorate size, polling station locations etc.
25	Consideration to be given on how to staff the communications team.	Roles need to be aligned to the foreseeable tasks and the budget available, and also clearly defined. Secondments from within the GLA should not be precluded unless there was a demonstrable conflict of interest.	Recruitment to the posts in London Elects' Comms Team (all fixed term posts) was open but no existing GLA staff applied.	Decided to apply the conflict of interest test at shortlisting stage.	Open recruitment to all FTC posts will be maintained.

26	Given that digital technology changes more rapidly than, for example, printing, it is recommended that the 2012 London Elects team go through an open OJEU process to appoint a new web design agency.	Transfer of procurement management to TfL changed relationships and opened up new possibilities within existing frameworks	Reviewed all available frameworks and used COI digital & website design framework.	Pursuit of most economically advantageous tender.	The pace of technological change suggests that a substantial rebuild of the London Elects site may again be desirable for 2016, and procurement will be undertaken in line with GLA procedures.
27	Procurement - Consideration will be given to the balance of expertise drawn in from the core GLA, including Legal & Procurement and Facilities Management. (Also recs 16 and 34 LE, rec 12 AEA)	Transfer of procurement management to TfL changed relationships	TfL provided both procurement practitioner and procurement legal advice and support.	Use of appropriate expertise and assurance of statutory compliance / transparency.	TfL's services will continue to be used in line with GLA policy. Detailed planning will need to be undertaken well ahead of the first procurements in order to overcome the challenges encountered with – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o understanding of the requirements, o the immovability of some delivery dates, and therefore o the critical need to abide by the agreed timetable. Next time, therefore, there must be greater allowance for slippage.
28	Risk assessment and business continuity planning must remain an integral feature of elections project management.	Need for 360-degree integrated planning	Risk register and BCP revised and kept under regular review including discussion at project team meetings and (for e-counting contract) at E-counting Management Board.	Rigorous and robust process embedded in project planning and management.	BCPs and risk registers are required under the Electoral Commission's performance standard for ROs. London Elects will continue to collect CROs' documents and ensure consistency and complementarity with London Elects' own documents as well as ensuring the completeness of the latter.
29	CROs should develop their own business continuity plans in time for the count chapters to be brought together in a single document.	Need for 360-degree integrated planning	GLRO direction for submission of project plans and risk registers preceded by workshops for borough staff to raise skill levels and achieve greater consistency.	Rigorous and robust process embedded in project planning and management.	CROs run their counts, within the law and taking account of GLRO directions and guidance. Whilst, it is unlikely that complete consistency will be achieved in the foreseeable future, it is necessary to seek to achieve consistency in key aspects, such as in transparency, accuracy and efficiency.
30	All polling and count staff should continue to be required to attend training and a more systematic quality assurance approach be developed for training at borough level.	Consistency of voter experience and best practice.	Training strategy and plan reviewed. Deliver included 'training the trainer' workshops as well as revised / enhanced materials / scripts.	Adaptation to capture learning from 2008 and other subsequent electoral events.	Collaboration with borough representatives in the development of the training plan and materials was successful, as also was the 'training the trainer' in leaving a lasting legacy at borough level. With hundreds of training sessions conducted across the boroughs, it is important to retain the QA sampling process of observer visits.

31	The current review and the analysis of borough returns due over the winter months must capture all potential cost variations and these must be reflected in the budget set for 2012.	All expenditure undertaken by Constituencies/Boroughs were thoroughly reviewed by LE staff and issues were raised with the appropriate CRO where necessary. A review of expenditure on Borough disbursements was undertaken in order to set a realistic budget for 2012	The GLA have adopted the Cabinet Office fees and charges structure that sets the maximum expenditure for the constituency under different heads. A fees and charges working group has been set up made up of representatives from the Boroughs to review and comment on recommended payments for 2012. It is proposed to agree the constituency allocations in November 2011	Ensuring best value at a time of limited financial resources	The intention is to track the Government's formula as borough expenditure represents more than one half of the total cost. Every opportunity for efficiency savings will continue to be pursued.
32	The core London Elects team structure must be kept under review in the light of further legislation, the market-place for experienced professional practitioners, and the arrangements being made for counting the votes.	Need for continuity, consistency and sufficiency for the most complex elections in the UK.	GLA agreed two permanent core team members, augmented by FTC staff appropriate to the needs of the event. London Elects now built around three teams – operations, communications and support - in order to improve management arrangements.	Permanent staff ensure preparedness for any by-election. Revised structure of unit better serves functional requirements.	The staffing structure will be kept under review to ensure that capacity exists for the proper planning and preparation for future events as well as any by-elections that might arise.
33	Recruitment for the initial posts in the 2012 team should start in September 2009.	Adequacy of resources for build-up of planning and preparations.	Recruitment began as proposed. One permanent post not filled after two recruitment exercises so appointment deferred until after May 2012 and role filled by temporary staff.	Embedding of lessons learned from 2008 and other electoral events from the outset, allowing more time for revising and preparing contract specifications.	As above.
34	Consideration be given to supporting the operation with a contract manager to handle all the contracts and to exploring the possibility of support from Facilities Management for the preparation and management of the count centre arrangements. (Also rec 16 and 27 LE, rec 12 AEA)	Need to cover all skill sets required for the project.	Contracts manager created / appointed in the new structure. FM engaged in the count centre planning / delivery phases.	All required skills brought to bear on respective elements of the project planning and delivery.	As above.

London Assembly – Elections Review Committee

	Recommendations	Consideration Response of GLRO	Solution Implemented	Reasons	Post 2012 review of effectiveness
1	At a minimum the Rules for the 2012 election must be in place 12 months before the election. (Also rec 1 of LE, rec 1 of EC)	Raised initially with the Ministry of Justice in June 2008 and pursued through subsequent reminders and meetings.	Draft amendments received for consultation in August 2011. SI likely to be made in December 2011.	Delays occasioned by the precedence accorded to coalition government's other electoral law priorities.	We will continue to press for Rules to be in place six months before elections.
2	That the Budget Committee seeks to ensure that the GLA makes adequate and regular payments in to the reserve to ensure that the necessary resources for the election will be available by 2011.	Need for sufficient resources to fulfil all the statutory requirements for GLA elections.	The Mayor approved (MD400) a total budget of £20.9m in September 2009. A detailed cost benefit analysis was undertaken in 2009 to underpin the case for pursuing e-counting.	The deployment of the budget has been influenced by changes in statutory requirements, inflation in the cost of goods and services, and the introduction by the government of a formula for setting expenditure allocations for national electoral events.	Work to develop the budget profile for 2016 will begin in the autumn but will have to be refined after CROs' returns of 2012 expenditure are received and processed during early 2013.
3	Further work required by the GLRO and the Electoral Commission to understand better why the second choice vote appears to be confusing to some voters. (Also rec 6 of EC)	Research and surveys have not investigated the reasons why many voters do not exercise a second preference. SV proposed for police & crime commissioner elections (subject to new legislation) and GLRO co-opted to Home Office working party to address issues of roll-out of SV across England and Wales.	GLA election rules are specific as to ballot paper design.	Market research undertaken as to what additional voter education / materials / signage might assist understanding, whether in booklet, postal vote packs or at polling stations.	The rate of 'abstention' in second preference Mayoral votes remains relatively constant, from which it may reasonably be deduced that many voters have no preference beyond their first choice. Some electors also choose to give one candidate both their first and second preference votes. We will continue to work with the Electoral Commission and, this year, the Home Office in relation to November's PCC elections outside London.
4	That the GLRO ensures that the appropriate containers and security devices for storing ballot papers will be available and report back to the Committee once decisions have been taken. (Also rec 20 of LE and rec 4 of EC)	Seals on ballot boxes proved insufficiently robust to keep boxes sealed during transit between polling station, borough RVP and count centre in 2008.	Higher spec and larger seals procured for 2012.	Discussion with suppliers indicated that larger tamper-evident seals were the best solution, given the degree of flexing in transit of the type of ballot box used.	The 2004 design ballot box again proved entirely satisfactory, and the larger final seal proved sufficient and will be retained whenever single-use ballot boxes are deployed.
5	The reports by KPMG LLP of its assessment of the hardware, software and network management should, where commercial confidentiality clauses allow, be made available by the GLRO for public view. (Also rec 9 of LE, rec 5 of EC)	Transparency of process, leading to enhanced public confidence.	E-counting and independent testing contracts provide for publication of independent reports.	Open source software proved not to be an option within the 'most economically advantageous tender' e-counting solution. Independent testing was procured to run through from system blueprint phase, development and build, testing, and delivery, to post-count procedures.	The GLRO summary was published before the elections and Actica's reports (appropriately redacted) will be published shortly.
6	Should the election count be run in a similar way in 2012 then lessons learnt from 2008 election should ensure a much speedier result.	Timely delivery of accurate results in which public can have confidence.	Contract specification revised to ensure complete clarity as to what was required of the contractor. Guidance / directions to CROs also reviewed to clarify what was required for them to fulfil their role in the counts to ensure the agreed 'standard operating procedures' worked effectively and as planned.	Participation by boroughs and contractors over 8 months in planning events and processes at each count centre to ensure common understandings and team effort.	The capacity and methodology proved satisfactory and achieved results within the target times at ExCel and Olympia. Alexandra Palace was affected by a power outage at the beginning of the day, seriously delaying the start of the count. There were knock-on effects

	Recommendations	Consideration Response of GLRO	Solution Implemented	Reasons	Post 2012 review of effectiveness
					for two Constituencies, compounded by non-system issues, resulting in delays to the final results. The causes are being analysed to ensure that lessons are learned and mitigations put in place to avoid recurrence at any future event.
7	In future elections the GLRO must ensure that contingency arrangements for the overtime payments to count staff are fully resolved and costed before the count begins.	A comprehensive review of count staff payments undertaken after 2008 election	The new funding regime will enable payments to count staff to be controlled by the CRO within the total allocation given to them to run the election	Adherence to government's scale of fees and charges for national elections / referendums.	The agreed formula was used to pay staff for excess hours worked.
8	We recommend that in future such scanner staff should be employed and trained by the Constituency Returning Officers and that the GLRO commit to ensure that this will be the case.	Competent and efficient delivery of service within agreed timescales.	Boroughs provided all scanner operators.	Control of operations, and assurance that staff appointed will attend.	The use of boroughs' own staff to operate the scanners was universally well received
9	One of the lessons to be learnt is to ensure maximum flexibility at the count centres in the deployment of both staff and machines. This principle should be observed in the tender for the 2012 GLA election.	To minimise the differentials in count duration between constituencies.	Tender specification was based on defined outcomes, not inputs, but asked for suggestions as to flexible configurations between constituencies within each count centre. The solution of the contractor appointed used intelligent scanners that use bespoke software for each constituency, and switching between constituency templates would not be a quick operation, so each constituency was self-contained.	The proposed solution was to enhance the work in projecting turnouts, and allocating scanners according to likely volumes of ballot papers to ensure all constituencies finish within a short time-span.	Multi-tasking and staff rotation will continue to feature.
10	The e-counting system does not appear to allow for the reason why a particular discrepancy is resolved and accepted by the CRO, we believe that must change and that the GLRO must ensure that the future tender takes this into account.	Transparency.	Variances accepted at verification stage had to have an explanation as to reason, thus providing better information than at a manual count. Interim verification statement made available during the course of the count.	To equal and better the supply of accurate information typically available during a manual count.	Variances were shown on the verification statements but could usefully distinguish in future between the different types of ballot paper.
11	Better and more informative visual display units are available for the next GLA election.	Transparency.	Improved / more progress screen displays.	To equal and better the supply of accurate information typically available during a manual count.	The improved scope and visibility of the progress screens and – unique in the UK - the live feed to the London Elects website were universally praised.
12	Greater efforts need to be taken to increase the transparency of the count process. For example, making more information available on the sequence of ballot boxes being opened and counted and greater clarity of the number of votes recorded as the count proceeds. We would expect the principle of	Transparency.	Information available at each scanning station as to the originating venue for each batch.	To equal the supply of accurate information typically available during a manual count.	As above and in addition sample manual verifications were undertaken in each constituency to demonstrate the accuracy of the scanning process.

	Recommendations	Consideration Response of GLRO	Solution Implemented	Reasons	Post 2012 review of effectiveness
	transparency to be at the very heart of the tender process for the 2012 GLA elections.				

The Electoral Commission

	Recommendations	Consideration	Solution Implemented	Reasons	Post 2012 review of effectiveness
1	There should be a six-month period between the enactment of any legislative change (including both primary and secondary legislation) and the date of any scheduled elections. (Also rec 1 of LE, rec 1 of ERC)	Forwarded to and discussed with the Cabinet Office	Draft amendments received for consultation in August 2011. SI likely to be made in December 2011.	Following the UKPGE in May 2010 the coalition government's proposals for electoral law took precedence.	We will continue to press for Rules to be in place six months before elections.
2	The role and responsibilities of borough returning officers should be clearly and appropriately recognised within the legal framework for the GLA elections in 2012. (Also rec 2 of LE, rec 4 of AEA)	Forwarded to and discussed with the Cabinet Office	No change forthcoming in legislation MoU between GLRO / CROs / BROs to be reviewed	Government's legal advice is that BROs are not 'returning officers' in the sense of responsibility for electing ('returning') any members and a 3-tier RO hierarchy is in any event unprecedented.	We will continue to press for legislation to reflect the reality of 'who does what'. Provision for European and PCC elections recognise the role of local ROs who, to quote the Government's argument, also do not 'return' successful candidates.
3	The power of the GLRO to direct other participants in the administration of these elections is retained, and that the GLRO should be able to use this power where it is required to deliver a consistent and effective approach to running the election.	Consistency in statutory compliance, voter experience and administration are proper objectives, with a hierarchy in the sequence shown. The Chief Counting Officer used her power of direction extensively for these purposes at the May 2011 referendum.	Following consultation with ROs and ESMs, a small number of directions was issued, going beyond the single direction that the former GLRO had issued in 2004 and 2008, but less onerous than the Commission's directions for the 2011 referendum.	Directions are inappropriate to achieve statutory compliance as they can add nothing to the law. Acceptance of the need for a small range of directions allows CROs appropriate discretion over non-statutory and back-office functions.	Some suggestions have been made that additional directions would be appropriate in the future and these will be considered carefully.
4	We would strongly encourage the GLRO and the GLA to identify the potential requirements for the London Elects team as early as possible in the planning process. (Also rec 1 AEA)	Adequacy of resources for build-up of planning and preparations.	Recruitment began as agreed by HOPS following consultation with the Mayor and Assembly.	Embedding of lessons learned from 2008 and other electoral events from the outset, allowing more time for revising and preparing contract specifications.	The staffing structure will be kept under review to ensure that capacity exists for the proper planning and preparation for future events as well as any by-elections that might arise.
5	Any audit or quality assurance documentation must be made available for review by suitably qualified experts and anyone else with an interest, including the Electoral Commission. Considerations of security or commercial confidentiality may be relevant, but any proposal to restrict access to key management information must be properly and openly justified, and set against the risks of damaging participant and public confidence in the integrity and effectiveness of systems.	Transparency of process, leading to enhanced public confidence.	E-counting and independent testing contracts provide for publication of independent reports.	Open source software proved not to be an option within the 'most economically advantageous tender' e-counting solution. Independent testing was procured to run through from system blueprint phase, development and build, testing, and delivery, to post-count procedures.	The GLRO summary was published before the elections and Actica's reports (appropriately redacted) will shortly be published.
6	Further research should be carried out on the impact of the ability of electors to	Research and surveys have not investigated the reasons why	GLA election rules are specific as to ballot paper design.	Market research undertaken as to what additional voter education /	The rate of 'abstention' in second preference Mayoral votes remains

	easily and clearly mark their choice using ballot papers with two columns of candidates or parties, and we will consider these issues in our planned work on standards for ballot paper design. (Also rec 3 of ERC)	many voters do not exercise a second preference. Prospect of SV being used also for police & crime commissioner elections (subject to new legislation).		materials / signage might assist understanding, whether in booklet, postal vote packs or at polling stations. Consistency with Home Office proposals for P&CC elections.	relatively constant, from which it may reasonably be deduced that many voters have no preference beyond their first choice. We will continue to work with the Electoral Commission and, this year, the Home Office in relation to November's PCC elections outside London.
7	We believe there is great value in Returning Officers holding briefing meetings on standing for election and the value to candidates and agents attending these, in order to avoid problems and minimise individual queries, and we will continue to reflect the benefits of such briefings in our guidance to Returning Officers.	Clarity and consistency to facilitate the nominations process.	GLRO briefings for Mayoral and London Member candidates / agents maintained, supported by documentation and guidance in print and electronic forms. CROs directed to undertake briefings for Constituency member candidates / agents.	To ensure there are no unnecessary / extra-statutory barriers to potential candidates.	GLRO and CRO briefings will be maintained as part of the Electoral Commission's performance standard for ROs.
8	We recommend that the UK Government should review the provisions relating to the supply of electoral registers to candidates in order to ensure equality of treatment for independent candidates. (Also rec 3 of LE, rec 13 of AEA)	Referred to and discussed with Cabinet Office to consider change in the law	No change forthcoming in legislation	Not considered urgent within busy review to new/amending legislation	EROs are entitled to take their own decisions locally as to access to the electoral register and the government should review the inconsistency that arises for independent candidates, compared with those from the main political parties.
9	We continue to recommend that Returning Officers should check personal identifiers on 100% of returned postal voting statements. (Also rec 21 of LE)	Maximum accuracy and consistency.	GLRO direction is to maintain 2008 practice of planning for 100% checking.	Maximum accuracy and consistency.	100% checking was achieved on this occasion. Upcoming legislation is likely to make it mandatory to check 100%.
10	The quality and suitability of ballot boxes and seals needs to be considered by the GLRO. (Also rec 20 of LE, Rec 4 of ERC)	Seals on ballot boxes proved insufficiently robust to keep boxes sealed during transit between polling station, borough RVP and count centre in 2008.	Higher specification and larger seals procured for 2012.	Discussion with suppliers indicated that larger tamper-evident seals were the best solution, given the degree of flexing in transit of the type of ballot box used.	The 2004 design ballot box again proved entirely satisfactory, and the larger final seal proved sufficient and will be retained whenever single-use ballot boxes are deployed.
11	We recommend that all staff at an electronic count are provided by the CRO and are trained either centrally by London Elects in conjunction with the electronic counting provider or by the CRO.	Competent and efficient delivery of service within agreed timescales.	Boroughs provided all scanner operators.	Control of operations, and assurance that staff appointed will attend.	This worked effectively and will be maintained so long as the e-counting process allows.
12	The electronic counting system must allow Returning Officers or their staff to record the reasons for any verification discrepancies, or to correct the original ballot paper account figures	Transparency.	Variances accepted at verification stage had to have an explanation as to reason, thus providing better information than at a manual count.	To equal and better the supply of accurate information typically available during a manual count.	Variances were shown on the verification statements but could usefully distinguish in future between the different types of ballot paper.
13	Returning Officers should be required to provide a verification statement for every ballot box to any candidates, agents or	Transparency.	Interim verification statement made available during the course of the count.	To equal and better the supply of accurate information typically available during a manual count.	Interim verification statements were available at constituency level.

	observers present before those ballot papers can be counted.				
14	We also recommend that candidates and agents should take the opportunity to review verification statements where provided.	Transparency.	Facility provided.	Agents must choose whether to use this facility: GLRO cannot deliver this recommendation.	As above.
15	A detailed costs benefit analysis of both electronic and manual options for counting ballot papers at the 2012 GLA elections should be carried out by the GLRO. This analysis must be carried out as a matter of urgency, as an essential first step in the process of planning for the administration of the 2012 elections, and certainly before any high-level budget decisions are taken. (Rec 11 of AEA)	Demonstration of value for money.	A detailed cost benefit analysis was undertaken and published. It demonstrated that e-counting was affordable and, when considered over two electoral events, not disproportionately more expensive.	The CBA was begun in 2009 but not concluded until April 2010 as initial calculations had to be revised following the government's introduction of a national formula for election expenditure starting with the 2009 Europeans.	A new cost benefit analysis will be produced in preparation for 2016, including different numbers of count centres and any variation in the Government's formula for election fees and charges.

