

CHAPTER 8

POLLING AND COUNTING ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE ELECTION

Section 1 – Recruitment of Polling/Counting Staff

8.1 In view of the relatively small number of EC members and the fact that there would only be 1 main polling station, 1 counting station and two DPSs in the CE Election, the REO, instead of launching a service-wide recruitment exercise as in other elections, deployed 640 of its staff members to serve as polling and counting staff as well as providing supporting services on the polling day.

Section 2 – Training for Polling/Counting Staff

8.2 To equip its staff with the necessary knowledge and skills for discharging their duties, the REO organised two general briefing sessions on 14 and 15 March 2017 at the Queen Elizabeth Stadium and Lady Trench Training Centre respectively. On-site rehearsals were also conducted on 24 and 25 March 2017 at the venues prior to the polling day, so that staff of different positions would be familiar with the electoral process and the venue operation. The REO had compiled 3 sets of operational manuals for the reference of staff responsible for polling and counting matters. Two sets were designated for the polling staff (one for the PROs, DPROs and APROs and another for POs and Polling Assistants). The remaining set was designated for the counting staff.

Section 3 – Identifying Venue as Polling Stations

8.3 The REO started identifying suitable venues to serve as polling and counting stations for the CE Election as early as 2012. In view of the fact that the venue used in the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (“HKCEC”) for the 2012 CE Election was spacious and conveniently located, and well-supported by ancillary facilities and transport arrangements, reservation was made in advance by the REO for the same venue, i.e. the Grand Hall on Level 3 (about 6 000 m²) and Halls F and G on Level 5 (about 9 000 m²) of the HKCEC, in late 2012 for use as the main polling station and the CCS respectively for the CE Election. The REO also rented Hall F on Level 3 (about 2 000 m²) and meeting rooms on Level 4 (1 700 m²) for use as the bag search point and the waiting/resting area for EC members respectively. The total area was about 18 700 m². Moreover, the venue was accessible to wheelchair users. Dedicated passageways could be identified for the transportation of the ballot boxes from the main polling station to the CCS after the close of poll, and for use by EC members who wished to go to the CCS to observe the count after casting their votes.

Section 4 – Polling Arrangements

Polling hours

8.4 The first round of voting in a contested election (or the poll in an uncontested election) is scheduled to be held from 9:00 am to 11:00 am in the main polling station and the DPS set up in a police station. Should there be a need for more than one round of voting, the second and third rounds of voting will be held from 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm and from 7:00 pm to 8:00 pm respectively on the same day. As for the DPSs set up at the penal institutions of the CSD,

the first round of voting in a contested election (or the poll in an uncontested election) is scheduled to be held from 9:00 am to 10:00 am, while the second and third rounds of voting will be held at the same time as those in the main polling station.

8.5 In the event that there is a need for the fourth round or further rounds, it will be held on the following day (i.e. 27 March 2017). For each round of voting, the count will be conducted right after the poll.

The main polling station

8.6 To avoid long queues during the poll, 38 ballot paper issuing desks and 70 voting compartments (including 4 for wheelchair users) were set up in the main polling station. Similar to all other elections, an NCZ and an NSZ were designated outside the main polling station. There was a waiting area right outside the main polling station for EC members who arrived before the commencement of the polling. A resting area was also provided for EC members who had cast their votes. Apart from displaying the Introduction to Candidates leaflets at each voting compartment inside the main polling station, enlarged versions of the leaflets were also posted near the entrance of the main polling station.

8.7 In anticipation of possible demonstration activities in the vicinity of the venue, Designated Public Activity Areas were delineated by the Police outside the main polling station on the polling day. As accessibility by EC members was crucial to the smooth conduct of the election, the REO had worked closely with the Police and the venue management on security and traffic management matters. To enhance the security inside the HKCEC, access control was implemented at the Expo Drive Entrance and on various levels of the HKCEC along the dedicated passageways leading to the main polling station

and the CCS. EC members were each provided with a name badge printed with a barcode for easy identification. An EC member was required to show his/her name badge when entering the HKCEC and the barcode printed thereon would be scanned for identity verification before he/she was permitted to pass through these access control points. To ensure voting secrecy, the REO also implemented a series of measures in this election on various aspects including the layout of polling station, security, polling procedures, design of the voting compartments, etc. to enhance secrecy and security arrangements. Please refer to paragraph 14.23 for details.

