



SOUTHWARK DECIDES

Elections 2014

2014 Combined Elections

Review of the Local and European Parliamentary Elections

October 2014

Southwark Electoral Services



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1. Introduction

Overview of Combined Elections

2014 saw two elections being held in the London Borough of Southwark, the European Union Parliamentary elections and the Borough Council elections: both were held on the same day, Thursday 22 May 2014. Sandwiched between a delayed canvass and the implementation of Individual Elector Registration (IER), along with the prospect of working in new venues, the combined election proved to be challenging but successful.

The European Union Parliamentary elections are national elections, paid for by central government, and held every five years to choose representatives for the European Parliament (MEP's). The borough council elections are held every four years, and result in the election of the administration which will run the council for the following four years. They are both statutory events.

The Returning Officer (RO) is personally responsible for running both elections within the borough. There is, however, a Regional Returning Officer (RRO) for the European Union Parliamentary election, and the RO, as the Local Returning Officer (LRO) for these elections, is obliged to follow any directions issued by the RRO. The Southwark Electoral Services team is the business unit responsible for the planning and implementation of all elections in the London Borough of Southwark. The council is obliged to provide the RO with the resources needed in order to run the elections.

Legislative Requirements

The processes and timetables (Appendix B) for the running of both European and Local Elections are laid down by statute, including the following legislation (as amended):

- The Representation of the People Acts 1893,1985 and 2000
- The Representation of the People Act (England and Wales) Regulations 2001
- The Local Government Act 1972
- The Local Government Act 2000

The legislation is supported by guidance set out by the Electoral Commission which sets the roles and responsibilities of the RO in the practice and procedure of running the poll.

Any failure the process could result in an election petition to challenge the result of the election. Any such petition is generally only granted where success would result in the change of a winning candidate. However, any concern about the management of the election could result in reputational damage to the RO and the Council and thus it important that the Election is administered effectively and as a result the experience of voters and those standing for election is a positive one.

European Parliamentary Election

There are eleven electoral regions in Great Britain. Southwark falls in the London electoral region. The London region appoints 8 MEPs.

The Regional Returning Officer (RRO) for London is Barry Quirk from the London Borough of Lewisham. The RRO is responsible for:

- The giving of notice of any European Parliamentary election.
- The conduct of nomination procedures.
- Encouraging participation.
- The calculation of votes given for each individual candidate/political party and the allocation of seats.

- The declaration of the result.

Southwark, as a counting area, provided a Local Returning Officer (LRO), Deborah Collins. The LROs role is to ensure that the election is administered effectively in their area. The LROs functions for which she is responsible include:

- The printing of ballot papers.
- The appointment of Presiding Officers and Poll Clerks.
- Management of the postal voting process.
- The verification and counting of votes.

Local Council Elections

2014 saw a full council election with all 63 council seats in 21 wards up for election. 285 Candidates contested the election. This year's election saw the Labour Party win 48 seats; the Liberal Democrat Party win 13; and the Conservative Party win 2 seats.¹

Local Election Statistics

- Number of Wards (Local): 21
- Number of Polling Districts: 103
- Number of Polling Stations: 109
- Number of Split Polling Stations: 6
- Number of Electors: 208,400

Postal Ballot

The deadline for postal vote applications was 5pm on 7 May 2014. Postal votes were then mailed to electors on 9 May 2014.

Postal vote opening and verification commenced at Tooley Street on Thursday 15 May through to Polling Day. A total of 17,750 local postal votes were verified from 15 May through to 22 May.

The Poll

Polling commenced at 7.00 a.m. on Thursday 22 May for 109 Polling districts at 103 Polling stations, there being 6 polling stations dealing with two districts. Polling stations closed at 10.00 p.m. A significant change from past elections was the introduction of legislation regarding voting at the close of polls. In the past, electors who had not been issued a ballot paper by the close of polls were not permitted to be issued a ballot paper. At this election, any person who was in a queue at the close of polls, with the intention to vote, even if they had not made it into the polling station, was permitted to cast their vote.

The Count

The count was held at the Council offices in Tooley Street, the first time this venue had been used for a Borough wide election. The local count commenced at 9am on Friday 23 May, the day following Polling Day. As many European countries were conducting their European poll on the Sunday, it was a requirement that UK results should not be declared until 10pm on the Sunday. This was to avoid UK results influencing how electors voted in other European countries. However European ballot boxes had to be verified at the same time as the local ballot boxes in order to facilitate the transfer of ballot papers that were accidentally placed in the wrong ballot box.

¹ A map showing the political make-up of Southwark after the 2014 local election is Appendix A.

At the completion of verification the European ballot boxes were stored in a secure location until the European count, which took place on Sunday 25 May.²

Review

This report has been written to provide a factual assessment of the delivery and management of the combined elections and identify areas for future improvement.

The following table shows the expected timetable of elections until the next scheduled combined election in 2020. The next scheduled election is the General Election in early May 2015. 2020 will see a combined General Election and GLA/London Mayoral Election.

	General Election	EU Parliamentary Elections	GLA and London Mayor Elections	Local Borough Elections
2014		X		X
2015	X			
2016			X	
2017				
2018				X
2019		X		
2020	X		X	

Table 1.1 Scheduled timetable of elections

2. Election Management

The RO appointed three Deputy Returning Officers (DRO's), with full powers, for the local election. The DRO's were Des Waters (Head of Public Realm) , Fran Biggs (Head of Electoral Services) and Caroline Richards (Electoral Services Manager).

Election Project Board

In September 2013 a project board for the administration of the election was established and led by the RO,. The aim of the Project Board was to:

1. Agree a project brief and initiate the project.
2. Approve and monitor the delivery of project plans.
3. Provide a high level decision and problem solving function for the duration of the project.

During the second half of 2013 the project board met on a monthly basis. From January 2014 the board met fortnightly.

ELECTIONS 2014 PROJECT BOARD			
Board members	Position	Responsibilities	Responsibilities
Deborah Collins	Returning Officer and Local Returning Officer	Personal responsibility for ensuring elections take place within all legislative provisions	Well run election overall, with no petition
Des Waters	Deputy Returning Officer	Deputy to Deborah Collins and DRO with full powers, responsibility for the count	Overall programme management and Count Manager to ensure the count takes place within agreed timeframe, with high levels of

² The timetable for the election is shown in appendix B

			transparency and understanding of the process by all stakeholders
Fran Biggs	Deputy Returning Officer	DRO with full powers, responsibility for polling day	Head of Electoral Services and Polling Day manger to ensure that the Poll takes place throughout the electoral area in accordance with legislative provisions, meeting the standard or above as set out by the Electoral Commission
Caroline Richards	Deputy Returning Officer	DRO with full powers, project manager	Project information and work packages kept up to date and exception reporting applied. Specific responsibility for validation of European Ballot.
Doreen Forrester-Brown	Monitoring officer/Legal advisor to the RO	Legal issues relating to the poll and the count, including signing in of new Councillors after the declarations	Monitoring Officer Responsible for providing legal advice, purdah tec.
Matthew Jackson	Corporate Asset Manager	Providing the RO with access to the publicly maintained buildings within the borough, and being the link between the electoral services team (for polling stations and triage) and Des Waters (for the count) for any issues which require escalation	Ensuring the RO has access to publicly maintained buildings where possible, for polling stations, triage and the count venue. All aspects of the election relating to property are properly managed and recorded. Liaison where there is change to the estate that will impact on the election
Ian Morrissey	Head of Applications, Data and Operations, IT	Providing the RO with IT expertise and resources necessary for the smooth running of the election and the count	Xpress software updated as required, Modernise programme implemented in synergy with election requirements, with no loss of functionality
Graeme Gordon	Director of Corporate Strategy	Communications managed for the RO, as well as all issues relating to the members once they are elected of a new council in 2014	Interests of the RO are protected throughout the electoral period, and the council is able to move smoothly into the new administration
Robin Campbell	Head of Communications	Encourage registration, manage relationships with media, event management	Optimal registration, staff participation and knowledge of arrangements, proactively manage Council reputation, provision of event management resources for Count
Matthew Hunt	Head of Facilities Management	Lead officer for co-ordinating teams and activities relating to the teams within LBS	To ensure that FM are able to provide necessary support to the count project

Table 4.1: The Project Board for 2014 Elections

The main objective for the election project was the effective delivery of all aspects of the EU Parliamentary election and the Borough Council election in 2014, including;

- Ensure that the necessary arrangements were in place to deliver well-run election
- Putting in place robust planning processes for delivery of the poll and count and production of accurate results
- Ensuring that Agents, candidates and all guests receive a high quality service and the information they need prior and during the election.