The Association of Electoral Administrators, London Branch

	Recommendations	Consideration	Solution Implemented	Reasons	Post 2012 review of effectiveness
1	That the GLA should actively investigate the establishment of a permanent London Elects presence in whatever form it feels is appropriate rather than relying on the temporary arrangements that it has had in place since its inception.	Need for continuity, consistency and sufficiency for the most complex elections in the UK.	GLA agreed two permanent core team members, augmented by FTC staff appropriate to the needs of the event. London Elects now built around three teams – operations, communications and support - in order to improve management arrangements.	Permanent staff ensure preparedness for any by-election. Revised structure of unit better serves functional requirements.	The small core permanent team will be retained.
2	That the roles and responsibilities of both London Elects and of returning officers be clearly set out and disseminated to all stakeholders early in the process in order to avoid confusion and/or duplication of effort.	Clarity and communication.	Starting with an overview of responsibilities between GLRO / CROs in summer 2011, the detail was developed in the CROs manual and a Memorandum of Understanding between the GLRO and all boroughs.	There is added scope for confusion as BROs are not recognised in law and some activities undertaken by them are statutorily assigned to CROs.	The roles and responsibilities will be reviewed jointly with borough staff in good time for 2016.
3	That the GLRO and London Elects fully review communication channels in consultation with stakeholders to avoid the issues identified on this occasion. For example, the role of GLEAP and its sub-groups need to be considered, and better communication channels to administrators developed (such as the development of a dedicated extranet).	Dedicated Work groups of representatives from Boroughs be set-up On line forum to be created Regular newsletters/communications Managers Forums Attendance at AEA London Branch meetings	Fees & Charges, Training, General Purposes and Count Centre Groups have been set up On-line forum is imminent for use by both borough and political parties/prospective candidates 3 Managers Forums taken place 3 rd Newsletter due to be published Representative from London Elects attends AEA branch meetings GLRO meets the chair and deputy chair of the AEA (London Branch) at regular intervals Political party and other stakeholder meetings take place regularly from autumn 2011	Increased participation and transparency	Some sub-groups will continue through the review phase and new groups will be established for 2016 on the basis of mutually agreed key topics for the next event.
4	That the GLA does all that it can to ensure that the role of Borough Returning Officer is correctly specified in primary legislation. (Also rec 2 of LE, rec 2 of EC)	Forwarded to and discussed with the Cabinet Office	No change forthcoming in legislation Memorandum of Understanding between GLRO / CROs / BROs to be reviewed	Government's legal advice is that BROs are not 'returning officers' in the sense of responsibility for electing ('returning') any members and a 3-tier RO hierarchy is in any event unprecedented.	We will continue to press for legislation to reflect the reality of 'who does what'. Provision for European and PCC elections recognise the role of local ROs who, to quote the Government's argument, also do not 'return' successful candidates.
5	That the GLA does all that it can to ensure that the role of Regional Returning Officer at European parliamentary elections after 2009 sits with the GLRO.	Alignment of regional roles.	The possibility of the GLRO being RRO was enacted in the Political Parties and Elections Act 2009.	The new provision makes possible the development of a regional centre of excellence.	Legislation allows the GLRO to be considered for appointment as GLRO. The GLRO would need the agreement of the Mayor and Assembly to apply.
6	That the GLRO himself should at future elections undertake the check of	The publication of the register is the responsibility of the Electoral	A review of the benefits of holding centralised registers was undertaken. It	Within extremely tight timescale to process nominations, the ERO has	For discussion with the boroughs, depending on the extent of

	nominations for the Mayoral contest from the registers supplied by EROs.	Registration Officer. Risk that registers supplied to GLRO are not up to date. Any queries on a signature submitted on a nomination paper would need to be referred back to the ERO for clarification	was decided that no change be made to the current system. In the event boroughs were paid a day's admin fee to undertake this checking.	access to original data and up to date information on electors	technological provision.
7	That a working group be set up involving key stakeholders before the end of 2008 to commence preparations for the 2012 elections, linking in with the work being undertaken by the London RRO (Barry Quirk at Lewisham).	Continuity of work practices/lessons learned from the 2008 elections are passed to the RRO as a basis for the preparation and delivery of the to ensure consistency across London for the 2009 European elections	Regular meetings took place between DGLRO and RRO Two former members of staff from London Elects employed by the RRO to assist with the 2009 election. Consolidation of results undertaken at City Hall. Similar arrangements in place for the Referendum in 2011.	Lessons from both elections carried forward in planning for the 2012 GLA elections	This will be maintained and will co-ordinate with the RRO's preparations for the 2014 EPEs.
8	That the excellent training material produced by the London Elects team is in future supplemented with adequate back-up material.	Some materials that were to be used for training in the boroughs were not available when training commenced	Arrangements in hand for all training materials to be available at least 4 weeks before training commences	Enable clear understanding of the voting process in polling stations	The materials were generally well received but the CBT materials were later than intended. Arrangements for 2016 need to be adhered to.
9	That the scale of fees and charges is reviewed so that it fairly and properly reflects the costs incurred in running an election. In particular, the issues of training fees and IT costs prevalent at the 2008 elections need addressing.	Review of expenditure undertaken by CROs as part of their borough disbursements was undertaken	In planning for a fees and charges order for the 2012 GLA election, policy guidance given to Returning Officers nationally on training and IT costs was taken into account and discussed with borough representatives on the Fees & Charges Working group.	Follow as far as possible the national framework in London	The intention is to track the Government's formula as borough expenditure represents more than one half of the total cost. Every opportunity for efficiency savings will continue to be pursued.
10	That effective contingency planning continues to be properly undertaken, and that all associated costs incurred are met.	As part of the preparation for the 2008 GLA elections boroughs were encouraged to produce a contingency plan at nil cost.	Encouragement to Boroughs through project planning and business continuity and at training courses.	Performance standards Consistency across London	BCPs (including contingency arrangements) and risk registers are required under the Electoral Commission's performance standard for ROs and London Elects will continue to collect CROs' documents and ensure consistency and complementarity with London Elects' own documents as well as ensuring the completeness of the latter.
11	That a full review of the most effective counting method be undertaken, albeit that the Branch generally supports the principle of electronic counting. In particular, the effectiveness of super-count centres as against local count centres should be considered. (Also rec 15 of EC)	Demonstration of value for money.	A detailed cost benefit analysis was undertaken and published. It demonstrated that e-counting was affordable and, when considered over two electoral events, not disproportionately more expensive.	The CBA was begun in 2009 but not concluded until April 2010 as initial calculations had to be revised following the government's introduction of a national formula for election expenditure starting with the 2009 Europeans.	A new cost benefit analysis will be produced in preparation for 2016, including different numbers of count centres and any variation in the Government's formula for election fees and charges.
12	That the GLA provide as a matter of course the GLRO with sufficient technical expertise to undertake all tasks, for example, proper procurement advice and facilities management support around the counts.	London Elects works independently to the GLRO. and as part of the GLA they use the Authority's services provided there is no political influence	Since the 2004 GLA election, the GLRO has called upon most GLA services including:- Finance, ICT, HR, Legal advice, Procurement etc In 2008 arrangements for count centres was undertaken by London Elects and Facilities Management were involved particularly on issues around Health and	This successful arrangement has continued Value for money Expertise of staff	The same distribution of responsibilities was used in 2012 as in 2008 and worked satisfactorily, so will be repeated for future events, subject only to the revision of the timetable for procurement.

			Safety.		
13	That the GLA press for a change in legislation to bring the rights of Independent candidates in line with those of party candidates, specifically in respect of the provision of electoral registers. (Also rec 3 of LE, rec 8 of EC)	Forwarded to and discussed with Cabinet Office	No change forthcoming in legislation. Electoral Commission will be issuing guidance for potential candidates as to their right to copies of the register and its use.	Legislation not considered appropriate at this stage GLRO to encourage consistency across London and in particular, within a constituency	EROs are entitled to take their own decisions locally as to access to the electoral register and the government should review the inconsistency that arises for independent candidates, compared with those from the main political parties.

	Recommendations	Consideration	Solution Implemented	Reasons	Post 2012 review of effectiveness
1	<p>A full cost-benefit analysis of electronic counting at the London elections in May 2008 should be performed by London Elects. The analysis should be set against a properly-costed manual count of similar scope. London Elects should also cost the following recommended enhancements to the electronic count, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o A statistically significant live manual audit on count day, or some other effective means, accessible to the layperson, of monitoring votes that are counted as valid o A comprehensive, independent audit of all source code deployed on e-counting systems, made publicly available before the elections 1110 o Improved record-keeping facilities at the ballot box verification stage o Improved transparency around the contractor's service management desk o System-designed assurance that the voter's paper ballot remains the ballot of record so that, for example, paper ballots can easily be retrieved by CROs wishing to ascertain the intention of a voter where this is not clear from the scanned image of a ballot. 	Need for transparency and confidence in the system deployed.	<p>Full cost benefit analysis undertaken and published by the GLRO in April 2010.</p> <p>2012 count arrangements provide for manual sampling of both polling station and postal vote batches.</p> <p>Independent testing contract awarded with stage reports before and after the count event.</p> <p>Progressive reporting of verifications throughout count day, including reasons for accepting variances.</p> <p>Discussions with contractor to find ways to improve transparency at count centres</p> <p>GLRO to discuss with interested groups in advance of the count the anticipated access rights around contractor equipment</p> <p>Physical retrieval possible under contracted method statement.</p>	<p>To demonstrate value for money and that e-counting is not significantly or disproportionately more expensive than manual counting.</p> <p>Manual sampling limited to verification as law does not allow analysis of votes by individual polling station.</p> <p>Transparency throughout the development and build phases.</p> <p>Transparency.</p> <p>Transparency</p> <p>Ability to fulfil provisions of Election Rules.</p>	<p>A new cost benefit analysis will be produced in preparation for 2016, including different numbers of count centres and any variation in the Government's formula for election fees and charges.</p> <p>Manual sample verifications were well received and will be repeated for future events.</p> <p>The 2012 system was subject to detailed independent scrutiny by appointed external auditors – the most comprehensive and intensive testing yet undertaken in the UK. This also resulted in more extensive security measures being added to the system. Independent auditing throughout development, build and delivery phases will be repeated for future events so long as there is no national accreditation arrangement.</p> <p>Interim verification reports were available and recorded reasons for accepting variance. These arrangements will be repeated for future events.</p> <p>There will always be a tension between keeping system operations sterile and transparency, and the former has to take precedence to ensure the security of the count operations.</p> <p>Retrieval of physical ballot papers was achieved and we will review the methodology to make tracking easier as well as effective.</p>

	Recommendations	Consideration	Solution Implemented	Reasons	Post 2012 review of effectiveness
2	Time should be given for formal consultation — at national and local levels — prior to the approval of e-counting being used in an election.	Confidence building at regional level, as happened also in Scotland where e-counting is being used for local elections in May 2012. National consultation is a matter for Government.	Roundtable consultation with (then) Ministry of Justice, Electoral Commission and ORG in September 2009. Continuing liaison and consultation through project board (including MoJ/Cabinet Office and Electoral Commission in non-executive role as well as two CROs). ORG offered facility for further discussion but did not respond.	Partnership and transparency.	Meeting held with ORG before the elections to explain the e-counting arrangements and answer questions. No other group expressed interest. Public confidence is very important for such projects and it would be helpful for the Government to establish a national system for accreditation for e-counting technology.
3	Administrators should remain committed to long lead-in times for procurement and implementation of election technology. Based on the experience of London Elects, ORG revises this figure upwards from one year (as recommended in ORG's May 2007 report) to 18 months as a suitable application and implementation timetable.	Adequate preparation.	Contract awarded 21 months before the elections.	To allow adequate time for development, testing, build, training and deployment.	The current contract provides for a decision to extend (or not) to 2016 by Autumn 2013 in order to allow adequate time for development for the next scheduled elections.

Report of London Elects



The 2012 Mayor of London and London Assembly elections

25 June 2012

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1. Introduction and context

1. Every set of elections is different and the 16 separate contests of GLA elections under three electoral systems will always include a large number of variables. For these very reasons it is vital that the project planning, risk assessments / mitigations and business continuity planning are based on best practice.
2. This has been the aim of London Elects over (now three) successive elections, but it is also the bedrock of the Electoral Commission's new Performance Standards for Returning Officers, published in December 2011.
3. The Commission's report on the May 2012 elections has yet to be published but, through the process of regular submissions by the GLRO and all CROs, the Commission assessed that only a very few minor instances fell below the Performance Standards (e.g. despatch of poll cards after the target date in one ward in order to co-ordinate with a local by-election), and none on the part of London Elects.
4. In the event the polls on 3 May passed, exceptionally, with no significant events reported apart from an incident at a polling station in Tower Hamlets to which the Police were called. The counts would also have been regarded as successful but for the loss of power at Alexandra Palace at the start of the day and the consequences of that event. Even a manual count needs a power supply for the computers typically used for verification etc data and calculating results but clearly recovery from a power outage is far quicker at a manual count.
5. Electricity is fundamental to the use of e-counting and, in the event of an outage and without certainty of its duration, there is no alternative but to close the system down 'gracefully' and re-boot when power is resumed. It is great credit to all involved that the CROs, their staff and the contractors recovered the situation as they did, although inevitably leading to delay. Results were still achieved two or three days earlier than would have been possible from a manual count.
6. In response to an enquiry from the Head of Paid Service, the Electoral Commission wrote in March 2012 that the GLRO had supported the Commission's monitoring of CROs' performance reporting by following up on issues raised, and had submitted key planning documents in support of London Elects' own submissions throughout the process to keep them informed of the project planning.

7. The Commission went on to add that their report on this year's elections would look in detail at two key areas – the operation of e-counting and the overall management framework. This would include consideration of –
 - The extent to which the anticipated benefits of e-counting were in fact achieved
 - The extent to which candidates, agents and other observers were satisfied with the accuracy and transparency of the e-counting system
 - The extent to which the management structure for the London elections ensured an appropriate level of consistency and good practice, and
 - The extent to which the management structure for the London elections includes appropriate mechanisms for transparency and accountability.
8. For local elections in the UK, only Scotland, Northern Ireland and London enjoy any form of regional co-ordinating mechanism. Each model is different and it is appropriate to assess their relative effectiveness in ensuring the employment of good practice and consistency in the voter experience.

2. Project management

1. London Elects' usual project plan was updated for the 2012 elections, and was supplemented with detailed project planning with key stakeholders including the plans of the CROs and the main contractors. Additionally, two CROs and representatives of the Cabinet Office and Electoral Commission were co-opted in a non-executive capacity to the Elections Steering Group (project board). This framework met the requirements of the Electoral Commission's latest Performance Standards for Returning Officers.
2. Following the 2008 elections, reports were produced by the Electoral Commission, the London Assembly, the London Branch of the Association of Electoral Administrators and the Open Rights Group, as well as the London Elects team itself. All the recommendations in all five reports were addressed and in each case a considered response was developed, either to adopt the proposal (in its entirety or in an amended form) or to reject it for reasons stated. Where changes were made in response to these recommendations, their effectiveness has been evaluated for future reference. The full analysis will be made available to the Assembly.
3. In the same way, all recommendations arising from the reviews of the 2012 elections will be addressed in planning and preparing for the next scheduled GLA elections in 2016.
4. IntElect, the e-counting contractors, appointed a Project Manager to co-ordinate all aspects of the contractor's role and having such a single focus worked exceptionally well. It is proposed that for the 2016 elections London Elects should appoint an equivalent e-Counting Project Manager to co-ordinate all aspects of London Elects responsibilities for e-counting and count centres. This is also referred to below in relation to London Elects staffing (Section 13).

3. Contingency and Business continuity planning

1. The Commission's Performance Standards require ROs to submit project plans that include contingency planning and business continuity arrangements. London Elects' custom and practice is to use MS Project for the very detailed and complex project planning, and to compile / maintain a separate business continuity plan.
2. To avoid CROs having to produce different versions of their plans for the Commission and for London Elects, we agreed that we would accept the CROs' documents as submitted to the Commission and extrapolate from the project plans the relevant arrangements for business continuity, ensuring that there was complementarity between their and our documents. The Commission accepted our separate submissions.
3. Separately, of course, our e-counting contractor and count centre management companies had their own business continuity plans which had to be reviewed to ensure they synchronised sufficiently with our and CROs' arrangements.
4. Although this provided a satisfactory level of planning for contingencies and worked in practice on count day (including the recovery from the power outage at Alexandra Palace), it is far from transparent. The private sector stakeholders will have different requirements, given the nature of their business, but effort should be made to streamline and simplify the public sector arrangements for business continuity.
5. A comprehensive and detailed Risk Register was compiled covering all aspects of the preparation for and conduct of the elections. This was subject to regular review and updating as circumstances changed.

There should be discussion between the Electoral Commission, the GLRO and CROs to synchronise business continuity planning.
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4. Election Rules

1. Some suggestions for amending the GLA Election Rules were submitted for consideration to the government department concerned in June 2008. Following occasional discussion over the intervening years, an Order introducing a few minor amendments came into effect on 1 March 2012.
2. Some of the suggestions from 2008 that were not dealt with in the Order require further discussion and some new issues have emerged in the intervening years. For example, -

a. **Borough ROs**

The law places all matters relating to the conduct of the poll and the count on CROs and they are therefore held to account under the Commission's Performance Standards. The non-lead boroughs in each Constituency do, however, manage their own electorates, postal votes, polling stations, poll staff and the training for those staff. The law does not recognise this, nor the impracticality of CROs undertaking those responsibilities outside their own individual borough, and this therefore adds to the burden of collating information from the non-lead boroughs through a period of intensive activity in order to submit to the Commission a single report for each Constituency under the Performance Standards regime.