Polling notice

8.8 In accordance with legal requirement, the REO will send to each EC member a polling notice 10 days before the polling day. The package sent to each EC member included the polling notice as required by the law (which contained such information as the polling date, address of the main polling station and polling hours), a location map of the main polling station and CCS, voting instructions, a note on the polling and counting procedures, and the house rules of the CCS. Besides, 1 map showing the extent of the NCZ of the main polling station, a leaflet on Introduction to Candidates and 1 ICAC leaflet were also included in the package.

8.9 The polling notice also attached a letter from the CEO with essential information on the CE Election. The letter also reminded EC members that they were not allowed to communicate with others, use a mobile phone or any other communication device to communicate with other persons, film, take photographs, make any audio or video recordings inside the main polling station, or remove a ballot paper from the main polling station. The letter further reminded EC members that, in order to assist the PRO in enforcing the EP (CEE) Reg, they had to switch off their mobile phones and put them away

properly before entering the main polling station, and that they were not allowed to communicate to another person any information obtained at the main polling station as to which candidate an EC member was about to vote for or had voted for. Besides, the letter reminded EC members that no person should directly or indirectly induce an EC member to display a ballot paper marked by him/her so as to make known to any person any information as to which candidate the EC member had voted for. Hence, EC members were not allowed to show their choices on the ballot papers to others.

8.10 For security reasons and for easy identification of EC members, the package sent to each EC member also included 1 name badge, as mentioned in paragraph 8.7 above. The name badge was solely used for identifying an EC member with its unique barcode and would not contain any information on the voting record. In addition, there were 1 transportation map showing the designated drop-off and pick-up points and 1 vehicle entry permit for EC members who came to the main polling station by private vehicles or taxis. To facilitate the assessment of the likely traffic condition of the HKCEC on the polling day for the Police to make arrangements, the REO appealed to EC members to complete 1 survey form on the mode of transport which they would use to arrive at the main polling station. EC members were also invited to provide their own and/or their assistants' mobile phone numbers and/or email addresses to facilitate the dissemination of the latest information on electoral arrangements and/or contingency measures by SMS or email in case of need on the polling day.

Design of ballot papers

8.11 The design of ballot papers followed the form set out in the EP (CEE) Reg. As more than one round of voting might be required, ballot papers to be

used in different rounds were differentiated by different colours.

Storage of ballot papers

8.12 After the ballot papers were printed by the Government Logistics Department, REO staff conducted quality checks on them in a room under closed-circuit television (“CCTV”) surveillance and with security guards on duty round the clock. After examination by the PRO, the sealed ballot papers were delivered to the storage room of the main polling station located at the HKCEC for storage before the election, and were unsealed for use only on the polling day. The ballot papers were transported by government vehicles and escorted by REO staff and security guards throughout the journey. Upon arrival at the main polling station, the ballot papers were immediately stored and locked in the storage room which was under CCTV surveillance. The entrance of the storage room was guarded by security guards round the clock until the close of the election when the ballot papers were transported back to REO offices for storage. Separately, arrangements were made by the REO in the same manner for the transportation and storage of a portion of sealed ballot papers which had been examined by the PRO to the fallback venue of the main polling station located at the AWE to cater for contingency use.

Voting procedures

8.13 In accordance with the legislation, an EC member has to mark the ballot paper inside the voting compartment by using the “✓” chop provided. After marking the ballot paper, the EC member is required to fold the ballot paper so that the marked side is concealed, and to put the folded ballot paper into the ballot box. The Guidance to Electors on the Voting Procedure was posted at the main polling station and inside each voting compartment.

