

## **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, only one main polling station, one DPS, one polling station at the Penny’s Bay Community Isolation Facility (i.e. the Penny’s Bay Polling Station (“PBPS”)) and one central counting station-cum-media centre (“CCS-cum-MC”) were set up for this CE Election. The REO did not launch a service-wide recruitment exercise for electoral staff as in other elections, but mainly deployed its own staff and invited the staff from other bureaux/departments who had rich experience in electoral work and effective performance in the relevant duties to serve as electoral staff for this CE Election. In total, around 1 200 staff were recruited to serve as polling and counting staff as well as providing supporting services on the polling day in this CE Election.

#### **Section 2 – Training for Polling and Counting Staff**

8.2 To ensure the polling staff were fully equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills for discharging their electoral duties, the REO organised two online general briefing sessions on 25 and 29 April 2022, to explain various major arrangements of this CE Election to the staff of the polling station and electoral staff of other functional units respectively. In the briefing session for polling staff, the REO highlighted to the staff of the main polling station the new arrangements of this election, including the operation of the EPR System and the precautionary measures against the COVID-19 epidemic. For the

polling staff in the main polling station, the REO organised practice sessions on the EPR System, so as to provide them with hands-on experience in operating the EPR System and to get them familiarised with the details of the work flow with a view to ensuring a smooth process in issuing ballot papers. A series of drills and rehearsals was also held before the polling day, including 8 sessions of drills in relation to the duties of the main polling station held in the Kowloon Bay International Trade & Exhibition Centre between 27 and 29 April 2022, and the on-site drills and rehearsals held in the HKCEC between 3 and 7 May 2022 to familiarise staff serving different positions with the electoral process, the operation of the EPR System and the workflow at the election venue. For the staff of the DPS and the PBPS, drills were held for them on 3 May 2022. In addition, the REO compiled two sets of operation manuals, one for the PRO, DPRO and APROs and the other for POs and Polling Assistants.

8.3 In addition to providing training for the polling staff, the REO also organised on-site drills and rehearsals between 6 and 7 May 2022 in the HKCEC for the Ushering and Marshalling Unit, the Admission Unit and the Venue Security Unit to familiarise them with the arrangements at various access control points in the HKCEC, the routes for the EC members to enter the main polling station and the CCS-cum-MC, as well as the venue security arrangements. This included an introduction, demonstration and practice of the Radio Frequency Identification (“RFID”) access control system (please refer to paragraph 8.11 for details), so that the staff could provide assistance to the EC members at the admission points of the venue and maintain order on the polling day.

8.4 Concerning the training for counting staff, the REO set up a mock counting area at the office of the Central Counting Team for training and

practice purpose. The REO organised 8 sessions of training cum counting rehearsal between 6 and 27 April 2022. With a view to ensuring a smooth counting process, the REO deployed civil servants who had counting experience in the past CE elections from other bureaux/departments to participate in the counting of votes and assist in the training of other counting staff.

8.5 With reference to the arrangement of the 2021 LCGE, the REO organised an on-site simulated drill for the some 30 counting staff on 4 May 2022 (i.e. 4 days before the polling day) with a view to strengthening their work knowledge and the ability to handle unexpected situations. More than 1 400 marked mock ballot papers were provided to increase the authenticity of the drill. The EAC, the SCMA, the Permanent Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, the RO, the AROs, the AROs (Legal) and the CEO were also present. As usual, the REO also organised a half-day briefing cum mock operation session for all counting staff on the day before the polling day (i.e. 7 May 2022) to deepen their understanding of the assigned duties.

8.6 The REO also produced an operation manual and a training video for the counting staff to enable them to grasp every detail and arrangement in the workflow.