There is an argument that the 'proper officers' at the non-lead boroughs do not "return" the members elected and should not therefore be classified as "Borough ROs" but this is equally true of European Parliamentary Elections where only the RRO "returns" the winning candidates but each authority's proper officer is recognised as a "Local RO".

The government should be asked to re-consider an appropriate statutory designation for non-lead boroughs in electoral law for the responsibilities they undertake in practice, rather than placing all these responsibilities, as now, on the CROs. As an example, for professional indemnity insurance purposes, each borough's staff must be covered in their own right for the activities that they actually undertake.

b. **Independent candidates' access to electoral registers**

Political parties are entitled by the Rules to obtain copies of the boroughs' electoral registers and can therefore use the version updated in the February before GLA elections as the basis for an early start at obtaining the 330 signatures for their Mayoral nominations. Independent candidates may only obtain copies upon publication of the Notice of Election (on 20 March this year). Nominations open on that day and close 8 calendar days later (noon on 28 March).

Late access to the 33 registers places the independent candidates at a significant disadvantage in their efforts to complete the required nomination papers. There is a strong case for the government to look again at the relevant provisions to see whether a more level playing-field should be provided for independent candidates.

c. Booklet of Mayoral candidates' election addresses – distribution

The law was changed in 2003 to require that the booklet should be sent, addressed, to every elector registered at the date of the publication of the Notice of Election. (In practice we try to ensure that those added to the register after that date are also sent a copy.) The cost of the design, printing and delivery of the booklet this year was some £1.456 million, of which £1.07 million was for delivery and it may reasonably be assumed that the cost in future years will increase because of rising electorates, the increased cost of paper and the significantly higher postal charges that came in shortly after this year's booklet was despatched.

For the 2000 GLA elections and last year's national referendum, the provision was for one booklet to be sent, unaddressed, to every household. The Commission's circulation (outside London) of voter education material for the police and crime commissioner elections in November is also likely to be on this basis, and the candidates' election addresses will be accessed online, with printed copies sent out only on request. This reflects the increase in access to, and use of, the internet as well as the real budgetary pressures on the public sector.

The government should be asked to consider whether the cost to the public of the GLA booklet is still justified, and whether alternative means could be used to disseminate the information it contains.

d. Booklet of Mayoral candidates' election addresses - content

The law provides (Rule 27 of the Mayoral Election Rules 2007) that there should be only two pages of additional information (voter education material) and it is evident that electors value the greater range and detail of information that has actually been included in 2008 and 2012. In addition, that Rule also requires the Commission's approval of that information which no longer conforms with their role.

The government should be asked to update Rule 27.

e. Definition of polling stations

There has been increased attention in recent years to the activities – in a few limited areas - of supporters outside polling stations. The law controls activities within the polling station but is unclear of the distinction between the polling station and the polling place. For example, a polling station may be clearly contained within a classroom of a school building, but the polling place may also contain the playground or access road, possibly some distance from the public highway.

For the confidence of all concerned, it would be helpful to have clarification of what powers are available to a police officer, PCSO and presiding officer for each type of situation that might arise on / off the highway and inside / outside the polling station. PCSOs should also be granted some of the same rights as police officers, e.g. the power to enter polling stations but not the power of arrest.

f. Electronic counting

E-counting is the default method in the GLA Election Rules and is also the standard method for local elections in Scotland. The increasing use across the country of voting systems other than 'first past the post' (supplementary vote, additional member system, STV etc) may conceivably result in more demand for the use of e-counting in the future. Whether or not this happens, its use is already provided for in law.

Public confidence could be enhanced, greater transparency could be guaranteed and costs might be reduced if there were a national framework accrediting approved e-counting systems that satisfied appropriate measures for security, secrecy, accuracy and resilience. This was recommended by the Commission and ORG after the 2008 elections.

There is good reason to believe that the unit costs of e-counted elections could be reduced, both in the provision of the system and in a need for more limited bespoke auditing. The government should be asked to re-visit the recommendation for a national framework and accreditation system for e-counting solutions.

g. Tactile Voting Devices (TVDs)

Currently one company holds a broad patent in respect of TVDs for use by blind and visually impaired voters and it is difficult for potential competitors to develop TVDs which are within the election rules and do not conflict with the terms of the patent. The Government should address this issue to secure competition in supply.

The government should consider such proposals for review as may be put forward by relevant parties in good time, so that the final rules are in place by no later than the beginning of November 2015, i.e. at least six months before the next scheduled GLA elections in May 2016.

5. Co-ordination with CROs and Boroughs

1. Regular meetings were held with the London Boroughs in the lead up to the elections to plan and discuss the detailed election arrangements together with a regular item on the AEA London Branch agenda. This was supplemented by a detailed training programme for Borough staff (see section 6 below).
2. A section on the London Elects website was designated primarily for electoral administrators. On this was posted the CRO Election Manual and Appendices, which outlined the general arrangements for the elections, including the election timetable, election notices, nomination and polling arrangements and the count.
3. Complementing the Electoral Commission's general guidance to returning officers, and in addition to London Elects' usual detailed guidance, the GLRO issued directions to CROs to cover a number of issues including the maximum number of electors at any polling station (2,500) and examples of "doubtful" papers – based on Electoral Commission guidance published in March 2012 - to ensure a consistent application of adjudications across London. A Count Handbook was also issued to CROs which gave detailed instructions on how to operate the count system.
4. An aspiration that was not achieved this time, but which will be scheduled for launch well before preparations for 2016 begin, is an online forum for colleagues in the boroughs, Cabinet Office and Electoral Commission to interact with London Elects and each other, for consultation and liaison on options and proposals in a more immediate and convenient manner, avoiding the need for time out to travel to City Hall for meetings.
5. CROs would have benefitted from earlier planning and so it is proposed that London Elects issue a detailed time planner in the summer of 2015 in order that CROs can begin election planning that autumn for the May 2016 GLA elections. Both the CRO Manual and Count Handbook also then need to be issued earlier. The provision of materials to the Boroughs for the elections (e.g. ballot boxes, seals, notices, pop ups, etc) was sporadic.
6. In regard to the receipt of Mayoral nominations, one detailed aspect of the administration needs review. Checking the validity of the 330 subscribers on each nomination is a lengthy process, and it has historically been achieved by faxing each borough's sheet to that authority to check against their own records. This has worked well, but as the pressures on boroughs' staff during the nominations period have grown, they have been pressing London Elects to undertake the process. The arrangements need to be reviewed for 2016 and all options must be considered.

Building on London Elects' and CROs' project plans, the timelines for all activities should in future be included in a detailed London Elects time-planner to be issued in the summer 2015 and the CRO Manual to be issued no later than the December of the year before scheduled GLA elections.

6. Training

The approach

1. In the past a range of activities has been organised to ensure a consistent approach to the administration and delivery of the elections across London. For 2012 London Elects again developed a programme including the following types of training:
 - a. Seminars for managers and their deputies to engage interactively on a wide variety of issues. Essentially there are times in the election preparation process when it is crucial to bring these people together to explore issues, exchange ideas and embed key messages.
 - b. Workshops and master classes concentrating on specific areas of the election (e.g. processing postal votes) – these half day sessions are considered the most useful method of experimenting with a variety of practices.
 - c. Specialist training e.g. 'Training the Trainer', Advanced Training Skills, Project and Risk Management, Contingency Planning and Business Continuity – this type of training is sometimes considered outside the scope of normal electoral services training but it is now the only way to manage effectively the complex aspects of elections, especially the GLA elections.
 - d. E-counting training – hands on practical exercises for all CROs and their staff including the training of the scanner operators where the Constituencies for the first time had requested that they supply their own staff to scan the ballot papers rather than the contractor engaging over 350 temporary staff. A spare floor at Hercules House in Lambeth (being vacated by the COI) provided an excellent temporary count training centre and it is recommended that a similar facility be established for future e-counts.
 - e. Integrity Round Table – to bring together the police single point of contact (SPOCs) officers and the Electoral Service Managers to consider hot spots in London and how they could work together to safeguard the integrity of the election.
2. All the events were well attended and the training materials that were distributed to support the ongoing development of the individuals were widely used e.g. project management and risk register templates, a toolkit for training the polling station staff etc.
3. The most critical of all the activities was the training of polling station staff. To achieve consistency across London the team worked with a small group of London electoral practitioners to identify the key issues for polling day and to develop a toolkit that trainers in the borough could use to train the 12,000 plus staff.
4. Observation visits were made to training sessions being undertaken by all but two London authorities. Many of the trainers delivering the training had signed into the Training the Trainer courses and there was a marked improvement in the quality of the delivery over that observed in 2008.

5. Similarly training for the count had to be factored into the very tight training schedule in such a way that the absence of upwards of 80 staff per Constituency from the workplace did not adversely affect the day job, in particular the nominations process and the high volume of work associated with registration and postal voting.

Issues for 2016

6. The first challenge is in maintaining the momentum around training as the London Elects team disbands and ensuring that a training needs analysis (TNA) is undertaken year on year to concentrate on the skills gap will very much fall to the AEA London Branch. The Borough electoral services staff will be planning for the introduction of Individual Electoral Registration, preparing for a possible combined election in 2014 for the European Parliament and the London Boroughs shortly to be followed in 2015 by the next Parliamentary Election. An elected House of Lords may also have to be included in the planning arrangements.
7. London Elects has since 2004 incrementally developed its approach to the design of training programmes to address the different learning styles of individuals. This represents a valued legacy and has embedded the practice that most London boroughs now limit the numbers attending their training sessions, making them interactive and using tools to check out that the individuals being trained have actually absorbed the knowledge and skills required to do the job.
8. Greater emphasis in the future on the distance learning approach should be encouraged, in part, to reduce the amount of time spent away from the core business.

Given the challenges of this programme, the good practice in training and development already shared across London should be encouraged, maintained and supported to ensure that any lessons learned from 2012 are embedded into the training for 2016, including establishing a dedicated count training facility.

7. E-counting

Preparation and Planning

1. The contract was awarded to IntElect in September 2010. IntElect comprised a partnership of DRS (the supplier in the 2000 and 2004 elections) and ERS (Electoral Reform Services Ltd). The former brought technical e-counting expertise and the latter expertise in ballot paper design and production and a more in-depth knowledge of local government elections and processes. From the perspective of London Elects the partnership worked well.
2. In 2008 it was possible to use the negotiated tender process (under EU procurement provisions) for the procurement of the e-counting service but on this occasion it was necessary to use the restricted tendering process, and therefore the most suitable bid had to be accepted as it stood.
3. Accordingly, and to tailor the tendered solution to the detail of London Elects' requirements, the functional specification of the e-counting system was subsequently developed significantly in the lead up to the elections. Although the changes improved the performance of the system considerably, the lateness of some of the changes impacted on the roll-out of count staff training and guidance.
4. Specifications for the successive GLA e-counting projects have evolved considerably, but have been geared mostly to outcome measures, in order not to preclude new developments in technology. However, the 2012 project has highlighted the need to introduce the definition of more inputs in order to avoid too much post-award change.
5. The objective was to complete the electronic count within 10 hours of all scanners being operational, based on a 50% turnout. In the event overall turnout was below 40% and all constituencies at ExCel and Olympia worked efficiently and effectively to conclude their counts within that time, the first concluding in under six hours. Those at Alexandra Palace experienced a major challenge when there was a loss of power on site at the very start of the counts, and the CROs and their staff suffered considerable disruption, distraction and frustration but recovered the situation extremely well. This situation is dealt with separately in section 10 (b) below.
6. A key change from previous GLA election counts was that for the first time CROs supplied their own staff to operate the scanners. At all previous GLA elections these have been provided by the e-counting contractor. These CROs' scanning staff attended a number of dedicated training sessions and performed exceptionally well at the counts.

7. Another innovation was the appointment of a Deputy Greater London Returning Officer at each of the count centres. In broad terms their role was to represent the GLRO and work with the CROs in resolving any problems and there was therefore considerable flexibility allowed in the role. There was some uncertainty by some CROs as to the benefit of a locally-based DGLRO, but in the event, they were generally perceived to be a valuable resource in keeping the GLRO apprised of issues as they arose during count day, supporting CROs and their staff, and helping to resolve issues locally.
8. During the preparatory phase, progress with the e-counting contract was monitored in fortnightly project meetings between London Elects and IntElect covering all aspects of the services to be provided. IntElect provided a highlights report at each meeting showing progress, issues, risks, upcoming tasks and budget compliance.
9. Two User Acceptance Tests (UATs) were held to test the system functionality and performance. As a consequence a number of amendments were made to improve and refine the system. The number of scans during testing exceeded 1m, representing the most extensive and robust testing regime of any e-counting system in the UK to date.
10. Although not needing to be used at these elections, ballot paper designs were in place should there be so many candidates that a dual column ballot paper would be needed on which to fit them all, and these formats were also tested successfully.
11. Conversely, where ballot papers had a relatively small number of candidates, the text size of those ballot papers was increased, making them clearer to read for voters.

Performance on Count Day

12. E-Count system performance: The count system performed in accordance with the specification and could be redeployed with minimal changes in 2016.
13. Attached as Appendix A is a comparative table of count statistics by Constituency. In general the statistics are broadly comparable. However, the table does reveal the impact of the power outage at Alexandra Palace and consequent knock-on effects, particularly on the Brent and Harrow constituency (see Section 10 (c) below).
14. Any significant changes needed would be as a result of any change in legislation, and amendments prompted by the lessons learned this year would be of a relatively minor nature, including resilience issues arising from events at Alexandra Palace, e.g. loss of power.
15. The minimal changes could also include relaxing the parameters of the scanning set-up marginally so that postal ballots with damaged edges could be scanned rather than out-sorted for manual entry. This change would have assisted the few constituencies where a significant number of postals had damaged edges.

16. Managing batches: Consideration will be given to changing how batches are processed through the count, particularly to reduce the amount of movement of ballot papers and so reduce the likelihood of batches being misplaced.
17. One suggestion would be to retain the ballot papers in their ballot boxes and not to transfer them to count trays. The ballot boxes would then be emptied at the scanners and the ballot papers placed back in the ballot box, with the exception of those in the red wallets which would need manual entry at the PCs. The consequence would be that a ballot box could then remain in a single designated position on the racking throughout the count (with the exception of when it was being scanned). There would be (a) a saving from not purchasing count trays; (b) less physical manual handling of ballot boxes by staff; (c) far less chance of a box being mislaid in the racking; and (d) speedier packing-up at the end of the count as the ballot papers would already be in their boxes ready to be sealed up.
18. It is also proposed to review the postal vote stationery to ensure that return/one-piece mailer envelopes are of sufficient size to avoid the fit being too tight for three ballot papers and the accompanying postal vote statement (which includes the personal identifiers of signature and date of birth), resulting in the ballot papers being damaged on opening or picking up glue that then transfers on to the scanners.
19. At the start of the count, the GLRO had set a nil tolerance level for verifying batches, i.e. if the number of ballot papers at the end of the first scan did not match exactly the numbers on the Ballot Paper Account, the batch would be put “on hold” for further investigation. A significant number of these were found to be either due to errors on the ballot paper accounts or due to “cross-posting” in a polling place – voters placing their ballot papers in another ballot box where there are two or more issuing tables and boxes in the one location. The GLRO relaxed the tolerance to up to 2 in the afternoon.
20. Each Constituency manually counted one polling and one postal batch as a double-check against the e-counting system. No CRO reported any issues in connection with this process, and it is not proposed to repeat it in future.
21. Candidates, agents and observers welcomed the greater use of video screens at City Hall and the count centres to report on the progress of the counts at Constituency and pan-London levels.
22. A significant advantage of an electronic count over a manual count is the real-time count progress that can be displayed and the ease in which detailed count results, including the break-down of 1st and 2nd preferences can be published. Vote information is also available at ward level. Consideration will be given to the practicality of recording postal votes by ward rather than having postal votes aggregated together by Borough.

If e-counting is to be considered for the future:

- **the workflow within the count centre should be reviewed and, where possible, streamlined, including by minor adjustments to the e-counting system;**
- **the provision for postal votes should be revised with a view to limiting the incidence of damage to the ballot papers making them unscannable; and**
- **progress screens at the count centres and with a live feed to the London Elects website be retained.**

Independent testing

22. The system was subject to detailed independent scrutiny by appointed external auditors – the most comprehensive and intensive testing yet undertaken in the UK. This also resulted in more extensive security measures being added to the system.
23. Such ad hoc testing of individual systems, through blueprint, development, build and delivery phases, is inevitably expensive but it proved its worth. For confidence and public trust, it needs to be undertaken for each project but a national framework of accredited systems might reduce the unique auditing required, to focus on the adaptation of a standard approved system to the needs of a particular set of elections, thus requiring independent testing only for those unique elements.








The Cabinet Office should be asked to look again at the possibility of a national accreditation process for e-counting systems with a view to their possible greater future use in the UK.

8. Ballot papers

1. The format of the ballot papers was subject to rigorous pre-testing, including at the UATs. The printing of the postal ballot format in particular was carefully tested to ensure that when folded it did not create an unnecessary number of adjudications.
2. The supply of ballot papers this year was increased from 75% to 80% of the electorate to ensure that there was more than adequate provision for the most optimistic predictions of turnout, and to ensure that the environmental impacts of tonnes of unused ballot papers and their transportation, and unnecessary costs, were avoided.
3. New print suppliers were used this time and great care was taken to ensure a consistently high quality in the printed output across the contests and across the constituencies. London Elects staff were present to sign off the initial print of each ballot paper type. The printing of the nearly 15 million ballot papers in the event caused few issues at the counts.
4. The ballots were issued to Boroughs in loose-leaf format (i.e. not book bound) in boxes of banded bundles. This format will be reviewed, as Boroughs found it time-consuming to split these between polling stations.
5. A few Boroughs had under-estimated their requirements and so some Boroughs had to adjust their requirements late in the printing schedule and a few late orders were placed after the scheduled printing had ceased. A few Boroughs had a late surge in postal vote applications due to targeted political party campaigns. With some notice of such campaigns, these Boroughs could have been better prepared and so avoided added costs through having to print extra papers.
6. The ballot papers are differentiated by colour and, having regard to voters who may have sight impairment and as dark colours would interfere with the performance of the scanners, the ballot papers must be of light pastel shades. There was a handful of public complaints that the advertised colour descriptions of the ballot papers did not accurately reflect the colours as printed. The colour shadings and descriptions will be reviewed for 2016.
7. Arrangements were made to ensure that postal votes were printed and supplied by 16 April to enable Boroughs to begin to issue them after Wednesday 18 April (the last day to change an existing postal vote or apply for a new one). The polling place ballot papers were delivered over the week (20-27 April). Boroughs receiving their ballot papers towards the end of this period had limited time to ready them for issue to polling places so it is hoped the end of the print schedule could in future be brought forward by at least a day or so.