Having set the above objectives the Board also set the following quality expectations and criteria for the success of the project:-

- The elections must be run in a way that clearly shows that there is complete impartiality throughout the process – the integrity of the electoral process provides the residents of the borough with certainty that the administration is properly elected.
- Every elector who wishes to cast a vote must be able to do so, within the legal framework – there must therefore be information available to electors to enable them to vote.
- Internal customers (colleagues and contractors) expect the electoral services team to be highly professional at all times. This includes any contracting processes as well as inter-departmental relationships.

Combined Election Acceptance Criteria

- All polling stations open and close on time with no elector unable to vote as a result of error.
- Count for Borough Council elections completed by 10pm on Friday 23 May 2014.
- Count for European Union Parliamentary election completed by 10pm on Sunday 25 May 2014 (subject to regional returning officer requirements for communication of borough results).
- No challenge to the election results.
- Feedback from agents indicates satisfaction with the administration of the count

Project Team

The Project Board was supported by a project team who were responsible for the delivery of specific election project work packages. The team consisted of members of the electoral services team, communications team, and other team leaders. Project team meetings were held on a monthly basis during 2013 and fortnightly from January 2014. Meetings were held in the week between project board meetings.

Project team meetings were used to:

- Report any issues that arise during the execution of a work package stream. These issues were then either mitigated within the team or escalated to the project board.
- Report on progress in relation to the project timeline. Any slippage in the timeline was either mitigated at the team meeting or escalated to the project board.
- Provide a forum for team members to discuss their work packages or other project related topics.

Risk Register / Issues Log

A Risk Register was used for project management and organisational risk assessments. It acted as a central location of all risks identified by the project or organisation and, for each risk, included information such as risk probability, impact, counter-measures, and risk owner.

The risk register³ was developed in the summer of 2013 and was updated regularly and presented to each meeting of the election project board.

The Issues Log was updated at project team meetings and upon advice from work package lead officers. It was used as a tool to record and report issues that could not be solved at a project team level or issues that threatened the project timeline. Issues were given a severity rating (red, amber, and green) along with a target resolution date. The Issues Log was also on each election project board agenda.

Project Tracking

Work Package Reporting

Two methods of work package reporting were used; to track progress with the timeline set out for each work package; and to identify any issues that arose. Initially a Microsoft Excel questionnaire was developed and distributed to the Project Team in the days leading up to a Project Board meeting. The information gathered was used to update the Election Milestones 2014 document and the Issues Log.

In the final months of the project a more direct method of reporting was adopted. The fortnightly team meetings were used for team members to report the RAG (red, amber, green) status of individual work packages and to highlight any issues that needed to be resolved. This information was then collated and consolidated with other documentation for the project board, as described below.

Election Milestones 2014

Information from the individually completed Work Packages was used to draw up a timeline of events to be used as a progress tracking tool. Using Microsoft Excel, the document displayed start and finish dates for the main elements of each work package with a movable date line that could be moved as each week passed. Items on the document were coloured green (meaning that the work was not complete but was on track), amber (meaning that the deadline was passing but it is not critical), red (meaning that the deadline has passed and urgent action was required) or black (meaning that the work is complete). The work package reporting (mentioned above) was used to update this document, which was presented to the Project Board.⁴

What worked well?

- The project board structure proved to be an effective means for the efficient agreement and monitoring of plans for the delivery of the elections.
- The recruitment of a skilled project manager, responsible for the production of project tracking and documentation greatly assisted in the ability of the Board to identify progress and deal with any issues requiring attention at an early stage.

Areas for improvement:

- Resource planning within the core team and across the project
- Consistency in the approach to project management

³ The Risk Register is shown in Appendix C

⁴ The Election Milestones is shown in Appendix D

- Single responsible owner for the work packages and stronger lines of accountability for delivery

Recommendations:

- | | |
|---------|---|
| Rec. 1. | That the project team structure and the appointment of specific project management resources be used for all future Borough wide elections |
| Rec. 2. | Resource planning, especially within the core team, to be done at least 6 months prior to the election. The work packages to be developed in advance and allocated to the leads with at least 6 months notice |

3. Registration

Registration Timetable

The communications team ran a campaign to increase awareness of elections amongst all Southwark residents and promote the different ways of voting (in person, by post, by proxy). This included a campaign plan, artwork and the development of and testing messages and a range of community engagement activities.

Due to the changes to the registration process as a result of the introduction of Individual Elector Registration (IER) in June 2014, there was a delayed Canvass in 2013. The date for publication of the 2014 Register was the beginning of February 2014. As a result of the delayed canvass a considerable amount of resources were allocated to the completion of the Canvass in the middle of February. As a result, Electoral Services Staff were not able to devote as much time as planned to working on the election during this period.

From the February publication there were further updates to be published on 1 April and on 1 May 2014. The final date for registration for the 2014 combined election was midnight on 6 May 2014. All deadlines resulted in a considerable workload on members of the Electoral Services Team during the preparation phase for the May election. The retention of trained temporary members of staff was essential during these busy periods.

European Registration

UC1

Voters who were included in the Register of Electors for Southwark, and who were also entitled to vote in another European country, were sent a UC1 form in September 2013 and in March, April and May 2014. Only those foreign nationals that completed the UC1 form and returned it to Southwark Electoral Services by 6 May 2014 were entitled to vote in the European Parliamentary election in Southwark.

Out of a total of over 21,400 European electors 7,079 electors are registered with a “K” marker, meaning they can vote in both the local and European elections. The remainder are registered with a “G” marker, allowing them to vote only in the local election.

POs were trained in how to deal with situations where an elector thought they should be able to vote. Where an elector insisted on being able to vote, the PO contacted the back office so that the procedure could be explained. Information on the issuing table gave details of the dates when the UC1 forms were sent out, so that European citizens could be reminded of the fact that they had been given opportunities to register to vote in the European Parliamentary election in the UK.

Notifying European Authorities

Throughout the months of March and April the Electoral Services team were asked to send information to European authorities detailing European nationals that were registered within Southwark. Southwark Electoral Services did not own the technology required to encrypt the data for transmission so some of the deadlines were missed. The software required to do this can be purchased from Xpress.

At the London Region review meeting held at Tooley Street on 2 June 2014 it was revealed that no London authority carried out this task.

Recommendations

- | | |
|---------|---|
| Rec. 3. | Investigate the possibility of purchasing the required software from Xpress to enable the encryption of data for European authorities, before the next EU election. |
| Rec. 4. | POs to be reminded in their training of the importance of providing electors with only the ballot papers which they are entitled to receive. |

4. Nominations of Candidates and Agents

The responsibility for nominations for the European Parliamentary election lies with the Regional Returning Officer (RRO) – this section therefore only focuses on the nominations for the local elections.

There were in total 285 candidates for these elections – an increase of 35 (14%) from 2010. It is not possible to predict the number of candidates with any accuracy prior to the elections; the expectation was that the number would be similar to the previous local elections.

Best practice requires the RO to provide all candidates with an opportunity to have their nomination papers informally checked before they are formally delivered. This is a time-consuming process whereby senior Electoral Services staff, typically the head of service and/or electoral services manager, goes through the nomination papers in detail, including checking the electoral numbers of all the subscribers. This process means the nomination papers, when submitted, are more likely to be correct and to result in validly nominated candidates. A blank set of nomination papers are attached⁵ – these show the details required to be completed. There is no margin for error in the completion of these papers, although the RO is not required to look behind the information provided.