8.14 EC members were encouraged to proceed to the CCS after casting their votes to observe the count and stay until the counting result was known, so

that they could proceed to the main polling station for another round of voting, if necessary.

Special polling arrangements for imprisoned, remanded and detained EC members

8.15 To enable EC members who are imprisoned or remanded by the CSD on the polling day to vote, DPSs are planned to be set up at penal institutions of the CSD. The REO had posted and updated on the CE Election website the number of EC members who were imprisoned or remanded in custody at penal institutions daily from Monday to Friday (other than a general holiday) starting from 3 weeks before the polling day and on the Saturday immediately before the polling day for candidates' reference. It was only necessary for the REO to set up a DPS at the Pik Uk Prison on the polling day. The CSD would arrange any EC members who were imprisoned or held in custody to cast their votes in a specified time slot during the polling hours.

8.16 A DPS was also set up at the Happy Valley Police Station for any EC members who were remanded or detained by the LEAs, other than the CSD, on the polling day and expressed their wish to vote. Since the LEAs may arrest persons who are EC members any time on the polling day, the polling hours of the DPS are the same as that of the main polling station.

8.17 The DPSs were smaller in scale than the main polling station. For security reasons, some polling materials used were specially designed.

8.18 After the first round of voting, the PRO of a DPS would lock and seal the ballot box before delivering it to the CCS under police escort. Candidates or their agents might accompany the PRO in the delivery process. Ballot papers cast at DPS would be mixed with those cast at the main polling station before the count.

Section 5 – Counting Arrangements

The central counting station

8.19 The CCS comprised a counting zone, a public area and a media centre (“MC”) with designated areas respectively for use by candidates, their election/counting agents and electioneering personnel, EC members and the media. Each candidate was also allocated a room inside the CCS. There was also a public area in the CCS for members of the public to observe the count and the RO’s announcement of the election result. Besides, media announcements were also made through the MC.

The counting procedures

8.20 The ballot papers were counted manually. If any one of the candidates has obtained more than 600 valid votes cast in any round of voting, he/she will be returned at the CE Election. If another round of voting is required, the RO will announce the relevant arrangement through the electronic media, and the REO will make an announcement to EC members by telephone or SMS (if the EC member has provided the REO with his/her contact phone number), email (if the EC member has provided the REO with his/her email address), and through the large display boards set up at the Expo Drive Entrance of the HKCEC. EC members who have left the venue are advised to keep a close watch of such announcement and return to the main polling station in time to cast their votes. Alternatively, they may enquire through the REO Hotline and browse the dedicated website for the 2017 CE Election for the need to return for another round of voting.

8.21 When the count started, the PRO of the main polling station assumed the role of CS to oversee the counting process. The RO was responsible for determining the validity of questionable ballot papers.

Section 6 – Contingency Measures

8.22 The REO has made the following plans or arrangements to cater for inclement weather or other emergencies:

- (a) postponement or adjournment of the poll or the count;
- (b) extension of polling hours due to flooding, power failure or other emergencies;
- (c) setting up a fallback venue at the AWE in the event that the original main polling station/CCS, for one reason or another, could no longer function properly or be accessed by EC members;
- (d) stocking of extra ballot papers, ballot boxes, etc. at the HKCEC and REO offices to cater for emergency situation;
- (e) booking of vehicles and ferries for delivery of equipment and emergency transport of EC members and staff to the fallback venue in case of need;
- (f) close monitoring of the flow of traffic to and in the vicinity of the HKCEC on the polling day, with the assistance of relevant departments and authorities;
- (g) securing back-up electricity supply by the HKCEC to ensure

that the poll and the count could continue in the case of power disruption; and

- (h) making full preparation for making public announcements on the implementation of any emergency arrangements (including requesting EC members to provide their own and/or their assistants' mobile phone numbers and/or email addresses to enable contact in case of need).