Election of the Mayor






Vote once (X) in column one for your first choice
Vote once (X) in column two for your second choice

		column one first choice	column two second choice
1	 BENITA Siobhan Benita	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	 CORTIGLIA Carlos Cortiglia British National Party	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	 JOHNSON Boris Johnson The Conservative Party Candidate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	 JONES Jenny Jones Green Party	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	 LIVINGSTONE Ken Livingstone The Labour Party Candidate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	 PADDICK Brian Paddick London Liberal Democrats	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	 WEBB Lawrence James Webb Fresh Choice for London	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Election of the London Assembly

Constituency Member - Barnet & Camden












Vote once (X) in one blank box

 1	COLEMAN Brian John Coleman Conservative Party Candidate	<input type="checkbox"/>
 2	CORBY Michael Ernest Corby Fresh Choice for London	<input type="checkbox"/>
 3	DISMORE Andrew Hartley Dismore Labour Party Candidate	<input type="checkbox"/>
 4	POPPY Audrey Mindlin Poppy Green Party	<input type="checkbox"/>
 5	RICHARDS Christopher Lawrence Richards London Liberal Democrats	<input type="checkbox"/>

Election of the London Assembly

London Member

Vote once (X) in one blank box

 1	BRITISH NATIONAL PARTY	<input type="checkbox"/>
 2	CHRISTIAN PEOPLES ALLIANCE - SUPPORTING TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE	<input type="checkbox"/>
 3	CONSERVATIVE PARTY	<input type="checkbox"/>
 4	ENGLISH DEMOCRATS - "PUTTING ENGLAND FIRST!"	<input type="checkbox"/>
 5	GREEN PARTY	<input type="checkbox"/>
 6	LABOUR PARTY	<input type="checkbox"/>
 7	LONDON LIBERAL DEMOCRATS	<input type="checkbox"/>
 8	NATIONAL FRONT PUTTING LONDONERS FIRST	<input type="checkbox"/>
 9	THE HOUSE PARTY - HOMES FOR LONDONERS	<input type="checkbox"/>
 10	TRADE UNIONIST AND SOCIALIST COALITION	<input type="checkbox"/>
 11	UK INDEPENDENCE PARTY	<input type="checkbox"/>
12	ALAGARATNAM Rathay ALAGARATNAM	<input type="checkbox"/>
13	HAYAT Hayat HAYAT Independent	<input type="checkbox"/>

The three ballot papers used by voters in the 2012 Mayoral and Assembly elections

9. Ballot Box Seals

1. The ballot boxes were similar to those used in 2000 and 2004 and proved entirely fit for purpose. In view of problems at previous elections with seals not working fully effectively, larger seals were used this time, including a longer orange strip seal to close more securely the ballot box aperture at close of poll. These should be retained, both for security and visibility.

For future elections –

- **the principle of 80% provision of ballot papers should be kept under review with a view to ensuring an adequate supply to every borough whilst minimising unnecessary expenditure and waste of paper;**
- **the print and delivery schedules should be brought forward as far as practically possible; and**
- **there should be further consultation with the boroughs as to the packing and delivery of the ballot papers.**

10. Count centres

3 regional centres

1. Generally the arrangements at ExCel and Olympia worked well. Catering, an area where major complaints were received in 2008 at both venues, was much improved and no significant complaints have been received.
2. The venue management companies were supportive and the difficulties that were experienced related to the procurement of services not supplied by ExCel and Olympia.
3. Kit readiness at all count centres was delayed on polling day. If CROs had been warned in advance of such delays they would have been saved frustration and wasted time.
4. The issues that arose at Alexandra Palace were unexpected and are detailed below. All services at this site are arranged through the venue management companies and these arrangements worked well.

Alexandra Palace

5. At previous GLA elections this venue has worked well. It has good parking and delivery facilities and is relatively spacious. The management company has always proved flexible and is able to source most required services in-house at competitive prices.
6. On this occasion a litany of problems befell the counts at Alexandra Palace.
7. **Wednesday:** When the contractors arrived to set-up on the Wednesday, pools of water were discovered on the count floor. As a result of heavy rains, buckets in the roof had been used to collect water from roof leaks but there had been some spillage when they were being emptied. These spills were quickly cleared up. There was no further leakage and, in the event, the spills did not delay the count set-up but they were a distraction.
8. At all three count centres the e-counting contractor faced problems with the electricity supply set-up. IntElect staff could have partly made up the time if they had been able to work through the night, but this had not been arranged previously with the count venues, which therefore had to be vacated overnight. The contract with the count centres was 8am- 8pm on 2 May and prior notice was needed and additional costs would have been incurred if these times were to be exceeded
9. **Thursday:** Wednesday's events delayed the set-up and kit readiness testing on the Thursday. CROs had been invited to accept hand-over of their count systems between 2pm and 6pm on the Thursday. In the event all three centres were not ready and CROs' staff had to wait for an extended period on polling day, return at a pre-arranged time later that evening; or defer acceptance until the Friday morning. The delays for this reason were worse at Alexandra Palace than at the other two centres.

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The Office of the Greater London Returning Officer

10. **Friday:** Despite London Elects, the Boroughs and Alexandra Palace having held a number of meetings to discuss all the access arrangements, the venue was not ready in time to receive count staff as they arrived on the Friday morning, including reception and cloakroom facilities. A fire alarm briefing had to be held before staff could be admitted - in the event this was held with senior staff and then cascaded to avoid further delay in setting-up the count. The consequence was that over 200 staff were kept waiting unnecessarily or over half an hour whilst the issues were resolved
11. As each count centre was preparing for the 8am count start, an Alexandra Palace contractor cut the main floor power supply and also the back-up generator as part of a fire alarm test (excluding the lighting that remained on). As this was unexpected and unplanned with the Alexandra Palace management, it took a while to identify the cause and the likely time for the power to be restored. The e-counting contractor therefore powered down the network. Although the power was off for less than 30 minutes, IntElect had to follow their usual procedures and power up the network gradually.
12. Count staff became frustrated by the delays and in particular by the uncertainty as to when the count would resume. **It is accepted that communication should have been better in providing CROs with a more realistic timeframe for restoring the system.** In the meanwhile all the ballot boxes were opened so that they were ready for registration when the power was resumed. Improved communication about the likely time it would take to restore systems at Alexandra Palace after the power outage would also have enabled CROs to better manage candidates'/agents' and staff expectations about the delays.
13. During the afternoon the Enfield & Haringey network suffered an outage that related back to the earlier power cut. When powered back up after the outage the servers were not load sharing correctly. Initially this only affected verification and the scanners could continue scanning, but the scanners also had to be taken off line for a period adding to the frustration. The overall delay was between a further 1 to 2 hours.
14. Despite all the adverse conditions and due to the efforts put in by the count staff, three of the Alexandra Palace constituencies were able to complete between 6pm and 8pm, i.e. within the 10-hour target from the delayed start.

Brent and Harrow Constituency count

15. This constituency was more adversely affected than the other three constituencies at Alexandra Palace. It had been agreed that the constituency would accept the count handover on the Friday morning (not the Thursday evening). They were in the process of completing this when the power cut took effect and so some elements had to be repeated once the power was restored.
16. One constituency at a time was brought back on line as power was restored and Brent and Harrow happened to be the last constituency to be restarted and so it was inevitable that they would be last to complete.

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17. Prior to the count Brent had notified the contractors that there would be about 1,800 postal ballot papers that had been cut in half by an automatic letter opener. These had been taped together and were put into the count in two batches of 900. These were prioritised in the count and entered manually.
18. It did not become apparent until some time into the count that other Brent postal vote batches had also been damaged or cut and significant numbers of these also had to be entered manually. Not only did this take time but it also tied up some key election staff in having to deal with these ballot papers individually.
19. A number of these batches were identified towards the end of the count in addition to three batches that had been misplaced on the racking. Misplacing batches is in no way unusual in the processing and handling of hundreds of boxes in a count, but what was somewhat unusual was the number of ballot papers for manual entry in those particular batches. All these batches were recovered and the votes entered, but the overall combination of factors conspired to prevent this constituency being able to declare earlier. It is intended that the review of the workflow will minimise the chances of misplaced boxes in future.
20. Mayor and London Member Declarations: A knock-on consequence of these events was that the Mayor and London Member declarations were also several hours later than would otherwise have been the case.

Future count centres

21. Although Alexandra Palace is in the process of undergoing refurbishment with assistance from English Heritage, its use in 2016 will be reviewed. It is, for example, possible that either all the counts take place at Excel or that the counts be split between Excel and Olympia.
22. Although there is a risk in only using Excel as a single count centre, it is considered that this could be outweighed by having all the contractor's and London Elects resources together, setting up at least one day earlier and building in greater resilience. Use of ExCel could also offer the possibility of locating the "central site" activities and declarations there from City Hall. However, some CROs would prefer to retain three – or at least two - centres as being easier geographically to access than any one centre covering the whole of London.
23. The possibility of 14 separate sites, as in 2000, has never been discounted but discussion with e-counting bidders for this and previous contracts has indicated clearly that costs would be dramatically higher and that, more significantly, technical support would be spread dangerously thinly across London.

For 2016, if e-counting is to be considered, there must be a full cost benefit analysis – both between electronic and manual counting, and also between one, two or three count centres – having regard to non-financial (e.g. resilience, convenience, accessibility etc) as well as financial aspects.

11. Postal Voting

1. With numbers continuing to rise, postal votes remain a major feature of GLA elections (up from 634,838 postal voters in 2008 to 817,105 in 2012). A key issue for 2012 was concern about the limited capacity of the envelopes to accommodate all three folded ballot papers inserted in the 'A' envelope, the postal vote statement and a guide describing the process for completion.
2. Owing to the tight fit within the return envelope there were instances of damage to the ballot papers as the envelopes were being opened and reports that glue substance from the one piece mailers had left deposits on some postal ballot papers causing problems with scanning. These issues are addressed in the section on Ballot Papers above.
3. With electors able to request a postal vote up to 11 working days before a poll, and with large numbers of people using the facility in the few weeks leading up to this deadline, it is difficult for boroughs to predict accurately the numbers of postal ballot papers they will require. Any last minute surge can, and this year in a couple of instances did, result in the contractor having to print further postal ballot papers after the entire production line had finished.
4. Political parties may continue to undertake campaigns, regionally or locally, in the weeks before the deadline to increase the take-up of postal voting. In briefings with prospective candidates and their agents we encouraged the early submission of applications to enable boroughs to process them properly and efficiently. This liaison needs to be maintained to ensure that the processing of applications does not become unmanageable for the boroughs, nor have an adverse impact on their preparations for the poll and count.

12. Communications

Overall campaign

1. London Elects ran a communications campaign aimed at increasing awareness of the elections, educating people on how to take part and providing information on the powers and responsibilities of the Mayor and Assembly Members.
2. The campaign was a success, with good coverage, an effective advertising campaign and a well received information booklet and website. Positive feedback was received from candidates, voters and the media.
3. The communications work encompassed:
 - The development of the London Elects website and social media presence
 - An advertising campaign across print, radio, online and outdoor
 - The delivery of the Mayoral booklet to 5.8million voters
 - The design and print of a wide range of materials including public information posters and leaflets in a variety of languages and accessible formats
 - A public relations campaign to secure media coverage
 - Activity with stakeholder groups across London
 - Research into levels of election awareness and into the campaign effectiveness
 - Media liaison and education
 - Organisation of count day activity, including media presence and accreditation.

The individual elements of the campaign are evaluated separately in the following sections.

4. The total budget for all communications functions was £2,807,000, with the largest part of this taken up by providing the statutory information booklet (£1.46million). Overall it is expected that the communications campaign will come in about £85,000 under budget.
5. London Elects procured a number of agencies through the TfL shared services to help to deliver the campaign. The drafting of contracts, specifications, tender documents etc was carried out by London Elects staff, and TfL's role was limited to administering the distribution of documents. The method of procurement was found to add an extra layer of work to the process, and presented some problems.
6. The suppliers on the TfL frameworks were not always appropriate and in some cases it was necessary to revert to using COI frameworks (until the closure of the COI at the end of 2011). The COI frameworks also presented difficulties, for example by not being up to date, and being inflexible.

Website

7. Web developers, Reading Room were procured through the COI framework to build the 2012 London Elects website, and WCRS were later procured to provide support and maintenance.
8. As a result of feedback from 2008, the structure was built around the five audiences – voters, candidates, the media, community groups and electoral administrators – to ensure they could find the information that was most relevant to their needs. The simple content management system that sits behind the site should ensure cost savings in 2016 as this existing infrastructure can be developed, rather than a complete rebuild.
9. The website was integrated with social media, included information in English and 16 additional languages, hosted a pan-London polling station finder, and for the first time streamed the live count progress on 4 May.
10. Overall the website out-performed the 2008 campaign, with 3,228,083 page views and 741,190 visits to the site over the course of the campaign.
11. There were some issues with the working relationship with Reading Room. There were changes to the account team during development and this resulted in delays to the website launch by two months, with additional work – such as the uploading of content – being undertaken by the London Elects team. Contingency time built into the timetable by London Elects prevented this from adversely affecting the campaign.
12. The website underwent a range of testing (in-house, by the supplier and by 2 independent external companies) to ensure that it was user-friendly, adhered to accessibility standards, worked on a number of browsers, was secure, and that it would be able to manage large numbers of people visiting the site.
13. An online polling station finder was developed internally by the Intelligence Unit free-of-charge. London Elects then worked closely with the boroughs to compile the required data in the relevant format for all stations across London. Users just had to input their postcode to view the address and location of their polling station on a map. This popular application received over 100,000 visits over the campaign.
14. Working with IntElect - the e-counting contractor – and the GLA's Technology Group, London Elects produced a live count progress on the website. This proved an extremely popular and successful function, receiving half a million hits on 4 May. The feature was only possible because of the use of e-counting in these elections.
15. An emphasis was also placed on social media throughout the campaign, utilising Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and Flickr. This required an agreement to be drawn up with legal. This was because social media had not previously been used by London Elects and it was necessary to remain impartial.

16. In 2016 social media will be even more established channels than they are now. To move beyond the activity carried out in 2012, consideration will need to be given to providing a dedicated staff resource and budget to deliver social media activity.

Advertising

17. The advertising agency (WCRS) was procured through a COI framework. The media buying agency (MEC) was procured through TfL although there was no framework and thus TfL required the single supplier route rather than a competitive tender. London Elects enjoyed a productive working relationship with the two agencies, and are content with their output.
18. London Elects used advertising to raise awareness of the elections, explain the voting process and provide information on the responsibilities and powers of the Mayor and Assembly across the whole of Greater London.



London Elects advertising in situ

19. Advertising concepts were developed to explain powers of the Mayor and Assembly based on their statutory responsibilities, as set out in legislation and on the Greater London Authority website. Ipsos Mori was commissioned to carry out market research with the public to establish which of these issues mattered most to voters.
20. The final adverts and messaging used as a result of this process were also independently tested with the public before finalising them to ensure they were effective, and the advert concepts were checked by TfL lawyers and the Head of Assembly External Relations. They were also presented to the Election Steering Groups which includes members of GLA senior management.

London Elects, PP W6 City Hall, The Queen's Walk, London SE1 2AA
Tel: 020 7983 4444 / info@londonelects.org.uk

The Office of the Greater London Returning Officer

21. Adverts were displayed on outdoor media (bus, tube, tram, 6-sheets), a variety of London newspapers (including Metro, Evening Standard, City AM, and free papers), borough publications, and national papers such as the Guardian, the Sun and the Daily Mail (London-wide distribution only).
22. Adverts were also displayed online (which generated around 35,000 click-throughs to the London Elects website), on digital escalator panels, on digital screens in campuses and colleges, and on a variety of radio stations. Overall there were c.9,000 outdoor and printed adverts, 14,000 digital adverts, 1,000 radio adverts, and thousands of online adverts which covered the whole of London.
23. In previous years some boroughs had produced their own adverts promoting the election. For this election, London Elects decided to provide advertising copy to the 32 boroughs for them to use, and at least 11 local authorities did so, saving the tax payer money and increasing the reach of the campaign.
24. London Elects asked Ipsos MORI to carry out post-campaign evaluation. Recall of election adverts among Londoners was 58% to 62% (depending on whether research was conducted over the telephone or online)¹. This compares favourably to similar public sector campaigns and to the 2008 campaign, which was 59%. These statistics demonstrate the maintained high penetration of the campaign despite a lower budget than previous years and increased advertising costs.

Design and print

25. The design agency, Radius, was appointed using the COI framework, to support the work of the Communications and Operations teams in the design and print of publications, and additionally the design and layout of the Mayoral Address Booklet.
26. The majority of the publications co-ordinated with the overall look and feel of the advertising creative to ensure consistency and recall across all channels. Publications produced included:
 - information posters and leaflets detailing the role of the Mayor and Assembly, how to vote, and where to vote (polling station, proxy, postal)
 - information posters and leaflets in 16 languages and Braille
 - factsheets
 - count day programmes
 - CRO handbook, and
 - polling station materials including a multi-lingual booklet, list of Assembly Members, and large print ballot papers.
27. Polling station materials were sent directly to the London boroughs, while other publications were distributed directly to stakeholders and the public by London Elects.

¹ Online questionnaires were carried out with 1,333 London residents aged 18 or over and eligible to vote, between 4 and 11 May. Telephone questionnaires were carried out with 1,001 London residents aged 18 or over and eligible to vote between 4 and 12 May. Results weighted to the known London population profile London Elects, PP W6 City Hall, The Queen's Walk, London SE1 2AA
Tel: 020 7983 4444 / info@londonelects.org.uk

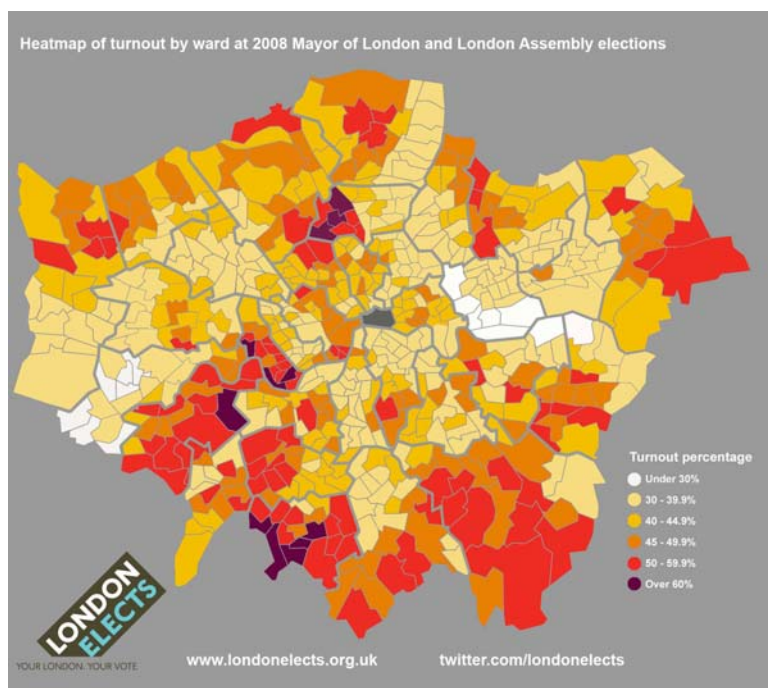
Stakeholders

28. London Elects developed a network of stakeholders from across London and across a broad spectrum of subject areas, to provide feedback on the team's work, distribute materials and act as advocate for the London Elects message. This network comprised around 250 charities, faith groups, community groups, colleges and universities, unions and embassies.
29. An event was held in September 2011 with 25 attendees from 21 groups representing various demographics and key groups. These included BME groups, faith groups, disability groups, civic engagement groups and student and young people groups. It was useful in gaining understanding about the barriers, motivations, communication mediums and messages relevant to a variety of hard to reach audiences.
30. The event generated several ideas that London Elects took up, including:
 - Producing information specifically for disabled people and their carers on their rights
 - Organising the display of leaflets and posters in campuses across London
 - Producing a short video explaining the voting process.
31. Others suggestions – such as easy-read materials – had already been planned by London Elects. One idea that would be worth pursuing in 2016 if there is extra capacity is to produce guidance on hosting events and hustings. Many groups will not be used to planning election events, and London Elects could be well placed to provide this information. There is scope for the next London Elects team to build on existing work, and move from providing information and materials, to facilitating groups to holding their own events.
32. London Elects also used the stakeholder group to distribute information posters and materials. These were very well received, and the team distributed around 25,000 posters and leaflets to more than 250 groups across London.