If the nomination papers are not in order when they have been delivered, they cannot be amended; the result of this is that if the papers are not completed as required, there are then candidates who have not been validly nominated. This results in a candidate appearing on the published statement of persons nominated, but with an entry in the column stating that the candidate has not been validly nominated. It is not desirable for the RO, the political party, or the candidate to have a nomination paper rejected – this raises questions as to the effectiveness of the electoral process.

Candidates and Agents were invited to a meeting where the Returning Officer was able to pass on relevant information about the environment, timing and processes for the upcoming election prior to the Notice of Election.

⁵ Nomination pack is Appendix E

The nominations deadline was Thursday 24 April. Prior to this date, over the Easter long weekend, a nomination checking service was offered to candidates. The aim of this service is to reduce the risk of candidates presenting an invalid application once the nomination process started that week. Four staff provided the service. Nominations could not be formally submitted at this time.

What worked well:

- All 285 candidates had their nomination papers checked in the informal process, including several late arrivals. This was possible because the election agents for the political parties had prepared their nomination papers early enough for the elections team to check them over the Easter weekend; having the bulk of the nomination papers checked early meant that latecomers could also have their papers informally checked before submission.
- The timetable given to the election agents included provision for informal checking to be done over the Easter weekend. It was also made clear to the agents and candidates that there was a deadline for informal checking; this was 4pm on Tuesday 22 April. The agents co-operated by bringing in their papers for checking which made a big difference.
- Informal checks are best done over a weekend when there are no other distractions. Election agents for the larger political parties typically bring in up to 63 sets of nomination papers to be checked. Dealing with the originals of documents requires time, attention and space, and therefore is best done out of office hours.
- The political parties all made use of election agents, or prepared the nomination papers for their candidates. This made a huge difference to the process as the correct completion of these documents is an essential part of the electoral process.

Areas for improvement:

- The nomination paper as produced by the electoral commission and Xpress software has space for the proposer, seconder and eight subscribers. If there is an error or a replacement subscriber is required, the candidate or agent crosses through the first entry and adds another to the bottom of the page. This can result in messy and illegible nomination papers; several of the papers submitted in the 2014 elections had multiple corrections. Counsel's opinion was sought for the inclusion of an additional line. Counsel agreed that this would not invalidate the nomination papers, and could be used for both the local elections and the general election in 2015. Unfortunately this advice was received after the nomination process for the 2014 elections had already closed.
- The time taken for informal checking is considerable, so ways of sharing the workload were considered. However at the end of the day this was left with the head of service and the electoral services manager, for the following reasons:
 - Consistency of approach to all agents.
 - Using the meeting with agents as an opportunity to discuss other election-related issues.
 - Responsibility for nominations is correctly with the head of service; any error in the checking process will result in a candidate not being able to stand for election.

Recommendations	
Rec. 5.	The advice from counsel that an additional line could be added to the nomination paper should be implemented for the general election in 2015. This will increase the likelihood of nomination papers being accepted more quickly, as any entry that fails can be crossed through with the result that the last subscriber then becomes activated.
Rec. 6.	Election agents and candidates should be encouraged to submit their nomination papers for informal checking as early as possible. The register for nomination papers will be the register that is valid at the notice of election, the 1 April register for elections held in early May.

5. Postal Vote Applications

Electors are invited to apply for a postal vote during the registration process and during the annual canvass. If an elector indicates that they would like to vote by post, they are sent a postal vote application. Only upon receipt of a duly completed postal vote application does the elector become a “postal voter”. For a postal vote application to be accepted it must include their date of birth and signature. These two pieces of information are used to verify the postal vote during postal vote opening at elections.

The deadline for postal vote applications was 5pm on 7 May 2014. Southwark sent data to the printers on 7 May 2014. On 8 May 2014 two members of staff were sent to the printers to pull out cancelled postal votes. Postal votes were then mailed to electors on 9 May 2014.

The first day to issue replacement spoilt or lost postal ballot papers was Friday 16 May 2014.

The last day to issue replacement spoilt or lost postal ballot papers was 5pm on 22 May 2014.

Postal Vote Re-issue

The postal vote re-issuing process this year was more complex than for most elections due to there being 21 separate electoral areas for the local election, plus the Euro election, for the whole borough. This required a large issuing and administration space within 160 Tooley Street and efficient IT provision.

What worked well:

- The arrangements for re-issuing postal votes this year were well-planned and executed. There were resilient measures in place for ensuring that ballots could be reissued as required.
- The room provided (G03) was secure and sufficient in size.
- The planned layout, segregation and labelling of the ballot papers for each area worked well, and minimised the risk of incorrect ballots being issued.
- IT provision was excellent and no IT problems affected the re-issuing process.
- User acceptance testing in advance was very useful in addressing outstanding IT needs.
- Communication between Electoral Services and the reception team at 160 Tooley Street worked well.
- The planning and project management approach worked very well in this case in ensuring all necessary requirements were taken into account.
- Facilities Management staff were very helpful in regards to provision of the re-issuing room.
- A step-by-step guide and checklist for staff to follow when re-issuing ballots was produced which was helpful in preventing errors.

Areas for improvement:

Although a briefing had been provided, some call centre staff still gave incorrect information to electors regarding re-issuing of postal ballots.

Recommendations

Rec. 7.

The re-issuing process built on existing knowledge and practice, introducing a more structured and project-managed approach, resulting in a marked improvement on previous years. This approach should be continued for future elections.

- Rec. 8. The instructions/briefing notes given to CSC staff should be overhauled for the 2015 election. A step-by-step process would be helpful and more user friendly for CSRs.

6. Ballot Paper Allocation

The ballot paper allocation for the 2014 combined election was made based on turnout results from the 2006 local election, with an uplift. The initial total allocation of 60% of the total electorate for the borough was revised up to 80% of the electorate by request of the RO. The final results show that the highest turnout (Village ward) was 50.62%.

At the European Election de-brief for the London region, held at Tooley Street, it was revealed that some local authorities allocated ballot papers for a 100% turnout. The result of this was that in some cases Presiding Officers were carrying 39kg of ballot papers and related equipment.

Ballot papers are printed by the RO before the deadline for registration and postal vote applications, and the ERO has to make a judgment on the number of postal votes which will be issued with ballot papers for each ward or electoral area. The ballot papers provided to the polling stations have numbers that run consecutively on from the end of the batch of ballot papers allocated to postal voters.

All postal votes are issued, which means that the ERO must allocate more than 100% at the time of the print contract. This enables the printers to allocate the correct ballot paper numbers to the two sets of ballot papers (those issued to postal voters and those provided to the RO for allocation to the polling stations).

A known group of electors are allocated to each polling station. There is a considerable range in the number of electors at each polling station. This is due in part to the composition of the wards (several wards have residential areas with very small populations that are on the edge of the borough or separated from the rest of the ward by roads, railways or natural boundaries, resulting in a polling district with very few electors), but is also due to the changing population of Southwark.

What worked well:

- No polling station ran out of ballot papers, and all postal voters were issued with ballot papers.
- The manual allocation of ballot papers to polling stations was correctly done for all polling stations; this meant that the ballot paper accounts had the correct numbering, allowing for all the ballot papers to be accounted for at the close of the elections. This is, however, a time-consuming task, and one which absolutely must be done correctly.

Areas for improvement:

- The postal vote allocation was tight. An adjustment was made towards the end of the process, which meant that the ballot paper allocation for polling stations was adjusted for several wards. This had a knock-on effect, with the ballot paper accounts needing to be reprinted for these wards. In the event, this adjustment was not absolutely necessary, but provided a cushion, so that there were ballot papers available should there have been a rush of postal vote replacements on polling day.