### **Section 3 – Identifying Venue as Polling Stations**

8.7 The REO started identifying suitable venues for polling and counting stations for the 2022 CE Election as early as 2016. In view of the fact that the HKCEC was spacious and conveniently located, and well-supported by ancillary facilities and transport arrangements, reservation was made in advance

by the REO with the HKCEC in mid-2016 for use as the main polling station and the CCS-cum-MC on the original polling day (i.e. 27 March 2022) for this CE Election. However, due to the severity of the fifth wave of the COVID-19 epidemic, the polling day of the sixth-term CE Election was postponed from the original date of 27 March 2022 to 8 May 2022. Once notified of the postponement of the polling day, the REO immediately discussed with the HKCEC the venue arrangements, and successfully rented Exhibition Halls 1A to 1D on Level 1 (about 16 000 m<sup>2</sup>) and Exhibition Halls 3B to 3E on Level 3 (Phase 2, New Wing) (about 15 000 m<sup>2</sup>) to serve as the main polling station and the CCS-cum-MC respectively for this CE Election. The REO also rented the Convention Hall on Level 1 (Phase 1, Old Wing) and Exhibition Halls 5B to 5E on Level 5, HKCEC (Phase 2, New Wing) for use as the security check point for the media and the general public and the resting area for the EC members respectively. Not only were the venues accessible to wheelchair users, dedicated passageways could be set up for the transportation of the ballot boxes from the main polling station to the CCS-cum-MC after the close of poll, and for use by EC members who wished to go to the CCS-cum-MC to observe the count after casting their votes.

8.8 In view of the COVID-19 epidemic situation, the REO set up the PBPS for the EC members who were unable to cast their votes at the main polling station on the polling day due to isolation or quarantine measures in the territory. The REO also set up a DPS at the Happy Valley Police Station for the EC members (if any) who were remanded or detained on the polling day by the LEAs other than the CSD. If any EC members were imprisoned or remanded under the custody of the CSD on the polling day, the REO would also set up DPS(s) at the relevant CSD penal institution(s) for the EC member(s) concerned to cast their votes.

## **Section 4 – Polling Arrangements**

### **Polling Hours**

8.9 The poll in this uncontested election was scheduled to be held from 9:00 am to 11:30 am in the main polling station and the DPS set up in the police station. To reduce the risk of the spread of COVID-19 in the main polling station, the REO assigned different suggested timeslots to the EC members according to the 5 EC sectors. If an EC member was unable to cast his/her vote at the suggested timeslot, he/she could still do so as long as he/she arrived at the main polling station within the polling hours from 9:00 am to 11:30 am. As for the DPSs set up at the penal institutions of the CSD, the poll was scheduled to be held from 9:00 am to 10:00 am. Considering that after the close of the poll at the PBPS, sufficient time was required for disinfection and delivery of ballot papers to the CCS-cum-MC, the polling hours of the PBPS were specified to run from 9:00 am to 10:30 am.

### **The Main Polling Station**

8.10 To avoid long queues during the poll and increase social distancing, the main polling station was equipped with 76 ballot paper issuing desks and 107 voting compartments<sup>14</sup> (including 6 for wheelchair users and 3 for the EC members who had fever or symptoms of respiratory tract infection when arriving at the HKCEC). The EPR System was adopted for the issuance of ballot papers in the main polling station of this election. After an EC member presented his/her identity document, the polling staff of the main polling station checked the identity of the EC member through the EPR System and issued a

---

<sup>14</sup> In the 2017 CE Election, there were 38 ballot paper issuing desks and 70 voting compartments. The number of ballot paper issuing desks and voting compartments in this election was 2 times and 1.5 times that of the 2017 CE Election respectively.

ballot paper, without having to draw a line across the printed copy of the FR. EC members could collect ballot papers at any one of the ballot paper issuing desks in the main polling station as directed by the polling staff. This helped to even out the utilisation of the ballot paper issuing desks, made the process of ballot paper issuance smoother and more flexible, and enhanced the accuracy of issuing ballot paper. Similar to other elections, an NCZ and an NSZ were designated outside the main polling station. There was also a waiting area right outside the main polling station for EC members who arrived before the commencement of the polling. Apart from displaying the “Introduction to Candidate” leaflet at each voting compartment inside the main polling station, the enlarged version of the leaflet was also posted near the entrance of the main polling station.