PR and media

33. London Elects developed a PR strategy in the summer of 2011 to support the overall communications aims of raising awareness of the elections and providing information on how to vote and the responsibilities of the Mayor and Assembly.
34. London Communications Agency was appointed (through the COI public relations framework) to contribute to strategy development and delivery. The range of PR initiatives included the 'ballot box tour' of every borough and turnout 'heat maps'. Coverage of the campaign was overwhelmingly positive, and the number of articles generated by the campaign (198) exceeded the London Elects campaigns for all three previous London elections. There were also 15,737 unique hits to press releases on the London Elects website.

35. There was a well received media briefing in City Hall attended by 22 journalists from print, broadcast and online. In addition, a 'media handbook' for journalists was distributed, produced in conjunction with the Electoral Commission. London Elects and IntElect also ran an e-counting demonstration for the media.



The turnout 'heatmap' generated media coverage across London

36. The press office function was carried out in house. London Elects handled any questions about the operational side of the elections, including e-counting, the count day at City Hall, nominations and results.

Booklet

37. Howitt were procured through a COI framework to print and fulfil the Mayoral Address Booklet. TNT was procured through an OGC framework to deliver the booklet. Due to the nature of mail delivery in the UK, Royal Mail still provides last mile delivery.
38. All of the seven Mayoral candidates chose to submit an address to be included in the booklet. The entry of the British National Party candidate was cause for complaint from some voters. All candidates' submissions went through a robust checking procedure, and that of the British National Party candidate was also the subject of consideration by a QC with specific expertise on electoral law.

39. There was an issue with Royal Mail delivery/non-delivery. Three mail bags were found in Royal Mail sorting offices after the election. Around 30 members of the public also contacted London Elects to say the booklets were delivered in the weeks after the election. TNT has raised the issue with Royal Mail. With a mailing of this size it is expected that there will be a failure rate of up to 5%. The figures received suggest the mailing had a failure rate of less than 0.1%.
40. Overall 5,802,020 booklets were printed and sent directly to registered electors, and an additional 107,980 were printed and sent to the boroughs, community groups, and members of the public on request. Audio, larger print and Braille booklets were also produced and distributed.

Count Day

41. London Elects co-ordinated accreditation both at City Hall and at the three count centres. In total, around 4,000 individuals were accredited across the four venues.
42. Media were accredited online via the London Elects website. Candidates and their agents were accredited automatically by London Elects, as were all individuals registered with the Electoral Commission as electoral observers.
43. London Elects contacted London-wide and Mayoral agents - and boroughs CROs contacted Constituency agents to request lists of their guests and sub-agents. London Elects liaised with boroughs, the Technology Group, Facilities Management, Bowtie and IntElect to accredit their staff.
44. The Communications team within London Elects was responsible for co-ordinating accreditation with the boroughs. While there were no significant issues with accreditation, the processes could have been improved. The main issue that arose was with the list of staff who would be working for London Elects and IntElect. This meant that the lists of accredited individuals were not approved until late on Thursday 3. May.
45. The experiment of centralising all accreditations was worth trying but was not wholly successful and, without significant additional staffing in London Elects, the appropriate course for the future is that the CROs co-ordinate accreditation for Constituency candidates and agents and their guests at future elections. Keeping this function at a local level would avoid unnecessary work and potential confusion. It is also proposed that London Elects extends its online accreditation to candidates' sub-agents and guests, to rationalise the process. London Elects should continue to run centralised accreditation of the media.
46. As well as staff working directly on the count, a number of borough staff and GLA staff worked on the day to help with the reception and hosting of guests. Feedback suggested that signage could have been clearer at the Constituency reception desks, and a specific training session held for Constituency reception staff.

47. London Elects sourced these staff for City Hall in March (from within the GLA), and ran a training session at City Hall. The staff performed well and thanks are due to them, particularly those who worked until after midnight.
48. London Elects worked directly with broadcasters to arrange facilities for them at City Hall, starting with meetings with the BBC, Sky, ITN and others from January onwards. A number of site visits were held for broadcasters.
49. After consulting media on their requirements, London Elects worked closely with TG, Norlands and Bowtie to ensure facilities were in place. London's Living Room was assigned as a dedicated media area, with an agreed floor plan that gave each of the main broadcasters their own spot.
50. The feedback from the media on the night was very positive towards the media team, despite frustration at the delays in declaration times. Prior to count day, no estimated time had been given to journalists for the final declaration (beyond saying that the hope was to have a result before midnight), because of the range of unforeseeable variables that affect counts. This helped manage expectations on the day.

13. Resourcing the elections

Budget

1. By MD400 the Mayor established an elections reserve to fund London Elects and all aspects of the conduct of the elections of just under £21m, comprised as follows.

Budget summary – elections 2012

Budget category	Budget (£)
Employee related (the London Elects team)	1,600,000
Election costs, including London Boroughs and E-counting	16,130,000
Advertising and other communications	2,800,000
Hire of count centres	470,000
Total estimated costs for 2012	21,000,000

2. The provision for borough disbursements is £10.8m and initial advances were made to the CROs for 75% of the formula allocations. Additional advances will be made upon production of evidence. Final costs will, of course, be known only after the expenses returns have been received and analysed. A contingency reserve of £300,000 has been retained at this stage. A sum of £750,000 is in the budget and can be drawn on for any possible Constituency Member by-election. A separate sum of over £0.5m in total is earmarked over the four year term to pay for the insurance cover to meet the estimated £13m cost of a Mayoral by-election.
3. GLA elections are undoubtedly the most expensive per elector in the country, but they do comprise three sets of contests, each with its own ballot paper, three electoral systems resulting in complex counts, the additional cost (acknowledged in the government's formula – see section (b) below) of running elections in London, and the requirement to send a booklet personally addressed to all 5.8m electors.
4. Significant change has occurred in the years since the inaugural GLA elections –
 - postal voting on demand (with a more than ten-fold increase in use),
 - a 2.6m increase in distribution of the booklet and their addressing individually to every elector,
 - separate ballot papers for Constituency / London Members of the Assembly (instead of being combined on a single ballot), and
 - the greater complexity of processing postal votes with their now mandatory personal identifiers.

5. Nonetheless, comparing costs on a like-for-like basis with 2000 - and therefore omitting the cost of the London Elects team as GOL's core budget absorbed most staff costs in 2000 - the cost per elector for 2012 is an estimated £3.34, a 5.4% increase on the 2000 cost of £3.17. Including London Elects' costs (but not GOL's), the increase is still only 14% (i.e. actual costs with no allowance for inflation over that period). NB – and the 2012 costs used here still include £0.75m for a Constituency Member by-election and £0.5m for Mayor's life insurance which were clearly missing from GOL's 2000 budget.

Fees and Charges

6. In 2009, the Government adopted a new funding regime for the European Parliament elections. They made assumptions about funding the costs of elections by averaging the actual costs incurred by Returning Officers across the country. They then used these assumptions to produce an allocation for each local authority to cover the costs of the election. These assumptions were increased for London by 25%. The formula was used again, with very minor modification, for the 2010 General Election and the 2011 referendum.
7. Across the country, the actual spend on both events was below the formula allocations although a few individual authorities incurred slightly higher costs than the formula initially provided. The Government aims to maintain such a formula for future national elections.
8. Under this funding formula, Returning Officers were expected to contain their expenditure within their allocation but had flexibility on how they spent the money provided that any expenditure was both reasonable and necessary.
9. The formula was intended to give certainty and more control over the costs of elections, whilst at the same time giving Returning Officers increased discretion about how the available funding was used.
10. The same approach was adopted for the funding of the 2012 GLA elections and the assumptions used for the referendum in 2011 (including the 25% up-rating for London) was used as the basis for calculating the allocation each Constituency received.
11. Whilst there have been some concerns about the inadequacy of the level of funding – particularly in view of the much greater complexity of the GLA elections - the flexibility that this regime provides has been generally welcomed. CROs have been asked to submit their returns by the end of the year and, once they have been received and analysed, it will be possible to review the formula arrangements and whether changes need to be made.
12. The aim generally, however, will be to track the Government's national scheme, accepting that this is in several respects less generous than the scales agreed by London Councils for London Borough elections.

Procurement

13. Procurement of e-counting began while the procurement function was still with the core GLA before the function transferred to TfL in autumn 2010. The same procurement lawyer continued to support the main elections procurements throughout, but a number of different practitioners were allocated, both to different contracts and also to the same contract at different times.
14. Meetings were held with the relevant TfL procurement team leaders in late 2010 and early 2011, and a timetable for all procurements was agreed. However, in the event there was slippage on the award of a number of contracts, the last (for count centre services) only being finalised a week before the elections. There were several reasons:
 - more and different documentation through the procurement process which was unfamiliar to London Elects staff and caused delays when the need for additional paperwork was not immediately notified;
 - unfamiliarity on TfL's part with the arcane and specialist nature of the supplies and services required for elections, requiring more time than anticipated to complete the necessary documentation and, where necessary, obtain the single source tender approval; and
 - the requirement to use TfL generic frameworks initially for tendering some services, leading to a second round of tendering, reverting to previous suppliers of elections services, because of the particular specialist nature of the service required.
 - A joint review will need to be held with TfL in order to ensure that lessons are learned, both as to the ability of London Elects to meet TfL's requirements first time, and as to TfL's understanding of the specific nature and timelines for London Elects' requirements.

For 2016 a clear and formal timetable of procurement activity, with appropriately generous lead times, should be agreed by no later than July 2014.

London Elects

15. On the GLRO's recommendation in 2009, the Mayor and Assembly agreed that a small permanent core team should be created, augmented incrementally by additional fixed term contract (FTC) staff during the two years running in to GLA elections. This was based on the need to ensure there was adequate capacity for any by-election that might occur, to establish a core of high calibre expertise for the most complex elections in the UK, and to provide a platform for any other type of electoral event that might need to be organised on a regional basis.

16. For example, the Regional Counting Officer at the 2011 AV referendum used London Elects to support the operation. This proved invaluable to him for the referendum and also to London Elects in having the opportunity to apply some of the proposed 2012 election procedures in a less complex scenario.
17. The Head of Special Projects and Elections was already in post and, following the 2009 approvals, the Elections Operations Manager was appointed in January 2010. The third permanent post, that of Senior Elections Officer, was advertised three times but no appointment could be made. Its duties were therefore covered by the other two permanent appointments and by adjusting the terms for the fixed term contract (FTC) staff. This worked, but only with the commitment, co-operation and energy of the staff involved.
18. To achieve the objectives of creating the small permanent team, the role of the Senior Elections Officer must be provided for and so the allocation of duties and person specification will be reviewed, alongside the profile of FTC staff required for the next set of elections.
19. Two further aspects of the team will need to be considered as part of the review. First, the project planning function has traditionally been supported by the Resources Directorate and this has been invaluable with a project as complex as GLA elections, monitoring progress with the risks register and issues log as well as the project plan itself. The project management function has been spread across the London Elects team and experience suggests that there might be added value in concentrating in one pair of hands – embedded in the team – the role of co-ordinating and driving the delivery of all elements of project management, including notably the e-counting stream if this is to be repeated in 2016.
20. Secondly, engagement in social media was a successful expansion of the work of the three members of the Communications team in London Elects this year, engaging with parts of the electorate that might not otherwise be reached and achieving far greater currency and topicality. The staff involved had other primary tasks and, if this activity is to be developed for 2016, it will need to be resourced within the team, either additionally or in substitution for some other work.
21. What is clear initially is that the progressive reduction in the team's 'person-days' since 2004 can go no further with the increasing complexity of electoral law, and unless there are significant changes in the requirements for GLA elections (e.g. abandoning the booklet in favour of online voter information) the resourcing of the 2016 team will need to be of the same order as for 2012. Equally, the retention of a permanent core team is essential to carry through the learning from one election to another, as well as providing the additional capacity and centre of expertise that comprised the original justification (para. 15 above).

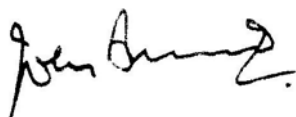
22. The London Elects team is, of course, reliant on the GLA to support the conduct of the elections. This works very well and the Scheme of Delegation provides for the GLRO, following consultation with the Executive Director of Resources, to “use and manage the Authority’s staff, property and other resources/facilities, and to incur expenditure” within the approved budget.
23. The language of this delegation survives from the era when the Authority had a Chief Executive who was also the GLRO, and so it will be amended to provide for consultation with the Head of Paid Service and the Executive Director of Resources, as appropriate. The delegation is, however, vital to ensure that the GLRO can call for the necessary support and equipment when it is required.
24. At previous elections, for example, in order to secure guaranteed access to equipment, the elections budget funded additional equipment which was then taken into corporate use as the team disbanded, only to have to purchase new equipment again at the following election.
25. This is illogical and so it is important for the core Authority to provide the team’s requirements and mitigate relevant risks (e.g. equipment or system failure) that might otherwise prejudice the efficient conduct of the elections.

The specific requirements of the post of Senior Elections Officer should be reviewed and the post filled as soon as possible, and the prospective establishment of FTC staff should be reviewed in 2013 against the likely legislative requirements that will apply in 2016.

14. Summary of recommendations

1. There should be discussion between the Electoral Commission, the GLRO and CROs to synchronise business continuity planning.
2. The government should consider such proposals for review as may be put forward by relevant parties in good time so that the final rules are in place by no later than the beginning of November 2015, i.e. at least six months before the next scheduled GLA elections in May 2016.
3. Building on London Elects' and CROs' project plans, the timelines for all activities should in future be included in a detailed London Elects time-planner to be issued in the summer 2015 and the CRO Manual, to be issued no later than the December of the year before scheduled GLA elections.
4. Given the challenges of this programme, the good practice in training and development already shared across London should be encouraged, maintained and supported to ensure that any lessons learned from 2012 are embedded into the training for 2016, including establishing a dedicated count training facility.
5. If e-counting is to be considered for the future,
 - the workflow within the count centre should be reviewed and, where possible, streamlined;
 - the provision for postal votes should be revised with a view to limiting the incidence of damage to the ballot papers making them unscannable; and
 - progress screens at the count centres and with a live feed to the London Elects website be retained.
6. The Cabinet Office should be asked to look again at the possibility of a national accreditation process for e-counting systems with a view to their possible greater future use in the UK.
7. For future elections –
 - the principle of 80% provision of ballot papers be kept under review with a view to ensuring an adequate supply to every borough whilst minimising unnecessary expenditure and waste of paper;
 - the print and delivery schedules be brought forward as far as practically possible; and
 - there should be further consultation with the boroughs as to the packing and delivery of the ballot papers.

8. For 2016, if e-counting is to be considered, there must be a full cost benefit analysis – both between electronic and manual counting, and also between one, two or three count centres – having regard to non-financial (e.g. resilience, convenience etc) as well as financial aspects.
9. For 2016 a clear and formal timetable of procurement activity, with appropriately generous lead times, should be agreed by no later than July 2014.
10. The specific requirements of the post of Senior Elections Officer be reviewed and the post filled as soon as possible and the prospective establishment of FTC staff be reviewed in 2013 against the likely legislative requirements that will apply in 2016.



John Bennett
Head of Special Projects and Elections - and -
Greater London Returning Officer

Count Statistics

APPENDIX A	Alexandra Palace					ExCel						Olympia						Totals
	Barnet & Camden	Brent & Harrow	Enfield & Haringey	North East		Bexley & Bromley	City & East	Greenwich & Lewisham	Havering & Redbridge	Lambeth & Southwark		Croydon & Sutton	Ealing & Hillingdon	Merton & Wandsworth	South West	West Central		
Number Of Scanners	22	22	22	25		25	28	21	22	24		23	26	22	23	22		327
Number Polling Station Batches	248	290	231	299		308	338	233	263	238		245	323	279	279	214		3788
Number of Postal Batches	143	115	95	160		130	116	88	121	87		170	85	99	139	131		1679
Number Of Batches	391	405	326	459		438	454	321	384	325		415	408	378	418	345		5467
Total Ballot Papers	509063	444325	439856	583892		510266	521111	400363	430596	479424		467530	498733	460710	526489	446459		6718817
Standard Adjudications %	6.86%	7.52%	7.19%	6.66%		5.48%	7.06%	6.43%	7.19%	7.73%		7.72%	6.52%	6.01%	5.69%	6.81%		6.76%
RO Adj (exc Man Entry) %	1.15%	1.57%	1.52%	1.39%		0.80%	1.23%	1.10%	1.10%	1.00%		1.04%	1.30%	0.80%	1.03%	1.29%		1.17%
Manual Entry Adj %	0.08%	1.66%	0.11%	0.10%		0.09%	0.14%	0.07%	0.14%	0.17%		0.05%	0.12%	0.12%	0.27%	0.27%		0.23%
Time by which all scanners started	10:43	11:35	10:28	10:20		08:24	08:37	08:15	08:19	08:23		08:12	09:09	08:09	08:23	08:41		
Time by which all scanners stopped	18:23	22:57	19:48	18:52		14:15	16:09	15:13	16:06	15:57		15:08	16:10	14:17	17:13	16:28		
Average Actual Scan Rate/Hour excluding idle time	6295	5809	6541	6321		7037	5983	6606	5966	6411		6567	7203	6470	6178	6327		6417
% Total Batches rescanned once	16.88%	11.36%	15.95%	6.97%		4.34%	6.61%	19.94%	15.63%	14.77%		14.94%	20.34%	2.38%	17.22%	6.09%		
% Total Batches rescanned twice	1.53%	1.73%	0.00%	0.65%		1.14%	0.44%	1.56%	0.78%	4.31%		1.69%	3.92%	0.00%	0.48%	0.00%		
% Total batches rescanned more than twice	0.26%	0.25%	0.00%	0.00%		0.23%	0.00%	0.00%	0.26%	0.62%		0.00%	0.49%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%		
All Contests ready to start	07:19	10:52	07:27	07:33		07:50	07:49	07:34	07:41	07:20		07:04	07:54	07:03	07:57	07:00		
All Contests Stopped Time	19:11	23:07	20:11	19:40		15:22	17:06	16:08	16:24	16:59		15:50	17:19	14:36	18:21	17:19		
Results Transmitted	19:14	23:10	20:13	19:55		15:27	17:15	16:11	16:36	17:06		15:54	17:26	14:38	18:23	17:21		
Final Results Produced	19:11	23:00	20:06	19:28		15:42	17:01	16:04	16:17	16:52		15:46	17:14	14:34	18:18	17:16		
No. Hours from target start time (all scanners started) to Final Results Produced.	08:28	11:25	09:38	09:08		07:18	08:24	07:49	07:58	08:29		07:34	08:05	06:25	09:55	08:35		

A MOCKERY OF DEMOCRACY

The elections for the London Assembly and to a lesser extend but only slightly the Mayoral election were a mockery of democracy.