Recommendations

- Rec. 9. A polling district review is scheduled for October/November 2014. This will be an opportunity to correct existing imbalances between polling districts, to the extent that is possible with limited buildings available for use as polling stations. This will enable an appropriate borough-wide allocation to be made which is less than 100%, without a manual adjustment being

required due to the considerable variation in turnout and number of electors in each polling district.

Rec. 10.	Increase the postal vote allocation, to cater for a significant increase in the number of postal voters at the deadline. In 2015 this will be on a constituency basis, but the risk for the next borough elections in 2018 should be borne in mind.
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Ward Name	Allocation	Electors	2014 Turnout (%)*
Brunswick Park	8400	9390	36.23
Camberwell Green	7500	10536	32.21
Cathedrals	7200	12657	31.34
Chaucer	7400	11473	34.95
College	7000	8819	46.4
East Dulwich	8800	9350	43.36
East Walworth	6200	8123	35.95
Faraday	6700	8063	31.95
Grange	6700	11518	30.94
Livesey	8300	9708	31.51
Newington	7000	10693	40.72

Ward Name	Allocation	Electors	2014 Turnout (%)
Nunhead	6000	9747	34.27
Peckham	7000	10227	31.31
Peckham Rye	8000	10071	38.36
Riverside	5500	10335	34.12
Rotherhithe	6100	10024	34.82
South Bermondsey	5400	9534	37.7
South Camberwell	6600	8830	39.62
Surrey Docks	5500	9374	32.85
The Lane	7400	11099	35.49
Village	7600	8726	50.62

* Turnout figures taken from Count Declaration for each ward.

Table 5.1 Final Ward allocations

7. Emergency Proxy applications

Another change in legislation introduced for this election involved the issuing of Emergency Proxies. Electors are now permitted to apply for an Emergency Business Proxy. This service is aimed at people who are unable to attend a polling station due to work circumstances. To qualify for an emergency business proxy, the elector must have become aware of the fact that they could not go to the polling station in person after the deadline for ordinary proxy applications (i.e. 5pm on the sixth working day before the poll).

The deadline for the receipt of Emergency Business Proxy Vote applications for both elections was 5pm on Thursday 22 May.

Staff from Southwark's Legal team alongside Electoral Services team were responsible for dealing with emergency proxy applications.

What worked well: Prior to the Emergency Proxy application period commencing, we ensured that we had a comprehensive understanding of the relevant legislation and associated regulations and guidance. A clear decision making process was established and a step-by-step guide was produced

- Staff understood the procedure for processing applications in regard to entering information in the electoral register, scanning forms and informing the elector, proxy and relevant Presiding Officer of the application's outcome as appropriate..
- The staff from legal services had comprehensive background in law and a good understanding of relevant legal requirements.
- Sufficient resources were available, in terms of staff cover, for dealing with an unknown uptake of Emergency Proxies.

- A significantly higher number of applications were received than for previous elections. All Emergency Proxy applications were dealt with and the outcomes communicated as required. All electors who had made a valid application were able to vote by Emergency Proxy –
- Positive feedback was received from electors on the efficiency of dealing with applications.

Areas for improvement:

- There were a number of problems around IT. These included slow/frozen/crashed computers and delays in accessing scanners as a result of the two working scanners being placed in the postal vote opening room. This caused a great deal of delay for Debbi and Lee in dealing with applications on polling day.
- It is not clear that the CSC advised callers appropriately on the Emergency Proxy provisions. This seems to have resulted in some electors believing they could make an application when this was not the case.

Recommendations	
Rec. 11.	The strong processes which were developed for emergency proxy votes should That the cars at Tooley Street be parked side by side rather than one in front of the other. This will speed up the process as the cars behind will not have to wait for the car in front to leave.
Rec. 12.	Dedicated IT provision for emergency proxies in 2015 should be considered, as the number of applications may increase for a UK parliamentary election.
Rec. 13.	The provision of detailed information on emergency proxy voting for the CSC should be looked at for 2015 – including a step-by-step process.
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8. Venues

Polling Stations

Polling stations are a high-risk area at elections and there are specific requirements relating to premises used as polling stations(i.e. that they should ideally be centrally located within the polling district or as close as possible to the majority of voters, must be accessible, must be of a suitable size and with necessary facilities).

The makeup of the 109 polling stations for the 2014 combined elections was as follows:

- 23 Schools
- 5 Libraries
- 13 new polling stations
- 98 Venues
- 9 venues had double stations
- 1 venue had three stations

Due to the extended transitional canvass for IER, the initial contact with premises previously used as polling stations was slightly delayed. This caused some problems as it was not discovered that some premises were unavailable until a relatively late stage.

Complaints were received about a small number of polling stations. These complaints have been taken into the process for the polling district review which will be held towards the end of 2014. Comments can be raised by members of the public and interested parties during this process.

Specific complaints included the following:

- The use of a portakabin at Trevor Bailey sports ground instead of the Old Library at Dulwich College, and the distance electors had to walk
- Signage was identified as an issue at several polling stations, including Redriff School, Lordship Lane TRA Hall and Kingswood Estate TRA Hall
- The use of ramps in Kagyu Samye Dzung Centre – a ramp was in place when required, as they could get slippery when wet

What worked well:

- We were able to secure polling venues for all polling districts, including making alternative arrangements for polling stations which were no longer available or had proved problematic at past elections, within the required timescales.
- Complaints raised about polling stations were limited and the overall provision of polling stations supported the integrity of the election.
- Working with other council officers to obtain information about alternative premises, where required, was helpful.
- We were required to use a temporary building/portakabin as a polling station for the first time this year. The procurement and deployment of this building worked well and we established a good working relationship with the contractor.
- New arrangements were made with Southwark Youth Services to provide a standby vehicle for use as an emergency polling station. This was an improvement on the previous arrangement as the vehicle was of a better specification. This also established a helpful working relationship between Electoral Services and Youth Services and raised the possibility of Youth Services undertaking electoral registration outreach activities on our behalf.

Areas for improvement:

- We had a great deal of difficulty contacting some venues and, in some cases, contact details were out of date.
- Due to conflicting work priorities, several different core team members and agency staff were involved in chasing non-responding polling station venues and updating records at the booking stage. This caused some uncertainty over which venues had been contacted and had confirmed etc.
- We initially made provisional booking requests with polling venues. However, by the time we were able to follow up on these requests, we needed the bookings to be confirmed, rather than provisional. Some polling venues were unsure whether bookings were firm or provisional.
- Some previously confirmed venues informed us of unavailability or other issues at a late stage. This required us to take urgent remedial action and was a pressure on resources.
- Closer co-ordination and liaison between other council service areas could assist in providing up-to-date information on premises.
- Early liaison with ward councillors could have assisted in identifying suitable polling station venues, and with communication with electors.
- Every effort should be taken not to use portakabins – they do not provide sufficient space for electors and polling station staff, particularly in a busy polling station or at an election with a high turnout.

Queens Road 2

Queens Road 2 was used as a central hub for members of the electoral services core team and Auditor activities. The call centre's break-out space on the ground floor was set-up with desktop computers with Xpress installed. An IT consultant was stationed at QR2 specifically tasked with looking after the Electoral Services team.

No reserved parking is available at Queens Road 2 for the day of the poll. The delivery of election equipment was only made possible by parking on the single red line by the main entrance.

24 hour door access was pre-arranged for core staff (Deborah, Fran, Chris and Ben) and those Auditors that had a Southwark staff pass. Unfortunately the 24 hour access was not activated properly, resulting in staff not being able to enter the building at 6am. This issue was rectified by mid-morning. Additional contractor passes were supplied to help give access to non-Southwark Auditors and standby Poll Clerks.

What worked well:

- IT was set-up and tested prior to polling day.
- IT expert was available throughout the day.

Areas for improvement:

- ID passes did not initially work.
- Parking was difficult for Auditors.