8.11 To prepare for demonstration activities which may arise 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 to the venue 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, the Police provided the REO with RFID installations, including electronic gates, checking kiosks and monitoring terminals mounted at every access control point of the HKCEC (including the HKCEC Expo Drive Entrance (Phase 2, New Wing), the entrance from the Expo Drive Central Carpark (Phase 2, New Wing), the entrance of the Hong Kong Trade Development Council SME Centre (Phase 2, New Wing), the Expo Galleria Entrance (connecting to the Golden Bauhinia Square) (Phase 2, New Wing), and the Harbour Road Entrance (Phase 1, Old Wing) to verify the identity of EC members and implement access control using RFID technology. Before the polling day, each EC member were issued with a name badge attached with an

RFID label and bearing the photo of the EC member and a personalised quick response code (“QR code”) for easy identification. Each name badge also had an anti-counterfeiting laser label. An EC member entering the HKCEC was required to show his/her name badge and walk through the designated RFID electronic gate for identity verification before permission to pass through the access control point. In the event of a service failure in the RFID devices on the polling day, staff manning the access control points at the HKCEC would use tablets to scan the personalised QR code on the name badge of EC members for identity verification. To ensure voting secrecy, the REO also implemented a series of measures in this election in various aspects including the layout of polling station, security, polling procedures, design of the voting compartments, etc. to enhance secrecy and security arrangements. For instance, admission to the main polling station was restricted to the EC members and the designated persons (including staff, the candidate and his Election/Polling Agents); all CCTV cameras in the main polling station were removed or covered, and EC members issued with a ballot paper had to enter separate roofed voting compartments to mark their ballot papers. Notices were also displayed prominently at all ballot paper issuing desks and each voting compartment to remind EC members that the use of mobile phones, photographing, filming and video or audio recording within the polling station were prohibited.

8.12 At the close of poll, the PRO of the main polling station locked and sealed the ballot boxes and delivered them to the CCS-cum-MC under police escort. The candidate or his agent was allowed to accompany the PRO in the delivery of the ballot boxes.

## Polling Notice

8.13 In accordance with the legal requirement, the REO must send to each EC member a polling notice at least 10 days before the polling day. The package sent to each EC member included the polling notice (setting out the polling date, address of the main polling station and polling hours) as required by the law, a name badge of the EC member, a checklist for the polling day, a location map of the main polling station and CCS-cum-MC, a note on the polling and counting procedures and a brief voting instruction, a transportation map to the HKCEC, a vehicle entry permit, the house rules of the CCS-cum-MC, etc. Besides, a map showing the extent of the NCZ of the main polling station, a leaflet on “Introduction to Candidate” and an ICAC leaflet on “Reminder to Electors/Supporters” were also included in the package.

8.14 The polling notice was also attached with a letter from the CEO with essential information on the 2022 CE Election. Besides appealing to the EC members to arrive at the polling station according to the suggested timeslots for their sectors, the letter also reminded EC members of the items which they should pay attention to, including:

- (a) they were not allowed to communicate with others, use a mobile phone or any other communication devices to communicate with other persons, film, take photographs, or make any audio or video recordings inside the main polling station;
- (b) they were not allowed to take any ballot paper away from the main polling station;



- (c) they must switch off and put away their mobile phones before entering the main polling station, and that they were not allowed to communicate to any person any information obtained at the main polling station pertaining to the vote about to be/already cast by an EC member in support or not of a candidate;
- (d) 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 pertaining to the vote cast by the EC member in support or not of a candidate; and
- (e) they should not show their choice on the ballot papers to others.