The proof is there for all to see – two out of three never bothered to vote. Why despite the best efforts of all those involved did people in the middle of a slump feel disengaged from the political process. Three days later the turnout in the first round of the French presidential election was over twice the number of people who cast their vote in the London elections. I know it is not an exact comparison; the French election was on a Sunday and the London elections were held on a Thursday.

So was it the weather that put people off? April was the rainiest since records began and therefore didn't lend itself to people - and political parties - getting out and about going to meetings. Not that there all that many hustings held in local constituencies. I attended only the one in Oxford House in Bethnal Green. If there were a hundred people present I would be exaggerating.

My views are obvious coloured by my own efforts during the campaign to get publicity. For all intents and purposes both press and broadcast networks showed a distinct lack of interest. I did try to get their interest.

At the start of the campaign I sent an article titled on why I though housing was a big issue to most of the newspapers and television networks. Further articles were sent to them during the campaign with similar lack of interest. Two particular organisations deserve to be singled out for criticism. They are the BBC and the Evening Standard.

I expected more – better - from the BBC. They were a sad disappointment. It is very much a 'timid little beastie' after the Question-Time furore. I obtained the email address of the editor of the BBC London programme and emailed that I had written about housing in London to them. Not ONCE did I receive an acknowledgement or a reply from them as regards anything I sent them. The only occasion they connected me during the campaign was when it emerged that Newham council were seeking to place people on their waiting lists in places outside of London. I phoned them when they trailed in a lunchtime bulletin that they would be holding a discussion in their main evening programme. They replied that they were only having the THREE main mayoral candidates in the

studio to discuss housing. I gave up on the BBC on getting any coverage from them. They were a waste of time and effort.

The ‘debate’ they held on housing with the mayoral candidates in a sense epitomises my criticism of the BBC. The reason given to exclude other candidates from equal coverage was ridiculous. It made the BBC look silly as well as being accused as a supporter of the established order. The BBC coverage of the election, particularly the Mayoral election was summed up by the all too familiar “and a list of all the candidates standing is on the screen”

I feel that the BBC failed in its duty to give due coverage of the issues that affect London. Far too much coverage was given to transport and crime and policing. The cost of living in London and housing – they are entwined as housing is the major cost of living in London – did not receive the same attention.

The contest in the 14 constituencies for the London Assembly went unnoticed and unreported. It would have been interesting to know about the contests in Ealing & Hillingdon and Barnet & Camden where sitting members of the Assembly lost their seats.

Steve Hewlett, professor of journalism at Westminster University, commenting on the Leveson Inquiry said that the BBC was the biggest news gatherer – I paraphrase – in the UK “by a country mile”. (June 12) So if you fail to get any coverage from the BBC of your campaign you are pretty much wasting your time and money.

London’s only evening newspaper has fallen in recent years from the heights it once stood. Editors in the past were major figures in the journalism world – Max Hastings and Simon Jenkins. That is no longer the case since the change in ownership. Even a couple of years ago the paper ran a series about people in London whom it called the dispossessed – people who lived in poverty next to the wealthiest in the city. The campaign they ran to help them got the backing of Prince William. It highlighted the housing conditions in which they lived. It will be interesting to see its coverage, if any, once the benefit cuts come into force. There was a link-up with Shelter and its campaign for Homes for London. The campaign did not feature in the paper only on its website. It seemed to shy away from highlighting the issue in the paper.

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Len Duvall AM and Andrew Boff AM
Review of the 2012 Mayoral and
London Assembly Elections
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London

Our ref: JR/km/0126

Date: 26 June 2012

Dear Sirs

Re. Review of the 2012 Mayoral and London Assembly elections

Thank you for your letter seeking my views on the key issues and lessons to be learnt from the above elections. I will start by saying that in the round the election in Croydon and Sutton went very well. However, there are always lessons to be learnt and my elections team have worked closely with London Elects to review the details of the administration of these elections.

As such my response looks at three key issues as I see them from my perspective as Constituency Returning Officer (CRO), namely the central management of the election and the budget.

1. Greater London Authority-Election Support Team

I believe the current approach of forming the London Elects team only some 18 months before the day of poll, does little to assist the conduct of the election. Establishing such a team so close to the day of poll does not assist the required long term planning process and leads to matters of detail being discussed at a very late stage of the election process.

In view of the above I would submit that the Greater London Authority (GLA) needs to consider a more conventional model of electoral administration and I would support the establishment of a small permanent election team within the GLA. This would help us to better prepare for the expected challenges of the 2016 election, and help us to build the rapport and trust to make the right decisions to exclude risk and to ensure we deliver a pan London election that is both effective and well managed at both central and local level.

2. The Count-National Hall Olympia

I agree that an element of central coordination was required. However the late establishment of the London Elects team, compounded by their loose approach to the detail of the Count did little to imbue confidence at local level.

I would suggest that the time has now come for CROs, or appointed deputies, to have an augmented role in the management of the GLA count process. Certainly, there needs to be a rebalancing of power between the CRO and the GLA's appointed contractors in the CRO's favour.

Finally on the Count, I would suggest that as part of any review, that consideration be given to a move back towards each GLA constituency having its own count venue. This would allow the CRO to run the count to local standards and expectations. In addition it would be expected that each CRO could then source a local venue, lowering costs and improving effectiveness.

3. Budget

I think that in light of the expected drive for efficiencies on the budget that a working group is set up, to include representation from officers involved in the organisation and administration of elections, to look in detail at the budget process for the election. This would provide an opportunity to redesign the election budget and look at value for money opportunities to alter base costs. At the very least I would submit that any further savings to the election budget are found from central expenditure, such as count centre hire charges and communications, rather than by reducing the allocations to CROs and Borough Returning Officers.

In conclusion I submit that the central management of the GLA election process requires systemic review and the points above are made with a view to consideration of a model of structure and delivery for the election management of the 2016 Mayoral and London Assembly elections.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jon Rouse". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly stylized font.

Jon Rouse
Croydon & Sutton Constituency Returning Officer

Contact Mary Ney

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Facsimile 020 8921 5943

Email mary.ney@greenwich.gov.uk



Chief Executive's Office

Len Duvall AM and Andrew Boff AM
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The Queen's Walk
London SE1 2AA

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SE18 6PW

13th June 2012

Main number 0208 854 8888

MNI3-6-112

Dear Len and Andrew

RE: Review of 2012 Mayoral and London Assembly Elections

Thank you for your letter of 30th May 2012 inviting feedback for your review of the recent GLA elections. Greenwich's experience of conducting these elections was relatively trouble-free and gave rise to no significant concerns. The following comments highlight the particular features of the Mayoral and Assembly Elections which need always to be given attention.

Responsibilities and Management

One of the features of the GLA elections is the particular stratification of responsibilities. The Greater London Returning Officer has overall responsibility, as well as direct responsibility for specific elements e.g. mayoral and London-wide assembly candidate nominations, central printing, purchasing and count venue and IT contracts. The fourteen Assembly constituencies each have a Constituency Returning Officer, who has responsibility for the conduct of the poll and the postal vote administration, as well as specific elements e.g. assembly constituency candidate nominations and the actual administration of the count for all three contests in the constituency. Additionally individual boroughs who do not provide the lead role in each constituency, and which have no formal status recognised in the election rules, are given a range of responsibilities as delegated by the relevant CROs, and will in practice organise and manage their own borough's polling and postal vote arrangements including appropriate contractual arrangements.

This all provides for a complex set of relationships, as well as inter-dependent timetables and processes which need to mesh coherently, and plenty of scope for information and particular requirements to be either heavily duplicated or to be mis-directed or otherwise fail to reach the relevant people at each level. This complexity requires careful management and effective communication in order to function well and minimise risks. This needs to be fully addressed in all election planning.

Project planning and Contractor Performance

It became apparent when developing our election project plan from December 2011 onwards that many practical issues at the local level were dependent on central contract performance, which were very largely out of our control.

By way of example the arrangements for production and delivery of ballot papers both to our own contractor for the issue of postal votes, and directly to us for preparation of polling station materials, were unclear at the local level until very shortly before actual delivery occurred. In relation to the postal ballot papers, it was evident that our print contractor needed to liaise and negotiate directly with the central ballot paper print company in order to establish actual delivery arrangements and ensure compliance with packing and other detailed requirements, so that our contractor could fulfil their contractual obligations with the local Returning Officer. There was no real practical role for the local Returning Officer in this inter-contractor dialogue, and nor was it evident at a local level that there was any active involvement by the GLRO, even if he or his central team were aware of this. If the actual delivery to our local contractor had been a day or two later the postal votes could not have been issued in accordance with the agreement with our postal vote contractor, and this would have meant a delay in issue of postal votes which may have meant some postal voters may not have received the papers in time, and that we may have been at risk of not meeting reasonable expectations and perhaps not sufficiently complying with performance standards.

Again the contractor delivery of polling station ballot papers was not made known locally until a day or two before actual delivery. In Greenwich's case the receipt, checking and detailed preparation of the polling ballot papers is done by a team of temporary staff, and it was difficult to plan for their start date and for the required accommodation with the uncertainty over delivery until very close to the actual delivery occurred. Delivery a day or two later may have seriously jeopardised our ability to fully prepare the polling materials to the standards required.

These two examples illustrate the local dependence, whether of our own contractor or of our own local administrative arrangements, as well as the associated risks, on the performance of a major centrally-managed contract. In attempting to provide for effective local delivery of key parts of the election, which includes detailed planning, and in terms of understanding and managing risks, the absence of detailed schedules for delivery of ballot papers was a hindrance, and appeared to rely too much on the contractor determining their own schedule without realistic influence or control by a returning officer at any of the three levels. Whilst in practice this did not give us a problem at these elections, it is an area of risk which could be considered in future elections.

The count arrangements were a considerable improvement on those in 2008, we appeared to have few if any significant issues at the ExCel Centre. The Contractor's staff were competent and committed to ensuring the count was well organised and delivered accurately.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary Ney', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mary Ney
Chief Executive

Green Party Election Agent notes & feed-back - GLA 2012 Elections:

Positive: As has been my experience in the past, I found those administering the elections to be **helpful, thorough and efficient**. A pleasure to meet up with regularly over the months! Specifically on the plus side:

- The focus was always on **making the rules work** - in this context, for this election - rather than on the rules for their own sake. Might seem obvious and therefore get taken for granted - not get mentioned. But we all have experience of how bad things can get when the process starts to take over from the purpose ...
- The initial plan was a traditional "Deposits in cash or Bankers Draft". When asked - by a number of parties - to investigate **transferring deposits electronically**, a system was set up and publicised in a couple of weeks.

I believe this to be a significant improvement. The administrative overhead imposed by (effectively) having to obtain Bankers Drafts is difficult to justify in an age where money can be transferred so easily to any bank account anywhere in the world.

- The briefings in City Hall and elsewhere (I attended some constituency level meetings in SW), and other meetings (for example, the presentation of the counting machines and process in Hercules House) where always **well prepared, well presented & very informative**. It is obviously a requirement to have such meetings, but even so, I would imagine that the poor attendance at some of them must have been dispiriting.
- There were some meetings where the representatives of some candidates were, I thought, aggressive to the point of being offensive in their attitude to those running the elections. The team always responded with **exemplary tact and politeness**.

Less positive: Obviously there were some areas where I - and other Green Party members who have got in touch with me - think improvements could be made:

- Compared to 2008, the London Elects web site - raising awareness with the public as well as advising those wishing to take part - **started between 3 to 4 months late**: (Effectively) January 2012 rather than September 2007. A 33% reduction in preparation & awareness-raising time! Email contact was available with London Elects before January 2012, but the advice was generally "We're not sure yet". This seemed to lead to delays in the availability of nomination packs from London Elects, which in turn delayed the constituencies ...

For a small party, with limited volunteers and a significant amount of admin to get through, I always had the feeling of being rushed - the feeling of catching up after this late start.

- As in previous GLA elections, voter publicity heavily emphasised the **different coloured ballot papers** and their different meanings for the 3 votes. On the day, the 3 papers all seemed to be ... slightly different shades of beige.
If publicity continues to focus on the ballot paper colours, they should be bold - definitively the colour they claim to be (even if that does mean using environmentally less friendly dyes!)
- I may be wrong, but it is more than possible that these 2 issues relate to costs: In general, I am concerned that **pressure on local & central government spending is impacting spending on elections** to the point where the quality of our democracy may soon be damaged. I'm confident the hard work and commitment of the support team stopped this from happening here, but as a wider statement of concern, I feel the point needs to be made.
- Following my advice, volunteers from smaller local parties - those which generally don't take up their right to a regular copy of the Electoral Register - started contacting their boroughs early in the year. Some boroughs strongly advised parties to wait until the March 1st updates had been consolidated; a few boroughs simply refused to issue the January or February register. Again, this compressed the time available to volunteers for collect signatures causing unnecessary pressure & stress.

Borough Electoral Service teams may have had the best intentions - to avoid a signature being collected from someone who wasn't on the March register. But the standard way even smaller local parties collect signatures - from "Friends, neighbours & party members" - means there is little chance of this happening; those signing are almost always know the volunteer collecting signatures, and would usually be asked before signing whether than had immediate plans to move house.

It should be made clear to borough staff that authorised representatives of political parties have the **right to request - and be given - the current electoral register** at any time throughout the year.

- Lastly, we were asked to provide lists of people who would be admitted to City Hall and to the constituency counts. On the day, random names - of List candidates and of constituency election agents (who should have been admitted by default) as well as of guests - were simply missing. Having to spend time - London Elects time as well as that of party volunteers - in the middle of the count(s) sorting this out was simply ... silly.

I have specifically *not* mentioned the late announcements for Mayor & List as a negative. While it was very frustrating and annoying, I understand it to have been due to an error in one constituency. Having been to the presentation in Hercules House of how constituency staff were trained, and knowing that the other 13 constituencies got it right, it seems to me that there was nothing London Elects could reasonably have done to avoid the problem. Of course, if this were a review of that constituency's performance ...

Finally, my thanks - again - to all London Elects staff for the professional and (with generally minor exceptions) exemplary way they ran these elections.

Martin Bleach

Green Party London Regional election agent

Mr Len Duvall AM and Mr Andrew Boff AM
Elections Review Committee
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London
SE1 2AA

5th July 2012

Dear Sirs,

I will be on volunteering leave during the week London Elects are due to give evidence to the Elections Review Committee. Please therefore find below my responses to the key issues within my remit which arose in Committee on the 5th July.

This submission does not cover everything my team did within the public awareness campaign. That can be found in more detail within the London Elects report. I am happy to provide further information as required by the Committee.

Advertising

London Elects ran a pan-London advertising campaign to support our overall public awareness work. As outlined in our earlier report, we had adverts on bus sides, 6sheets (bus shelter size posters) on the side of the road, tube and tram carriage panels, print adverts in local and regional papers, digital adverts on escalators at key tube stations, online adverts and also radio adverts. Our adverts even appeared on Eastenders.

Of the 2000 people interviewed in post campaign research by Ipsos Mori, just over half agree that the adverts helped them know more about the election and a similar number agree that it helped them know where to get more information about the election.

Impartiality

Impartiality was at the core of all communication planning. I have attached the tender specification and the final contract for the advertising work. Both of which make clear that aspects such as the wording, font, images and colours do not imply any bias to any party, individual, campaign or idea.

Procurement & creative development

5 companies submitted tenders for the work. The 3 highest scoring companies were invited to City Hall to present a developed creative campaign. WCRS were awarded the contract and we then worked closely with them to develop the creative and language, test the adverts and sign them off internally. The 'How do you like your London?' line referred to in Committee was designed to start conversations, to get people thinking and engaging with the democratic process.

At an early stage, an independent testing company was used to test how the adverts worked and to identify any problems. This was filmed to allow the London Elects team to observe how people reacted to the adverts. The adverts were well received and the messages understood.

At this stage we were also undertaking research with Ipsos Mori which would feed into the public awareness campaign as a whole. This demonstrated that the key areas of the Mayor's responsibility which most concerned Londoners were policing and transport. It also led us to

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decide not to use some of the adverts around responsibilities which had been developed by the advertising agency during the pitch process.

We were careful how we used the 'responsibility' adverts. They were used minimally in the first stage of the campaign only and the transport advert never appeared on the tube, buses or trams.

It has been shown before that in order to elicit a behaviour change from consumers you need to make it relevant to their lives and show how it impacts them. I understand from the Committee meeting on the 5th July that there is a wider discussion over whether or not there should be an independent public awareness campaign. However, while the statutory duty to promote participation and explain how to vote remains we believe it is imperative to use public money in the most effective way possible. To encourage people to vote, you must also explain what areas of their lives this election covers. This approach has been used in all previous elections for the GLA without complaint. Whilst the advertising covered just the top two items of concern – for budgetary reasons – wherever we could (PR, the web, public awareness leaflets) we referred to all the Mayoral responsibilities as set out on london.gov.uk, as well as the role of the Assembly.

Media buying

The Labour Party agent referred to the fact that we did not target by those areas which saw low turnout in 2008. The planning also took into account looking at turnout across London in 2008 and identifying which groups are statistically less likely to vote and/or are engaged in politics. This research enabled us to understand the potential for up-weighting certain areas to encourage more people to use their vote. In practice however our budget was not large enough to enable us to ensure a good pan-London reach alongside up-weighting certain areas. For example: Bromley, one of the largest populations in London, would have had 2 roadside adverts whereas Barking & Dagenham would have had over 100. It would leave us open to accusations of bias as it became apparent that we would be advertising in boroughs typically held by one party. I took the approach of advertising equally across the whole of London. Had more budget been available we would have started our second level of media buying would have seen us placing more 'remember to vote' style adverts in those areas with a low turnout.