Room Bookings

The Electoral Services team required access to a large number of rooms at Tooley Street for training, storage of materials, postal vote verification as well as the Count itself. Not all rooms are managed by the same person/team within Southwark Council. Some rooms are managed by the Learning and Development team; some by the Human Resources team; and some by Facilities Management. The Constitutional Department also books the ground floor for Council Assembly throughout the year. Because of this, booking the many rooms required for an election can be time consuming.

For the first time the responsibility for room bookings was given to the Facilities Management team. Based on previous schedules, a timetable was drawn up by the Electoral Services team and sent to the FM Lead Officer to make the bookings.

Although the room bookings were sent in July all final bookings were not completed until the weeks immediately prior to Election Day. This was due in part to the complicated arrangements described above, whereby different teams and individuals have responsibility for various rooms which are needed during the elections period. Communications were difficult on occasion and sometimes it was unclear if instructions were acted upon. In the end, a considerable amount of time was dedicated to room bookings by the Electoral Services team.

More rooms were booked for training than were actually used. This is partly because training started a week later than was originally scheduled. This lost week added to the pressures of training staff in the weeks leading up to the election.

What worked well:

- Where booked rooms were not required they were made available through the corporate resource.
- When requests for additional resources were made they were made available.

Areas for improvement:

- Communications between various parts of the council responsible for rooms and the Electoral Services team were difficult on occasion.

Recommendations

Queens Road 2

- Rec. 14. ID passes should be tested prior to polling day.
- Rec. 15. Facilities Manager for Queens Road, should be consulted early, along Client and Service Improvement Manager and user of QR2.

Polling Stations

- Rec. 16. There is still room for improvement in the booking process, including clear maintenance of records and improved communication with venue contacts. Booking letters and the methods for updating information to be improved before the next election.
- Rec. 17. Initial contact with venues for the 2015 election should take place early – during the second half of 2014.
- Rec. 18. Requests for updated contact details should be made, bearing in mind that these can change again before May 2015.
- Rec. 19. Developing a specific procedure for finding alternative venues would be of benefit. This should include assistance from council colleagues in community engagement and property.
- Rec. 20. If we have issues finding a suitable polling station location, we should enlist the help of ward councillors at an early stage.

Room Bookings

- Rec. 21. Check the Council Assembly timetable to avoid a scheduling clash prior to setting the training schedule. This is already BAU as electoral services consult with the constitutional team to get details of committee meetings and council assembly. This will be particularly important when national or regional elections are held, as council business is more likely to continue.
- Rec. 22. Book rooms early and arrange regular meetings with the responsible parties to ensure the work is being done.

9. Ballot Box Preparation

The Venue

In the past the electoral services team have utilised the facilities at Cator Street for a number of registration and election activities. One such activity was the collation of ballot box material and the collection of the material by Presiding Officers. Unfortunately this site is no longer available and a new site was required.

A site brief was produced based on the facilities used at Cator Street. The Project Board and a number of council employees were asked to identify and put forward suitable locations. There were difficulties in finding a location that matched Cator Street for suitability with regard to space, parking, access or usability. Every site that was assessed by the Electoral Services team required a compromise in one or more criteria. Sites investigated include the function facilities at Millwall Football Club, the Wickway Community Centre, the Biscuit Factory on Clement's Road, Tooley Street, 56 Southwark Bridge Road, the Pump House Museum on Rotherhithe Street, the Thomas Calton Centre, Rotherhithe Library, Silverlock (Rotherhithe New Road), Bells Gardens,

Elmington AHO, and APCOA's base garage on Browning Street. Although most venues had elements that were suitable for one part of the process (good parking or suitable space), all had pitfalls. The most obvious of these was security, the lack of parking, space or access.

After assessing nearly a dozen locations it was decided that the Camberwell Leisure Centre (CLC) was to be used for this election with the hope that, if successful, it could provide a permanent alternative to Cator Street.

In terms of available space CLC exceeded requirements. The space available was more than enough to accommodate the ballot box preparation plus the stations for refresher training so successfully implemented in past elections during the collection process.

The main drawbacks to CLC being used for this purpose are as follows:

1. Floor protection and equipment – One of the prerequisites for using the centre was to protect their recently refurbished flooring. A number of alternatives were considered including putting protective caps on the feet of chairs and tables and the purchase of a re-usable floor covering. The first option did not offer the full protection we desired and the second option proved to be too expensive. After careful consideration it was decided that anything other than fully carpeting the hall would not be adequate due to the large number of potentially damaging pieces of equipment, such as trolleys, and the significant weight of ballot papers placed on tables. After seeking quotes from a number of suppliers Corporate Events UK was commissioned to install disposable event carpet and to provide tables and chairs.
2. There is no direct access to the Southwark IT network or Xpress at CLC. Office space was offered in one of the upstairs meeting rooms at the front of the building but this offer was not taken up. This should be looked into for future elections.
3. Equipment Delivery – Delivery of equipment such as the ballot boxes, ballot papers and event management supplied gear was problematic as they had to be delivered through the fire exit which opens onto Harvey Road. An unused parking space next to the door proved useful during the ballot paper delivery. Pallets were placed in this parking space while waiting to be carried into the hall.
4. Presiding Officer Parking (Pickup) – As the venue was operating business as usual, the designated parking for the CLC was not made available for election activities. As a result, the car park (which had only a dozen or so spaces) was not available for many of the presiding officers during pickup. Artichoke Place is situated on a red route which is administered by Transport for London. To reduce the impact that this had on Presiding Officers a number of agency staff were employed to help transport the ballot boxes to their cars. Presiding Officers were notified about the parking issues in their letters of employment⁶ in the weeks prior to the pickup. Some Presiding Officers parked on the red route. At least three were given parking tickets as a result of parking on a red route. The lunchtime period was hugely problematic, with the electoral services team under considerable additional pressure as a result of the very unhappy POs trying to park and traffic problems which ensued in and around the CLC area.

⁶ A copy of this letter is Appendix F



Fig 7.1 Access to hall via fire exit with 4 steps.



Fig 7.2 Ballot Box Setup – 3 Polling Stations per Table



Fig 7.3 The hall during Saturday preparations

Security

Security was provided by Interserve during times when the leisure centre was open and Electoral Services staff were not present. During non-opening times the security team made regular site visits.

Recommendations

- Rec. 23. That the Damilola Taylor building be investigated as an alternative venue. This may provide better parking provision.
- Rec. 24. Access to office space with internet connectivity and printing should be investigated at the CLC, if this venue is used again.
- Rec. 25. Presiding Officer parking alternatives be investigated, including any possibility of using half of the parking spaces at the CLC.
- Rec. 26. More staff could be used to help with the initial set up of the folders and hall on the day of collection.
- Rec. 27. Signage should be erected at reception so that POs entering CLC do not wait at reception to be told where to go to collect their ballot boxes.
- Rec. 28. Having Auditors at the venue on PO pickup day worked well. They were there to explain the issuing of ballot papers, the mock-up polling station and the bagging process. This was a continuation of existing practice and helped develop a team approach.
- Rec. 29. Agency staff could be employed on the day of assigning ballot papers to ballot boxes to help with the heavy lifting.

10. Postal Vote Opening

This was the last election where the postal vote opening was managed by Glenda Favor-Ankersen. In order to ensure a transfer of knowledge to the remaining electoral services team, Chris John and Caroline Richards observed all stages of postal vote opening.

Room G01a-c was used for postal vote verification. The IT and the room layout was set-up nine days before Polling Day. The postal vote room setup is shown below and included 2 scanning stations complete with printer and an additional forward facing screen.

For this election new IT equipment was bought for postal vote opening. This included the purchase of two new PCs and two new A4 printers. The printers are now stored in the basement at Tooley Street. The PCs were stored by Capita.