8.15 For security reasons and for easy identification of EC members, the package sent to each EC member included a name badge with RFID label as mentioned in paragraph 8.11 above. The name badge was solely used for identification during admission of EC members to the HKCEC and would not record their vote. In addition, for the convenience of the EC members who went to the main polling station by private vehicles or taxis, the package also included one transportation map showing the designated drop-off and pick-up points and the two carpark entrances of the HKCEC, and one vehicle entry permit which EC members could display on the windscreen of their vehicles when passing through the vehicle checking points for the designated drop-off points. Paid parking lots in the two carparks of the HKCEC had been reserved by the REO for use by EC members on the polling day. To facilitate the REO's assessment of the traffic condition around the HKCEC on the polling day so that the Police and relevant departments could plan for it accordingly,

the EC members were invited to indicate, by completing a reply slip enclosed in the package, their means of transport to the main polling station and whether they intended to stay after the poll to observe the count. The REO also invited the EC members to provide their own and/or their assistants' mobile phone numbers and/or email addresses to facilitate, when necessary, the dissemination of the latest information on electoral arrangements and contingency measures on the polling day by text messages or electronic mails.

### **Design of Ballot Papers**

8.16 The design of ballot papers followed the form for an uncontested election as set out in the EP (CEE) Reg. The ballot papers were printed with the name of the candidate as shown on the CERC's notice of valid nomination, as well as the words of "SUPPORT" and "NOT SUPPORT" with corresponding circles against each option.

### **Storage and Delivery of Ballot Papers**

8.17 After the ballot papers were printed by the Government Logistics Department ("GLD"), they were first delivered to the REO office. REO staff conducted quality checks on them in a room with both CCTV surveillance and security guards on duty round the clock. After the PRO's examination, the ballot papers were sealed and delivered to the storage room of the main polling station in the HKCEC a day prior to the polling day for storage. The delivery of ballot papers from GLD to the REO office and from the REO office to the main polling station in the HKCEC was escorted by REO staff and security guards and accompanied by a police vehicle throughout the journey. Upon arrival at the storage room of the main polling station, the ballot papers were once again checked by the PRO and then immediately stored and locked in a

steel cabinet in the storage room which was under CCTV surveillance and guarded by two security guards at every entrance/exit round the clock. The ballot papers remained stored as such until the PRO unsealed them for use on the polling day. At the close of the poll, the ballot papers (both counted and unissued) were transported back to the REO office under police escort for safekeeping.

### **Voting Procedures**

8.18 In accordance with the legislation, an EC member had to mark the ballot paper inside the voting compartment by using the “✓” chop provided. After marking the ballot paper, the EC member was required to fold the ballot paper once with the marked side inwards so that his/her choice was concealed, and then put the folded ballot paper into the locked and sealed ballot box. The Guidance to Electors on the Voting Procedure was displayed prominently at the main polling station and inside each voting compartment.

### **Special Polling Arrangements for EC Members who were Unable to Cast Their Votes at the Main Polling Station on the Polling Day due to Isolation or Quarantine Measures under COVID-19 in Hong Kong**

8.19 The REO set up a polling station at the Penny’s Bay Community Isolation Facility for EC members who were unable to cast their votes at the main polling station on the polling day due to the following situations:

- (a) under isolation in community isolation facilities;
- (b) under quarantine in quarantine facilities;

- (c) undergoing home quarantine;
- (d) inbound travellers undergoing quarantine at designated places (for example, quarantine hotels); and
- (e) the Government has issued a “restriction-testing declaration” requiring them to stay in their premises and undergo compulsory testing, and the EC members and/or their household member(s) are later confirmed to carry a positive result.