We worked hard to ensure we stretched the budget to reach as many Londoners as possible. One way we did this was to allow boroughs to use our artwork – spreading our message and saving their budget. This was well received by all boroughs.

Election booklet

Post campaign research showed that 2 out of 3 Londoners had seen or read the booklet.

Ipsos Mori felt that the results from the interviews with 2000 Londoners showed that reading the booklet was associated with being more likely to vote.

"It can be seen that there is a strong relationship between receiving the booklet and voting... Over three-quarters (77%) of those who recall either them or someone on their household receiving the booklet say that they voted in the London elections."

Access to electoral registers

The communication team required exports from the Boroughs for the addresses for the mayoral booklet (2 exports per borough) and polling station finder. It was clear from the 2008 evaluation that this was a large piece of work so I spent several months working with the 3 Election Management System (EMS) providers to work out which exports to ask Boroughs for.

If we had spent money on this, we could have had a specific export and received all 33 exports in the same format. Whilst easier, we felt it was not the best use of limited comms funds. We therefore asked the boroughs for existing exports which were the most similar to other boroughs and did the rest of the work ourselves in house.

London [Elects](http://elects.org.uk), PP W6 City Hall, The Queen's Walk, London SE1 2AA
Tel: 020 7983 4444 / info@londonelects.org.uk

The Office of the Greater London Returning Officer

Count day

There were over 600 journalists accredited for City Hall and/or one of the count centres. Approximately 200 journalists came to City Hall on the 4th May.

It has been suggested in other evidence and in committee that estimated times were given for the results. At no point was a time given to any journalist. Our line in response to any query about when the result would be was that there were too many factors to enable us to predict. However to help with planning – and to demonstrate the disparity in results times – we pointed out that 2004 was early evening whereas 2008 was around midnight.

Amendments

I would draw your attention to a couple of discrepancies within the London Elects report which I would like to clarify. The page numbers below refer to those in the full pack of the written submissions circulated ahead of the first committee meeting.

p56

23 - The Mayoral booklet cost £1.45m not £1.7m as indicated.

24 - London Elects funded adaptations to the EMS for e-counting purposes, not for the collection of data for the polling station finder and the mayoral booklet data. The Communication Team worked with the suppliers and boroughs in advance to understand the different formats the data would come over in and allocated time to re format the data to a consistent format within the team.

p57

26 - The view of the Communication Manager is that the website should not need a substantial rebuild. Some adaptations will be required but the 2012 website has attempted to be 'future proof' to allow cost savings in 2016.

P77

C. The higher postal charges came in before the Mayoral booklet was dispatched not after as the report suggests. Poll cards were, however, sent before the increase was applied.

Appendices

For information, please find attached:

- Advertising tender specification & contract
- Our advertising
- Examples of public awareness leaflets & posters

Kind regards

Sarah Garrett
Election Communication Manager
London Elects

Sarah.garrett@london.gov.uk

020 7983 4449



VOTING IN THE 2012 LONDON ELECTIONS

HOW TO VOTE

WHAT ARE THE ELECTIONS ABOUT?

On **3rd May**, people living in London will vote for the Mayor of London and the 25 Members of the London Assembly.

The Mayor and Assembly are responsible for many aspects of your everyday life in London including transport, policing, the environment, housing and economic development.

WHO CAN VOTE?

You can vote if you are:

- aged 18 or over on 3rd May 2012
- a British, Commonwealth or EU citizen
- living in London
- registered to vote by 18th April 2012.

1 The Mayor of London

- You have two choices for Mayor.
- Vote for your first choice candidate by marking a cross (X) in the first choice column.
- Vote for your second choice candidate by marking a cross (X) in the second choice column.



2 Constituency London Assembly Member

- This is the person who will represent your local area.
- Mark one cross (X) in the box next to the candidate you wish to vote for.



3 London-wide Assembly Member

- This is the party or independent candidate who will represent the whole of London.
- Mark one cross (X) in the box next to the party or candidate you wish to vote for.



HAVE YOUR SAY – VOTE 3RD MAY



Visit londonelects.org.uk to find lots more information or to download leaflets in different languages. You can also call us on **020 7983 4444** if you do not have access to the internet.



1. Introduction

London Elects is the independent body involved in planning and managing the administration and publicity for the London elections in 2012. The Greater London Returning Officer (GLRO) has overall responsibility for the elections of the Mayor of London and the London Assembly. The GLRO set up a designated elections team - London Elects – to work to support the GLRO.

2. Scope

London Elects is looking for an advertising agency that can develop an eye catching and inspiring print, outdoor & radio voter education advertising campaign.

We want something to break through the noise of 2012 and be able to work across a range of executions and locations.

It needs to appeal to all Londoners, regardless of gender, race, age or political persuasion. It must also be free of political bias.

3. London Elects public awareness campaign

The advertising will be part of a wider communications campaign in the run up to the Mayor of London and London Assembly elections in May 2012. Other activity includes:

- London Elects website with information for voters, the media and electoral administrators
- PR campaign
- Working with key stakeholders and community groups to raise awareness and understanding
- A booklet delivered to every registered elector in London

The Electoral Commission will be running a campaign just prior to ours which will focus on getting people registered.

4. Creative objectives

- To raise awareness that an election is taking place
- Provide accessible and easy to understand information on the election process
 - What/who is the Mayor of London and London Assembly
 - When and where to vote
 - Increase understanding of how to vote

All the advertising should drive people to the London Elects website where there will be more information, videos, interactive elements etc

We want to engage Londoners and educate them about the role of the Mayor of London and the London Assembly so they are equipped with all the necessary information to go out and vote.

We want Londoners to be inspired and to start talking to each other about having their say on how London is run.

The creative style should work on a variety of executions – all of which can obviously be different - and to a wide audience, from posters in community centres to adverts on the sides of buses.

It is proposed that the first phase of the campaign will look to educate London on what it is these upcoming elections are all about. It is likely that the ‘celebrity’ aspect of the Mayoral campaign will attract a high degree of media attention but it will be important to explain the purpose of the Mayor as well as the London Assembly. (More information on these roles at www.london.gov.uk.) This phase will occur up until the registration deadline and will encourage people to look out for the Mayoral booklet. It will make reference to the registration deadline (18 April 2012) but the focus will be on how these elections will affect Londoners.

The second phase, post registration deadline, will be about when to vote, what to expect at the polling station and how to fill in the ballot paper. The secondary messages in this phase will still be about the role of the Mayor and the Assembly.

In the 2010 general election, a small number of people couldn’t vote because they were still queuing outside polling stations at 10pm. An important part of the campaign will be to ensure people understand when polls close and how important it is to get there in plenty of time.

There are 3 different ballot papers in the London 2012 elections all using different voting systems. This makes these elections one of the most complex in the UK. We want to reduce the number of ballot papers which are spoilt due to people not understanding how to fill them in. We also want to show this as simplistically as possible to help those with low levels of understanding and to encourage participation. A factsheet from 2008 which explains the process for completing the 3 ballot papers is available online:

http://www.londonelects.org.uk/pdf/factsheets/fs4_ballot_papers.pdf

We would be looking for a range of print, online, radio, transport and outdoor advertising. This campaign will not include television advertising.

We will procure a media buying agency later in the year.

5. Key messages

The main things we want people to know are...

- The election is on 3 May 2012
- If you are voting in person, polling stations are open between 7am and 10pm..make sure you don't leave it too late
- You are voting for the Mayor of London and London Assembly
- What these jobs do (see www.londonelects.org.uk for factsheets on their roles or www.london.gov.uk for more information)
- You can vote by post, by proxy or in person
- In the run up to the election we will have a polling station finder on the website and also via text response.
- A booklet will be coming through your door with information on how to vote.

FEEL: We want people to feel that they can have a say on how London is run. We want people to feel inspired, engaged and part of London. We want them to want to get involved.

DO: We want people to come away from the campaign thinking “I know there is an election going on and what it is for, I know when polls are open and I know where to find more information if I need it.”

6. Limitations

Whilst we don't want to limit you, for political reasons there are certain restrictions you must be aware of.

Due to the role of London Elects, it is imperative that the creative work maintains political impartiality, including from the GLA. It is important that aspects such as the wording, font, images and colours do not imply any bias to any party, individual, campaign or idea. London Elects established palettes and logo is supplied with this brief.

7. Target audience

The main target of the advertising is the voter:

- With an estimated 5.7million people registered to vote in London, 700 languages spoken across the region and a range of levels of understanding and interest in politics, a key challenge is to develop a campaign that will appeal to all and meet our objectives.
- Voters are those who are:
 - Resident in London
 - Over 18 on polling day
 - Citizen of UK, EU or Commonwealth
 - Registered to vote

Political views of Londoners vary with a number of parties currently elected to represent Londoners across Parliament, the assembly and local councils.

Not all Londoners are registered to vote – though we do not have exact figures. Electoral Commission research suggests that the key groups who tend to have low levels of registration are young people, those in private rented accommodation and some BME groups. Although we will not be focussing on registration, this information may help indicate those with lower levels of participation.

Two reports from the Electoral Commission may be of use:

Understanding Electoral Registration (2005):

http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/47252/Undreg-FINAL_18366-13545_E_N_S_W_.pdf

Accuracy and completeness of Electoral registers (2010):

http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0018/87111/The-completeness-and-accuracy-of-electoral-registers-in-Great-Britain.pdf

Out of those who are registered, at the last Mayoral elections, just 45% turned out to vote.

Research about voting behaviours in the UK suggests people fall into several camps from ‘will always vote regardless of what the election is, it's my duty’ to ‘election,

what's an election?'

There is no single reason why people don't vote. Surveys conducted after elections show a range of reasons... Didn't know an election was on; forgot; didn't get there on time; don't like politics; my vote doesn't count; doesn't affect me, etc.

The Hansard Society report every year on political engagement in the UK. The 2010 report is online;

http://www.hansardsociety.org.uk/blogs/parliament_and_government/archive/2010/03/02/audit-of-political-engagement-7.aspx This interestingly showed that Londoners are more likely, than other places, to think about local political issues. It should be remembered that this 7th report was done at the height of the 'expenses scandal' when trust in politics was at quite a low.

The campaign must be accessible to all eligible voters by complying with informability and inclusivity principles such as minimum font size, use of plain English etc. We are likely to have some advertising work translated so this should be considered although we will supply translated text.

8. Research

London Elects will have a contract with a market research agency and will be carrying out pre-campaign research to gauge the level of understanding and awareness and also why they do or don't vote. This will be undertaken over the next few months and made available to the chosen supplier to help develop the chosen campaign.

In addition, we will be running post-campaign research which will help us to evaluate the success of the campaign.

9. Printing

It is likely that the chosen advertising agency will be required to arrange a competitively priced printer to produce the adverts. As part of the initial quote, you should outline where you have done this previously and prices for printing billboards, bus-sides and tube posters. As stated earlier, we will be procuring a media buying agency so you are not expected to include the cost of buying the space.

10. Response routes

The main response route will be to the London Elects website. The website is currently being redesigned and will be launched in October 2011.

11. Testing

As part of the contract, the chosen supplier is expected to undertake consumer testing to ensure the effectiveness of the chosen campaign execution. This should be included within your initial quote.

12. ITQ requirements

- Submission of creative concept(s) showing executions for both stages of the campaign and how this would work across different mediums.
- Within your proposal you should explain how you would meet the requirements set out in this paper
- Case study of other design & advertising you have completed – ideally public sector
- Your approach to managing design quality
- Full pricing proposal including:
 - Development of creative – online, print, radio, outdoor, transport
 - Amendment of print advertising to include provided translations
 - Day rates for design/revisions
 - Printing & delivery costs for billboards, bus-sides and tube station posters
 - Creation of PDF/web images of advertising
 - Consumer testing
- Account management proposal
- Summary of staff who would be working on the contract should you be selected.

13. Evaluation criteria

Understanding of and ability to meet requirements set out in brief	45%
Cost efficiency (We are not bound to accept the lowest bid)	20%
Creative design credibility as demonstrated through relevant case study	10%
Adequate and appropriate people resources	10%
Approach to account management	5%
Adherence to GLA environmental policy (http://static.london.gov.uk/gla/publications/environment/GLA_Environmental_policy_procedure.pdf)	5%
Compliance with COI terms and conditions	5%

14. Process

- ITQ sent out to framework
- Responses evaluated against criteria and shortlist created
- Shortlisted companies will be invited to City Hall to present creative responses and project plan

15. Timing

Contract awarded: Approx 20 June 2011

Development/testing stage

Phase 1 advertising: 1 - 18 April 2012

Phase 2 advertising: 23 April – 3 May 2012

Polling day: 3 May 2012

16. Budget

A budget is not being provided with this invitation.

17. Framework Information

This is being tendered amongst Suppliers on COI Basic Procurement - Framework
“advertising agencies”

HOW DO I VOTE?

In the 2012 elections for the Mayor of London and the London Assembly, you will be able to cast three votes and so you will be given three ballot papers.

1 The Mayor of London

Vote for the Mayor using your PINK ballot paper.

- You have two choices for Mayor.
- Vote for your first choice candidate by marking a cross (X) in the first choice column.
- Vote for your second choice candidate by marking a cross (X) in the second choice column.

2 Constituency London Assembly Member

Vote for your Constituency London Assembly Member using the YELLOW ballot paper.

- This is the person who will represent your local area.
- Mark one cross (X) in the box next to the candidate you wish to vote for.

3 London-wide Assembly Member

Vote for a London-wide Assembly Member using the ORANGE ballot paper.

- This is the party or independent candidate who will represent the whole of London.
- Mark one cross (X) in the box next to the party or candidate you wish to vote for.

MORE INFORMATION

In April, everyone who is registered to vote in London will receive an information booklet about the elections. This will list all the London Assembly candidates, include mini-manifestos from the Mayoral candidates and give you some information about how to vote.

Look out for it coming through your door.

Visit londonelects.org.uk to find lots more information.

LANGUAGES & MORE COPIES

If you require this leaflet in Braille or another language, please contact us.

If you are a community group or someone who would like to help Londoners learn about the elections, please get in touch.

You can email us at info@londonelects.gov.uk or call us on **020 7983 4444** if you do not have access to the internet.

VOTING IN THE 2012 MAYOR OF LONDON & LONDON ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

HAVE YOUR SAY – VOTE 3RD MAY

HAVE YOUR SAY – VOTE 3RD MAY



WHAT ARE THE ELECTIONS ABOUT?

On **3rd May 2012**, people living in London can vote for the Mayor of London and the 25 Members of the London Assembly.

The Mayor and Assembly are responsible for many aspects of your everyday life in London including transport, policing, the environment, housing and economic development.

The Mayor of London

The Mayor makes decisions which they believe will improve the city and the lives of Londoners. The Mayor is also responsible for a budget of £14.6 billion which goes towards things including transport around London, policing and the fire brigade.

The London Assembly

The London Assembly is made up of 25 people. It looks closely at the work of the Mayor to see that they properly meet their promises and deliver good value for Londoners. It puts questions to the Mayor and also investigates important issues for Londoners.

WHEN CAN I VOTE?

7am – 10pm

Your polling station is open between **7am and 10pm** on **Thursday 3rd May 2012**.

Make sure you allow plenty of time to have your say before voting stops at 10pm.

If you think you might forget, go to our website and sign up for our free reminder service.

If you are voting by post, you will receive your ballot papers before the election. You must make sure you return them by 10pm on 3rd May.



WHO CAN VOTE?

You can vote if you are:

- aged 18 or over on 3rd May 2012
- a British, Commonwealth or EU citizen
- living in London
- registered to vote by 18th April 2012.

If you are not registered to vote visit londonelects.org.uk or contact your local council.

WHERE CAN I VOTE?

There are three ways you can vote.

1. At your polling station

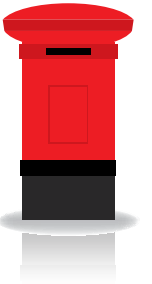
- Before 3rd May you will be sent a 'poll card' which includes details of where your polling station is.
- You can only vote at the polling station on this card.
- Staff at the polling station will be able to help you understand your ballot paper if you need help.
- You do not need to take your poll card with you to the polling station but it will help the staff.



If you are unable to go to the polling station in person, you can apply to vote by post or by proxy.

2. By post

- Your ballot papers will be sent to you about a week before election day.
- Mark your votes and send them back so they arrive before 10pm on 3rd May 2012.
- You must remember to complete the security declaration with your signature and date of birth.
- If you do not get your votes back in time, they will not be counted.
- If you have forgotten to post them, you can take your completed postal vote into your polling station in the envelope provided.



3. Using a proxy

- If you are not able to get to the polling station you can ask someone you trust to be your proxy.
- This means they can vote on your behalf but you will need to tell them who you want to vote for.



You must apply for a postal or proxy vote in advance. For more information visit londonelects.org.uk or contact your local council.



Version: V.2
Date: 18th August 2012



Schedule 1

Schedule to be attached to the terms and conditions between COI and WCRS to outline the scope of work to be undertaken on behalf of London Elects.

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1. Introduction and purpose

The purpose of this document is to clarify the nature of the services, deliverables and software that WCRS will deliver to the Client under the contract to which this document is attached or appended. This document supersedes all verbal or written agreements on the services to be provided and should be used as a sole point of reference. Services, Software, Deliverables not included within this document are not included within the prices shown in section 8.

The deliverables to be supplied to the client by WCRS are described in section 3 below.

The costs the Client will pay to WCRS for the deliverables and services are described in section 3.

1.1. Summary of advertising (from London Elects)

In this contract, 'London Elects' means the Greater London Authority (GLA) on behalf of the Greater London Returning Officer (GLRO).

London Elects is the independent body involved in planning and managing the administration and publicity for the London elections in 2012. The GLRO has overall responsibility for the elections of the Mayor of London and the London Assembly. The GLRO set up a designated elections team - London Elects – to work to support the GLRO

The advertising forms a key part of the London Elects public awareness campaign. The key objectives are:

- To raise awareness that an election is taking place
- To increase understanding of the purpose of the election
- To encourage people to look out for the Mayoral booklets
- To provide accessible and easy to understand information on the election process:
 - What/who is the Mayor of London and London Assembly
 - When and where to vote
 - Increase understanding of how to fill in the ballot papers
- To drive Londoners to the website

Due to the role of London Elects, it is imperative that the advertising maintains political impartiality, including from the GLA. This includes aspects such as the wording, font, images and colours so that they do not imply any bias to any party, individual, campaign or idea.

1.2. Target audience

The advertising needs to appeal to all Londoners, regardless of gender, race, age or political persuasion.

The main target of the advertising is the voter:

- With an estimated 5.7million people registered to vote in London, 700 languages spoken across the region and a range of levels of understanding and interest in politics, a key challenge is to develop a campaign that will appeal to all and meet our objectives.
- Voters are those who are:
 - Resident in London
 - Over 18 on polling day

- Citizen of UK, EU or Commonwealth
- Registered to vote

Further information on particular groups, translated text, messages, research etc will be provided to WCRS by London Elects as it becomes available. Discussions between the client and supplier will then take place to discuss any required amends or additions to the creative.