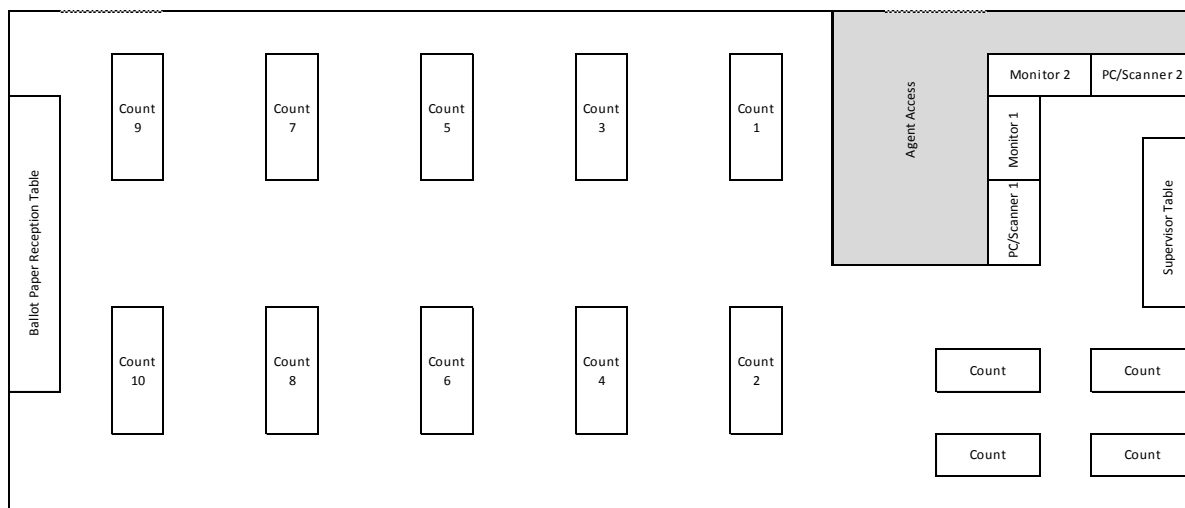


Fig 7.4 Postal Vote Room IT Setup

Agency staff were hired to perform the postal vote opening from Thursday 15 May through to Polling Day. Training was provided immediately prior to the first round of opening. Postal vote supervisors were recruited from a known pool of Southwark employees and were trained in the days leading up to the first round of opening. Day one (11am to 6pm) required 10 agency staff. Days 2 to 5 (8:30am to 6pm) required 24 agency staff. The final day (polling day 5pm to midnight) required 10 agency staff.

Initially 54 ballot boxes were assigned to postal vote opening. Due to the high turnout and the large size of the European ballot papers, a further 21 ballot boxes were assigned to postal vote opening. In total 75 ballot boxes were used.

A total of 17,750 local postal votes were verified from 15 May through to 22 May.

11. Polling Day Equipment and Stationary

Presiding Officer Folder

In the past information was provided to Presiding Officers using a blue wallet which contained a number of documents, loosely collated together into plastic folders. At Manchester the information, including posters, is presented in a folder. A pilot based on a Manchester example was conducted for the East Walworth by-election in December 2012. Although only crudely put together, the results from the user survey showed that the folder option was a helpful step forward; that the information was presented in a logical order and was easier to use. For this election a printing company was employed to print and compile Presiding Officer folders.

In order for the folder to work for a full borough election the majority of the forms, which in the past were polling station specific, were redesigned in order to be generic. To identify which polling station each form was from Presiding Officers were asked to write their polling station number in a box at the top of the page. Items that could not be made generic, such as the Ballot Paper Account and street list, were placed in clear wallets provided at the back of the folder on the morning of the Presiding Officer pickup and on the day the ballot boxes were prepared.

The White folders were printed and compiled by the Southwark contracted printers. As this was our first attempt at a full-scale, high quality folder a great deal of preparation work was required by members of the electoral services team. The resources were used to gather all the information required and produce the "artwork" for the folders, including producing the generic forms mentioned above. It is expected that this work will be able to be carried forward to future elections.⁷

What worked well:

- The majority of the forms were made generic to reduce the workload of the people inserting the documents into the folder. This meant that the generic work could be done by outsourced printers.
- With only minor modifications, the majority of the artwork for the folders can be used for subsequent elections.
- The time consuming task of inserting all the generic documents into the 125 folders was completed by the printing company (at a cost). This was work that did not have to be completed by the already stretched Electoral Services team.
- The folders were well structured, well presented and therefore well received by Presiding Officers.
- The printers were very flexible with their timelines and were able to accommodate numerous last minute changes to documents.

⁷ A copy of the contents page is Appendix G

Areas for improvement:

- Finalising the artwork for some of the documents required many alterations, particularly the bagging up instructions. It was vital, however, that this was done correctly to avoid delays during the triage process.
- The insertion of polling station specific documents and last minute alterations took a considerable amount of time for members of the Electoral Services team on the morning of the PO pickup. Additional resources could be applied to reduce the time taken.

Polling Station Equipment

The Electoral Services team conducted an audit of equipment stored in the Tooley Street basement and Sandgate Street early in 2014. A later evaluation of equipment required to conduct the election was then completed and orders for additional equipment was made at an early date. Additional ballot boxes and trolleys were required.

Preparation of much of the equipment, such as the labelling, was completed in the Tooley Street basement. This reduced the workload at the Camberwell Leisure Centre.

What worked well:

- Doing as much preparation as possible at Tooley Street early to avoid a rush closer to polling day.
- Conducting the audit of equipment early gave us plenty of time to order additional equipment.
- The new ballot boxes are better and easier to use than the old ones.
- Equipment was picked up and delivered by outsourced delivery team – this was delivered by an experienced team at low cost, performing their duties in an exemplary manner, including making additional deliveries at no cost late at night and before 6am on polling day.

Areas for improvement:

- Underestimating the number of ballot boxes required for postal voting required us to order more ballot boxes at the last minute
- Working in the basement with the dust and no natural light for long hours was not ideal.

Ballot Boxes

A double election across the whole borough, including postal votes, requires a large number of ballot boxes. This year 272 ballot boxes were assigned. 218 for the polling stations (one ballot box for the local election and one ballot box for the European Parliament election per polling station) and 54 were allocated for postal votes. Once postal voting got under way it was decided that a further 22 ballot boxes were required due to the size of the ballot paper and the large postal voter turnout.

Pakflatt supplied both the old and new ballot boxes. The older ballot boxes required the fitting of a “rim” where the lid was attached to the box itself. A number of these rims were broken or not fitted properly by the Presiding Officer. There are two versions of the grey ballot boxes – the lids are slightly different, with the result that lids did not fit securely on to the ballot boxes. This caused problems during the preparation of ballot boxes. The new ballot boxes did not suffer the same issue. Once the ballot box is sealed the rims cannot be re-fitted.

Storage

A considerable amount of equipment is required to run a combined election. Access to storage is vital. Southwark Electoral Services has access to an off-site location at Sandgate Street, the

basement at Tooley Street and a number of meeting rooms on the ground floor of Tooley Street during the election period.

Sandgate Street

This is used to store the polling booths, the majority of the trolleys, the polling station signs, and the wheelchair access ramps. There is not enough room to store all the trolleys. The remainder are stored in the Tooley Street basement. The polling booths are stacked on three levels of storage shelves. The top level is approximately head height and it is very difficult to store or remove without a step. Each polling booth weighs approximately 20kg.

Tooley Street Basement

This is the largest storage space available. It is very dusty and an uncomfortable place to work for long hours. Despite this it is conveniently located, large and a very important resource for the Electoral Services team. The basement is used to store ballot boxes, the sundries packs, stationery, the remaining trolleys, miscellaneous equipment in the lead-up to the election, and equipment used for the annual canvass.

Access to the basement is an issue. Although it is a large space there are constraints:

1. Access is gained via the members' rooms. This is not ideal as it means that staff walk through their part of the building.
2. There is no security on the door leading down to the basement. The material that is stored in the basement comprises stationery and other equipment necessary for the running of elections, which should ideally be kept in a reasonably secure location.
3. Access is via a narrow stairwell. A large quantity of equipment had to be brought to street level up these stairs.
4. On the upside, however, from the top of the stairs access can be gained to the street via a fire exit door.