Affected EC members could call the dedicated service hotline of the REO during business hours (9:00 am to 6:00 pm) from 3 to 6 May, and from 9:00 am on 7 May 2022 till 10:30 am on 8 May 2022. The REO would co-ordinate with other related departments to provide one-stop services, including arranging designated taxis to transport affected EC members, as well as their admission into the Penny’s Bay Community Isolation Facility. At the close of the poll, the ballot papers in the PBPS were disinfected in an ultraviolet light chamber and the ballot boxes were locked and sealed by the PRO and delivered to the CCS-cum-MC under police escort. The candidate or his agent was allowed to accompany the PRO in the delivery of the ballot boxes. Ballot papers cast at the PBPS were mixed with those cast at the main polling station before the count.

### **Special Polling Arrangements for Imprisoned, Remanded and Detained EC Members**

8.20 To enable EC members who were imprisoned or remanded in custody by the CSD to vote on the polling day, the REO had planned to set up DPSs at

penal institutions of the CSD. The REO posted and updated on the dedicated election website for the CE Election the number of EC members who were imprisoned or remanded in custody at penal institutions on a daily basis 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 candidate's reference. As of 7 May 2022 (i.e. the day before the polling day), there was no EC member in the penal institutions of the CSD. Therefore, no DPS was required to be set up in any penal institution on the polling day.

8.21 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 might arrest persons who were EC members any time on the polling day, the polling hours of the DPS were the same as that of the main polling station.

8.22 The DPS was smaller in scale than the main polling station and some of the polling materials used therein were specially designed for security reasons.

8.23 At the close of the poll, the PRO of the DPS would lock and seal the ballot box before delivering it to the CCS-cum-MC under police escort. The candidate or his agent was allowed to accompany the PRO in the delivery process. In this election, no EC member cast vote in the DPS.

## **Section 5 – Counting Arrangements**

### **The Central Counting Station-cum-Media Centre**

8.24 After the close of poll, ballot boxes from individual polling stations were delivered to the CCS-cum-MC. The CCS-cum-MC comprised a counting zone for the counting of the votes and a media centre for the announcement of the election result. The CCS-cum-MC had designated areas for use by the candidate, his agents and electioneering personnel, EC members, the media and the general public. A resting room was allocated for the exclusive use by the candidate. Besides, the notice of the election result was also put up on the notice board in the MC.

### **The Counting Procedures**

8.25 Ballot papers were counted manually. Since this election was an uncontested election, the candidate would be returned at the election if he obtained more than 750 valid “SUPPORT” votes in the single round of voting.

8.26 The RO, with the assistance of the Counting Supervisor, oversaw the entire counting process. The RO was also responsible for determining the validity of questionable ballot papers (if any).

## **Section 6 – Contingency Measures**

8.27 The EP (CEE) Reg and the CEEO stipulate the provisions on the postponement or adjournment of the poll or the count in respect of the CE Election. The REO formulated the following arrangements to cater for other emergencies:

- (a) extension of polling hours if a substantial portion of the polling hours was lost because of flooding, power failure or other emergencies;
- (b) stocking of extra ballot papers, ballot boxes, etc. at the HKCEC and REO offices to cater for emergency situation;
- (c) 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 organisations;
- (d) securing back-up electricity supply by the HKCEC to ensure that the poll and the count could continue in the case of power disruption;
- (e) setting up two emergency depots to provide logistic support to the DPS and the PBPS respectively;
- (f) given the importance of this election and that the HKCEC is a more appropriate venue for setting up the main polling station and the CCS-cum-MC, if the HKCEC was unable to operate on 8 May 2022 due to any unforeseen incident, the poll or the count would be postponed or adjourned for one day until 9 May 2022 and resumed in the HKCEC. In the possible event that the HKCEC remained unable to operate on 9 May 2022, the REO, subject to circumstances and needs, could resume the poll and the count on the polling day in the fallback main polling station and CCS-cum-MC set up in the Hong Kong Park Sports Centre. Subject to circumstances

and needs, the poll and the count could be conducted in the fallback venue on the polling day or after a 7 or 14-day postponement;

- (g) booking of vehicles for emergency transport of EC members and staff to the HKCEC, or delivery of ballot boxes and transport of EC members and staff to the fallback venue in case of need; 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).