2. Required messaging

The following provides the messages which London Elects requires the advertising to portray. Where appropriate, this has been linked to the creative provided by WCRS at pitch stage.

The exact number of executions and messages within those adverts, will be agreed between WCRS and London Elects during the discovery and design phases. The dates provided are indicative only and subject to agreement. A graphical representation of the timetable can be found in appendix A.

All advertising should reference the date of the election and clearly direct people to the London Elects website.

2.1. Phase 1

8th – 23rd April

Phase 1a: 8th - 15th April

- “How do you like your London?”

Phase 1b: 16th – 23rd April

- What is the Mayor responsible for
- Who are the London Assembly
- Look out for the booklet

2.2. Phase 2

24th April – 1st May (tbc)

- Have your say on the things the Mayor is responsible for
- Who are the London Assembly
- How to fill in ballot papers
- Ways to vote
- How to find the polling station
- Where to find more information/download a booklet

2.3. Phase 3

2nd May

- Vote tomorrow – Clock showing 7am as start of polling

2.4. Phase 4

3rd May

- Vote today – Clock showing 10pm as close of polling

FEEL: We want people to feel that they can have a say on how London is run. We want people to feel inspired, engaged and part of London. We want them to want to get involved.

DO: We want people to come away from the campaign thinking “I know there is an election going on and what it is for, I know when polls are open and I know where to find more information if I need it.”

3. Media planning and buying

Communications planning and buying will be undertaken by WCRS partner company, Engine. WCRS remain responsible for ensuring effective delivery for the client and fees for the media planning and buying will be paid to WCRS in the same method as the rest of the project.

The communications planning proposal from WCRS/Engine is set out in appendix B.

4. Deliverables

This section outlines the process, milestones, deliverables, acceptance criteria and timeline for this project.

Within the scope of this contract, WCRS will develop executions to cover all messages outlined in section 2. For each execution, 2 rounds of design will be allowed within the scope of this contract.

Additional executions for extra messages required by London Elects will require a change control and will be charged at the additional rates as outlines in section 6.

4.1. Stage 1 – Creative development (6 weeks)

- 1 x new “How Do you Like Your London ad
 - 2 x new “booklet” ad – Lookout & Download
 - Design development of master layout to increase prominence of URL
 - 3 x revised Phase 3 layouts “Have your say VOTE 3rd of May” headline
 - Colour correction on 3 x Phase 3 ads – Less blue / green
 - Assembly ad – One new character
- Payment on acceptance: £54,000

4.2. Stage 2 – Creative production (4 weeks)

- Final style guidelines
 - All artwork masters to be developed to a portal for partner agency access
- Payment on acceptance: £24,270

4.3. Stage 3 – Comms strategy (4 weeks)

- Identification of key audiences
 - Media buying strategy
 - Buying agency tender support
 - On receipt of final media plan an copy rotation will be agreed
- Payment on acceptance: £16,750

4.4. Stage 4 – Final delivery (2 weeks)

- Creation of all adapts as per agreed copy rotation
 - Manage rollout of copy rotation
 - Supply all ads to printing / posting houses
 - Comms planning team to assess campaign success post election day.
- Payment on acceptance: £10,645

A detailed timeline of work, including sign off dates, will be agreed between the parties within 1 week of the contract (or such other reasonable period agreed between the parties) being signed.

5. Translations

To reach as many Londoners as possible, London Elects will look to develop some adverts which include foreign language text.

The translations will be arranged by London Elects who will provide WCRS with the translated text.

WCRS will amend 2 existing designs, each into 15 languages

6. Accessibility

In developing the adverts, particular care should be given to ensure that the colours, font, design and wording are accessible. Standards set by the RNIB and other bodies will assist in this.

It is noted that WCRS have already testing the language for translation during the pitch stage.

7. Testing

As part of the contract, WCRS will undertake consumer testing to ensure the effectiveness of the chosen campaign execution. This is included within the costings in section 6.

8. Printing

It is likely that the chosen advertising agency will be required to arrange a competitively priced printer to produce the adverts. As part of the initial quote, you should outline where you have done this previously and prices for printing billboards, bus-sides and tube posters. As stated earlier, we will be procuring a media buying agency so you are not expected to include the cost of buying the space.

9. Intellectual property

The icons and graphics developed by WCRS are for the use in the London Elects 2012 election public awareness campaign only. Any usage outside this campaign requires the agreement of both London Elects and WCRS.

10. Costings

This excludes the cost of media space, printing of advertising, radio and online production.

- Creative development: £54,000
- Creative production: £24,270
- Comms strategy: £16,750
- Final delivery: £10,645

Total value of contract: £115,665

WCRS will invoice COI at the start of each work stage. Upon acceptance of the deliverables at the end of each stage, as set out in section 4, London Elects will then approve payment and release funds to COI as soon as possible.

10.1. Day rates

London Elects, City Hall, The Queen's Walk, London SE1 2AA
Tel: 020 7983 4444 / info@londonelects.org.uk

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Should additional time be required by London Elects, it will be at the additional rates as set out below. Before additional work is undertaken, it must be agreed between both parties.

Appendix A: Proposed phasing of advertising



Phase	1																							2												
Month	April																																			
Date	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	13th	14th	15th	16th	17th	18th	19th	20th	21st	22nd	23rd	24th	25th	26th	27th	28th	29th	30th	1st	2nd											
Creative																																				

Appendix B: Media buying proposal

WCRS&CO Communications Planning Proposal



YOUR LONDON. YOUR VOTE

Further to our meeting, please find below a scope of work and associated costs for WCRS in partnership with their communications planning arm to develop the media strategy and support the GLA in the tendering of a media-buying house to deliver the campaign.

SCOPE OF WORK

Having worked through the your brief, we see the project as having 3 distinct but inter-linked phases, as follows:

Phase 1

The bulk of work on this project will be the process of getting from the clients brief to a fully formed communications strategy and accompanying channel plan. As per the deck we shared with you at Friday's meeting, the route we propose taking to deliver this is as follows:

- Translation of business to communication objectives, based on the challenge to increase voter turnout and reduce proportion of spoiled ballot papers (used as an indicator of successful voter education)
- Generate target audience insights via our process of Observe, Define & Align, utilising our proprietary planning tools and distilling audience data gleaned from previous elections, which will be provided to us by the GLA. Whilst we're conscious of the fact that the brief is to reach all of London's voting population, this analysis will seek to identify distinct audience segments within that broad London audience which will enable us to:
- Engage specific audiences who are currently not voting but have the greatest potential to become voters
- Identify common touch-points that link all voter groups, to identify appropriate "reach all of London" communications channels
- Definition of success – agreeing business/comms metrics appropriate to the task in hand
- Generation of a communications vision – channel neutral 360 degree planning
- Channel planning and budget allocation, to drive greater efficiency of spend, and inform the task for the to-be-appointed executional media agency. As discussed, this means the GLA drive budget efficiencies by having a communications strategy that is completely aligned with the creative route, and enables them to have executional media planning and buying agencies pitch against a specific buying task.

Time allocation: 40% of a senior communications planner and a planning executive's time across a 6-week period.

Phase 2

The second phase pertains to the buying and execution of the campaign. Our role in this stage would be as follows:

- Use our experience and expertise to assist the GLA in the executional media planning and buying agency pitch process

London Elects, City Hall, The Queen's Walk, London SE1 2AA
Tel: 020 7983 4444 / info@londonelects.org.uk

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- Briefing the successful media agency to develop detailed media plans once the strategy has been agreed
- Oversee the detailed plans to ensure they effectively reflect the strategy and assist the client in the approval process
- Supply support, and guidance to both client and media agency to help optimise campaign where required

Time allocation: 3 full days of a senior communications planner's time.

Phase 3

The final phase is the Measurement piece – working with the GLA to assess the success of the campaign. Based on our 22nd July meeting, our understanding is that the GLA have a number of measurement and tracking processes in place. Our role will be to help analyse this data and provide clear learnings including quantification of the impact of the campaign (subject to the appropriate metrics tools being available).

Time allocation: 2 full days of both a senior communications planner and a planning executive's time.

NB: This scope of work and costing does not cover the cost of an econometric model. We're very happy to investigate such a route of analysis, but this will require additional funding. Suggest we monitor this as project progresses and assess requirements as and when appropriate.

COSTING

The ratecard cost of delivering the above scope is £19,250.

However in recognition of how hard the GLA have to make their budgets work to deliver this campaign, whilst at the same time reflecting how much we would like to work on this project, we will discount our rates by 13%.

This reduces the proposed cost to £16,750 (exc VAT)

Obviously if excessive hours are incurred on the project, we caveat that this cost may have to be revisited, but we stress this would only be in exceptional circumstances.

Appendix C: WCRS costings

Client
GLA
Assignment
Mayor Elections
Job Number
TBC

Billing Schedule			
50%	On acceptance	£	57,833
25%	Mid point	£	28,916
25%	On Delivery	£	28,916
Total		£	115,665

Creative Development	Creative Production	Comms Strategy	Final Delivery
6 weeks	4 weeks	4 weeks	2 weeks
422	254	118	77
£ 54,000	£ 54,270	£ 16,750	£ 10,645

Department	Hourly Rate	Hours	Total Amount
		871	£ 115,665

Days	Weeks
120	27

Executive			
Executive	£ 350		£ -
Creative Partner	£ 350		£ -
Managing Partner	£ 280	12	£ 3,360
Strategy			
Strategy Director	£ 230	8	£ 1,840
Senior Strategist	£ 190	70	£ 10,510
Strategist	£ 110	130	£ 14,300
Senior Analyst	£ 80		£ -
Analyst	£ 90		£ -
Creative			
Creative Director	£ 230	75	£ 17,250
Creative Technology Director	£ 230		£ -
Senior Creative	£ 190		£ -
Lead Designer	£ 190		£ -
Technical Team Lead	£ 190		£ -
QA Manager	£ 150		£ -
Creative	£ 110	225	£ 24,750
Senior Developer	£ 110		£ -
Designer	£ 110	38	£ 4,180
Developer	£ 110		£ -
Client Services			
Client Services Director	£ 230		£ -
Group Account Director	£ 190	60	£ 11,400
Senior Account Director	£ 190		£ -
Account Director	£ 110		£ -
Account Manager	£ 80	140	£ 11,200
Account Executive	£ 50		£ -
Delivery			
Production Director	£ 230		£ -
Delivery Director	£ 190		£ -
Senior Delivery Manager	£ 190	113	£ 16,875
Delivery Manager	£ 110		£ -
Producer	£ 110		£ -
Head Of TV Administration	£ 80		£ -
Production Assistant	£ 50		£ -
TV Administration Assistant	£ 50		£ -

2	1
2	1
10	2
18	4
10	2
30	6
6	2
8	2
19	4
15	3

4	4		4
		8	
		70	
70	20	40	
45	30		
135	90		
38			
30	20		10
70	45		35

Appendix D: TFL price list

Transport for London



6.9.10

Studio

Typography/Mac rate	£80 Hour
Conventional rate (Trim and mount etc)	£80 Hour
CD	£40
PDF	£15
Jpeg	£15
Colour Laser	£5
Upload to ftp	£25
Master Artwork for Press	£80 Hour
Master Poster including Proof and delivery	£220
Adapt Press	£60 Hour
Revisions (Min Charge)	£30
Lo Resolution scans	£25
High End Retouching	£170

Proofs

GMG and Colourbus

A2	£70
A3	£50
A4	£40
A5	£30

Largo (Presentation Proofs)

A0	£100
A1	£55
A2	£35
A3	£25
A4 (up to)	£20



Repro

Magazine fulfilment including 2 proofs, digital file and delivery

Page	£190
Double Page	£260

Newspaper Fulfilment including 2 proofs, digital file and delivery *

Tabloid up to half page	£175
Tabloid up to page	£220
Broadsheet up to half page	£200
Broadsheet up to page	£250

Proofs GMG and Colourbus

A2	£70
A3	£50
A4	£40
A5	£30

Delivery

Local	£15
National	£50

*** Gate Keepers Charges**

Independent/IOS

DPS	£100
Page	£100
Half Page	£100
1/4 Page	£100

Independent Magazine/IOS Review

Page	£100
DPS	£100

Express/Star/Sunday Express/Sunday Star

DPS	£100
Page	£100
Half Page	£100
1/4 Page	£100

Express/Star Magazines

DPS	£100
Page	£100
Half Page	£100
1/4 page	£100
Mirror/Sunday Mirror	£100

I have been informed by DCI Alexis Boon, that you require some information regarding the recent Mayoral and London Assembly Elections in May this year.

I was the Silver Commander for both the day of the elections, the count and results. I understand you wish to have some information on investigations that were connected to the elections.

I can confirm that the MPS received three (3) allegations under the Representation of the People Act 1983. Two of these relate to missing information on election material, and one relates to alleged false statements on nomination papers. These investigations are still on -going and the MPS are engaging with the CPS re any offences. As such, I am unable to comment further at this stage.

I hope this is sufficient for your purposes.

Regards

Michael Johnson | Commander | London Olympic Operational Planning (Silver)



**Anthony Kemp
Corporate Resources**

**Electoral Services
London Borough of Hounslow
Civic Centre Lampton Road
Hounslow TW3 4DN**

Mr Len Duvall AM and Mr Andrew Boff AM
Elections Working Group
London Assembly
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London, SE1 2AA

your contact is: Angela Holden
tel: 020 8583 2095
date: 3 July 2012
email: angela.holden@hounslow.gov.uk
our ref: AH/GLA2012
your ref:

Dear Sirs

Review of the 2012 Mayoral and London Assembly Elections

Thank you for your letter dated 30 May 2012 inviting comments in relation to the review of the 2012 Mayoral and London Assembly Elections. Back in May I attended the London Elects review meeting on the GLA elections when a lot of the points detailed below were also raised and I will use the basis of the agenda from this meeting to cover various points.

Overall the elections went smoothly and some elements were an improvement from previous GLA elections. Outlined below are issues that need to be reviewed for future elections.

Part A – General Arrangements

Regulations, rules, directions and performance standards

The GLRO directions need better co-ordination with the EC performance standards in the future. An example of this is the poll card delivery dates. The south west constituency followed the GLRO directions and delivered the first delivery weekend but we failed with EC performance standard as did 9 of 14 constituencies.

In addition some of the guidance came through late.

Project Planning

Project planning is essential for the successful conduct of elections but we could not plan properly in some cases for example ballot paper delivery dates were unknown as were other dates. During the whole process we didn't see the London Elects project plan and the timescales they were working to. There was no funding available for contingency planning and yet plans had to be put in place.

Insurance

Following the change in the GLA election insurance provider local authorities were advised on the week of the election that they were not covered by the GLRO insurance and had to arrange insurance locally at very short notice. In the future the insurance should be provided by the GLA.

Nominations

The checking of nominations for the Mayoral nomination papers should be dealt with by the GLRO and not at local authority level. In addition the procedures changed part way through the nomination process from faxed copies to scanned copies being emailed – procedures should be agreed in advance for any process.

Accreditation

The accreditation of agents for constituency agents worked better in 2008 than the centralised approach taken this year. It wasn't clear what information was being sent to our agents and we never saw a copy of the guide handed out at the count until the actual day when we did ask for a copy in advance.

Supplies

Some deliveries were late i.e. orange ballot box seals and over 800 of our white ballot box seals never arrived. This year local authorities had to purchase their own polling station sundry packs from the constituency budget allocated and yet in 2008 they were purchased centrally which is what should happen in the future.

Ballot Papers

The ballot papers were supplied on pallets which resulted in a tremendous amount of man hours in splitting the ballot papers down for each contest for each polling station. This is usually done by the print supplier due to the tight timescales so close to the election.

Communication/Information

There were a lot of communication from London Elects from various officers and it wasn't always clear who to contact and Pat Parker seemed to be the main contact for Electoral Services Managers and was probably swamped with emails and requests for information.

PR Resources/Booklet/Website

The mayoral booklet should be sent per household rather than each elector to save money.

An early decision should have been taken in relation to how the mayoral booklet would be despatched to late registrations so as to try to co-ordinate work at the planning stages.

Funding

Sufficient funding should be provided to run the election so that the governing body of any election meets the whole costs of the election and it is not subsidised by local authorities. The funding provided for the 2012 elections was insufficient. An example of this is the polling station staffing ratio to electorate recommended by the Electoral Commission which forms part of the performance standards required 119 additional poll clerks to the GLA funding provided - a shortfall of £26,180.

I understand that generally the national election principles for funding were adopted for the elections in 2012 however the principles of administering a GLA election are different to that of a parliamentary election. For example all count staff were expected to attend training sessions and in some cases several training sessions which were off site from their normal employment and held in central London. The travel budget did not cover the costs of travelling to London for training and to Olympia to conduct the count from Hounslow.

The conduct of some elements of the election was based very much on people's good will and not for the remuneration they received. Savings from elsewhere in the budget have had to be made including cuts to the poll card delivery payments to meet the costs of the elections, and in some cases recharges from the local authority will not be made to ensure that the constituency is within its budget allocation.

Training

The training provided by London Elects was excellent and a great opportunity for electoral services and count staff.

London Elects Staffing

The team at London Elects were very supportive but I felt at times they were under resourced and under a lot of pressure and should have been brought in full time at an earlier stage of the process. London Elects should be considering a permanent staffing arrangement which ensures succession planning and the appropriate staffing resources being brought in at an early planning stage to ensure the smooth conduct of the election at all stages.

Part B – Intellect and ECount arrangements

Portal

The portal overall was a disaster with data not loading automatically and data not being loaded by intellect. The portal was not user friendly. The uploading of the late registrations details was not included on the initial timetable and there was no clear submit button for Intellect to be aware that the local authority had finished loading their data. Sufficient testing of the portal was not carried out before going live. On Election Day the Returning Officer and I attended Olympia to check the data was correct. This data was checked for both Hounslow and Kingston and it was agreed that the Richmond data would be amended overnight ready for 6am on the count morning. Upon arrival at the count venue Friday morning all the data had changed for Hounslow and Kingston and had to re-entered, and the Richmond data had not been entered overnight as agreed all of which resulted in our count being delayed at the start of the day.

Sign off of ecount setup – Election Day

For the South West Constituency both the Constituency Returning Officer and I arrived at 2pm to test the system and sign off as arranged. It was clear that Intellect were not ready for us. We spent all afternoon there waiting to test the system and in the end left just before 6pm having not been able to complete the whole test.

Procedures

It is still unclear as to why ballot papers had to be taken out of ballot boxes and put into trays to be scanned to then be returned to ballot boxes for storage. The whole process could have been more streamlined by scanning the ballot papers from the boxes and also more cost effective not only from a man hour's point of view but also there would have been a major saving by not having to purchase trays and labels.

Ballot Papers

Perforations on postal ballot papers caused problems at the scanning stages which resulted in a high volume of manual entry on the day.

Yours sincerely

Angela Holden DMS, MBA, AEA (Dip)
Electoral Services Manager