Tooley Street Meeting Rooms

A number of meeting rooms were used for additional storage. **G09** was booked from the annual canvass right through to the election. The room was used to store training material, stationery and paperwork. From the beginning of May the Auditors room (in the ground floor area) was used to store count equipment and equipment delivered by the printers.

In addition to the storage locations mentioned above, the Electoral Services Team have access to three large storage cabinets at the work stations. These are used at capacity. A large quantity of papers and boxes were stored at the work stations.

Transportation of Equipment

A delivery schedule⁸ was arranged for the collection of equipment from Sandgate Street, Tooley Street, Camberwell Leisure Centre, the three triage locations and the 109 polling stations. The timetable was composed with the assistance of outsourced delivery partner, who supplied the transportation and some labour. It did not include the delivery of a small amount of equipment that was delivered to Queens Road 2.

Pre-Election

Prior to the election the delivery team was tasked with delivering polling station equipment to the polling stations. The equipment included polling booths and polling station signs. This was scheduled and arranged beforehand, and used a pre-existing and updated schedule. The team was required to make several unscheduled and additional deliveries, due to unexpected difficulties experienced. These were made effectively and without additional cost – the support of

⁸ A summary of the delivery schedule is Appendix H

the delivery team to the electoral services team is considerable, as they can be relied upon to go the extra mile and do whatever is necessary in order to deliver a good election.

Polling Day

On polling day a van with spare polling station equipment was stationed in the centre of the borough in case any polling station required additional or replacement items (such as polling booths). This service was not called upon this time.

The delivery team was also involved in the delivery of equipment to the triage locations and the transportation of equipment to the count venue at the completion of the triage process.

Post-Election

After the election the transport supplier was tasked with collecting all the polling station equipment from the polling stations. This was scheduled and arranged beforehand.

What worked well:

- All polling stations received the correct equipment.
- Delivery was completed in time for polling day.
- Everything was collected and taken back to Tooley or Sandgate Street in the week after the election.
- Ordered additional equipment where required (two additional wheelchair ramps).
- Informed delivery staff of polling station requirements and planned a route for efficient delivery and collection.
- Unexpected delivery requirements were met by the delivery team effectively and efficiently, with the result that all polling stations were able to open on time, with the necessary equipment in place (one caretaker had locked the polling booths in to her flat, resulting in an additional delivery to be made to the polling station at 6am on polling day, as she was not able to make the booths available when required.)

Areas for improvement:

- We under-resourced for the delivery of ballot box equipment to Camberwell Leisure Centre. One van with two people had to make three trips. The work was made more difficult by the fact that the equipment had to be carried up the stairs from the basement at Tooley Street.
- There was confusion for Presiding Officers over parking regulations when picking up their equipment. Some Presiding Officers received parking tickets.
- Although ultimately successful, arranging delivery times with the polling stations was difficult and time consuming.

Recommendations		
Presiding Officer Folder		
Rec. 30.		That a staff member be allocated the task of inserting final documents into the folder at the ballot box preparation venue on the morning of the Presiding Officer pickup.
Rec. 31.		That bagging up procedures and other documents are finalised well in advance of the printing deadline.
Rec. 32.		Tighter co-ordination of printing requirements, with allocated resource to focus on the printing of the folders, working with the outsourced print supplier.
Polling Station Equipment		
Rec. 33.		That staff members limit their time in the basement at any one go. This can be done by having a roster where other staff members can take over for periods.

Rec. 34.	That the equipment audit and the purchasing of additional equipment be done early; properly labelling and organising equipment so that it is easy to locate.
Equipment - Ballot Boxes	
Rec. 35.	All grey ballot boxes to be checked, with their matching lids. The older ballot box lids/rims should be consolidated so there is only one type. The larger group of grey ballot boxes to be kept by electoral services, with their correctly matched lids. New black ballot boxes to be bought to make up any shortfall in the number of ballot boxes.
Equipment - Storage	
Rec. 36.	That key-card access is provided for the basement to restrict/monitor access.
Rec. 37.	That a professional service be employed to clean the concrete dust.
Rec. 38.	That FM is consulted on any possibility of making the basement space more usable and accessible.
Equipment - Transportation	
Rec. 39.	For the transportation of miscellaneous items, for example sending a couple of boxes to QR2, we should have a Southwark van on standby. The Environment and Leisure Department have many vans. Explore possibilities with Ian Smith, Head of Environmental Services, Environment and Leisure.
Rec. 40.	That two vans be used rather than one van that was delivering ballot box equipment to Camberwell Leisure Centre on the Friday.
Rec. 41.	The delivery team and the equipment plan worked well, and there is as a consequence confidence that this part of the electoral process is adequately resourced and managed.

12. Election Staffing

Electoral Services Team

For the 2014 combined elections the Southwark Electoral Services team was comprised of six full-time permanent employees and a contracted Project Officer. A number of agency staff who were employed during the delayed annual canvass stayed on for the duration of the election period. All members of the team, agency staff included, were required to work very long hours to meet registration, training and election planning deadlines. All staff members were able to claim overtime for the extra hours they worked over the election period.

Electoral Response Team

The deployment of the Election Response Team was helpful in taking pressure off the core team in dealing with polling day queries. However, it was difficult to provide the necessary level of training in the run up to the election. This lack of training impacted on their effectiveness.

What worked well:

- The ERT were experienced council officers and skilled in dealing with calls in a helpful and constructive manner.
- The ES core team was therefore free to deal with more complex queries.
- The ERT kept a record of some calls so that these could be followed up later on if required.

Areas for improvement:

- Due to conflicting tasks, the training process for ERT staff was limited. This meant they only had a limited and basic knowledge of the many different processes, rules and legislation

relating to elections and registration. This limited their effectiveness and, in some cases, it was noted that ERT staff gave incorrect information when dealing with calls.

Staff Recruitment

The Electoral Services Team maintains a database of past employees on Xpress Management. This database records previous roles, an evaluation of past performances, and all the necessary employment and payment information. The majority of polling station and count staff were recruited from this database.

The displacement of staff from the third floor as a result of the European verification and the advertisement placed on The Source provided an additional source of staff from Southwark Council.

Auditors were sourced from staff used at previous elections with the addition of two promoted Presiding Officers.

Postal Vote Staff were recruited from Randstad. This method has been used in the past and has proved to be adequate.

Ten ballot box pickup porter staff were recruited through Randstad for Tuesday 20th.

Triage Staff were recruited from two sources. Firstly, previous staff were recruited. The remaining staff were recruited from the Parks Staff in the locations where triage took place.

Freedom to Work in the UK and HMRC RTI and Pensions

A great deal of information is required to be kept and updated for each staff member. This is to comply with legislation (right to work in the UK) and payment. Additional complexity was introduced in 2014 relating to HMRC Real Time Information (RTI) requirements.

A significant amount of time is dedicated to ensuring staff have submitted their most up-to-date bank account details; this was updated in Xpress Management. In addition details from every staff member's passport or birth certificate were recorded.

At past elections staff were paid via BACS; but from 2014, employers must report PAYE in real time. Each time an employee is paid, the employer must submit details about employees' pay and deductions to HMRC using payroll software on, or before, the day the payment is made. To achieve this, every employee was required to be registered on a payroll specifically developed for the RO.

In addition, the Government has introduced a new law designed to help people save more for their retirement. It requires all employers to enrol workers into a workplace pension scheme if they:

- Are not already in one in respect of an employment;
- Earn over £8,105.00 a year (or pro-rata per pay period) in that employment;
- Are aged 22 or over;
- Are under State Pension age; and
- Have a contract for three months or more.

The returning officer is an employer separate from Southwark Council. This means that the Local Government Pension Scheme is not available to employees of the Returning Officer. It is also the case that employees of the Returning Officer will not have a contract for three months or more, as their period of employment will be limited to activities on or around polling day and the count.

The law allows employers to postpone enrolment assessment for up to three months and the Returning Officer has decided to apply this delay in all cases. To achieve this all staff must be removed or suspended from payroll upon completion of their duties to ensure that the three

month limit is not exceeded. Election staff were informed of the fact that they will not be automatically enrolled in their employment letter.

Standby Poll Clerks

A number of Standby Poll Clerks were stationed at Queens Road. It was thought that having the additional polling station staff based centrally, where Auditors were making regular visits, would help get replacement or additional staff to Polling Stations quickly during the course of the day. In the end only a small number of standbys were called upon to work. Those that were not deployed during the day were dismissed in two batches, the first leaving at 5pm and the second by 7pm.

What worked well:

- Stand by PCs were deployed quickly where they were needed

Areas for improvement

- Confusion about where the stand-by Poll Clerks should be stationed and when they should be released.
- Need to assess how many are needed, and make arrangements that are flexible and can accommodate both the expected and the unexpected need.

Training

Training was provided by the Electoral Services Team. Election staff were paid for attending training and all staff members were required to attend their allocated training session. Staff were warned that those who did not attend training would not be employed.

In total 52 training sessions were run by the Electoral Services Core Team.⁹

The training provided by the Electoral Services Core team was very well received by election staff, however, the demands on staff time during a critical period in the election planning phase, with the statutory deadlines associated with registration and business as usual, were significant. Many hours were dedicated to the delivery of training sessions.

What worked well:

- We were able to produce comprehensive training for staff working at polling stations and on the count/verification.
- The experience and knowledge within the team was of great benefit in ensuring that staff were given expert information on important processes.
- Training materials were clear and appropriate.
- Existing material was updated and improved by taking a more visual and practical approach, ensuring that processes were clearly and practically demonstrated.
- Potential staff for the local count were assessed as part of their training. This worked well as we were able to identify staff that had difficulty undertaking the necessary processes.
- Electoral services core staff have all undertaken several training programmes over the past few years, thus providing an experienced and knowledgeable cadre of trainers. They are able to deliver training using a variety of mechanisms, thus ensuring that all learning styles are accommodated in the training.

Areas for improvement:

- Order sufficient handbooks from the EC for all polling station staff – this would enable POs and PCs to have access to material they can read in the days and weeks before polling day.

⁹ The final training schedule is Appendix I

- Some POs and Poll Clerks did not appear to have understood, or remembered, important aspects of the issuing process. This led to problems at polling station in some cases.

Staff Replacement Policy

There are a number of situations where it may be necessary to replace staff during the election period. These include the need to replace staff before polling day, as well as the more difficult situation where staff may need to be replaced on polling day itself.

Additional polling station staff were also trained, so that any dropouts prior to polling day can be replaced. Thus a total of 20 Poll Clerks were employed on stand-by on Election Day. These reserves were available should any poll clerks fail to turn up, need to be replaced, or if additional staff are required at any polling station.

Similarly additional POs were trained and retained, so that they could be put into any polling station where a PO was unable to perform their duties.

The role of Auditor has evolved over the years. Now more responsibility is given to the Auditor to assess the management of the polling station and the abilities of staff. Auditors are asked, in consultation with the Presiding Officer, to assess staff and, where necessary, replace staff or increase the number of staff at the polling station. Using the Auditor E-Form on their iPads they are able to complete a staff assessment which is emailed directly to the Electoral Services core team. If additional staff or a replacement are needed the reserves are called upon.

On the final Auditor round, the Auditor makes an assessment of the requirement for additional staff at polling stations. This assessment is based on the Presiding Officers readiness, confidence for the Close of Poll, and an assessment of the footfall moving through the polling station.

This process should be further developed in future, as the auditors are best placed to assess the staffing needs of the polling stations. This will particularly be the case in the 2015 general elections.

Staff Payments

Payments have been a time consuming task. There is increased scrutiny due to the new RTI requirements from HMRC and the fact that the payments are now being made through payroll. As a consequence election payment practices will need more detailed planning in order to satisfy HMRC and payroll requirements and to ensure election staff are paid in a timely manner.

It is a requirement that:

- A casual person can only remain on payroll system for three months.
- A casual person working on the election should only be paid once, within the three month period of remaining on the payroll.

Any payments made after 3 months:

- Make the council liable for the automatic pension enrolment.
- If they have been paid for one role the first month and then a subsequent role after 4 months then they may not be deemed "Casual" by HMRC.

Recommendations

Election Staffing – Electoral Response Team

Rec. 42.

The deployment of the ERT team could be usefully developed for 2015. However, this would require increased resources, more intensive training and shadowing of the ES core team, and the development of process guidance specifically for the ERT.

The ERT members would need to be released from their usual duties for some days, in order to make sure that they are effective in their election duties.

Staff Recruitment

- Rec. 43. The recruitment and retention processes followed by electoral services should be assessed by HR. This would ensure that processes are fair and proportionate. It is not possible to undertake full HR procedures when selecting individuals to undertake election duties, but some level of rigour is required, to make sure that those used in elections are adequately trained and can be fired if their work is not of a sufficient standard.

Election Staffing – Standby Poll Clerks

- Rec. 44. A review of how many standby poll clerks should be available at any time should be conducted. An option to be considered is to have some on standby in the morning to cover the opening of polls then replaced by a second team that would cover the afternoon and the close of polls.

Election Staffing – Training

- Rec. 45. Strict limits on numbers at training sessions should be observed. This enables the trainers to assess the understanding of trainees.
- Rec. 46. Order enough EC handbooks for all polling station staff.
- Rec. 47. A full assessment (and rating) of polling station staff should be undertaken as part of the training process. Staff who do not demonstrate a clear understanding of processes should not be employed. Suggest more effective use of quiz or short questionnaire after training has been completed.
- Rec. 48. Highlight how to deal with European “K” marked electors in the PO training.
- Rec. 49. A review of Triage staff numbers should be conducted. Some argue that there are too many staff at each venue.
- Rec. 50. That Triage training should be done on the night rather than the week before. Lead officers (and 2nd Officer) should be trained beforehand and they can then conduct the training on the night. There are upsides to this (including fewer payments for training) but the downside is that the training is currently used to collect employment details as well.

Election Staffing – Staff Payments

- Rec. 51. That, in consultation with payroll, and taking into account the date of the next election, a detailed plan be formulated and a guidance note for Electoral Services staff be formulated to ensure payments are made quickly and correctly after the election.

Rec. 52.

That additional resources (temporary members of staff) be assigned to the task of completing payments in addition to a member of the core team.

13. Information Technology

IT was identified as a major risk for the preparation and execution of the registration process, the election preparation, and as a result considerable resources were allocated to this area.

The IT Work Package was designed within the following time constraints:

- Postal ballot papers opened – From 14.5.
- Postal voting completed – Thursday 22.5, 22:00.
- Postal vote validation completed – by Friday 23.5, 07:00.
- Postal vote room ready for ward count – by Friday 23.5, 07:00.
- Count process starts: Friday 23.5 08:00.
- Count process completed: Sunday 25.5.
- BAU service re-instated: Monday 26.5.
- Count process completed: Sunday 25.5.
- BAU service re-instated: by cob Monday 26.5.

IT Project

Capita assigned a dedicated project manager for the election. The project manager was responsible for developing the project plan and work package, acquiring equipment, testing, installation and providing IT support for the election.

BAU Support

Business-as-usual (BAU) support was highlighted as a major risk factor during the registration and build-up to the election. After much negotiation a suitable mitigation plan was agreed, including the elevation of all Electoral Services service requests to priority one and the allocation of a senior member of the Capita team to visit the Electoral Services team daily to provide any assistance required. This included the maintenance of hardware and software. Issue logs were reviewed weekly.

Polling Station / Elector Finder

One of the aims for this election was to reduce the number of calls being made to the contact centre and the Electoral Services core team on polling day. One tool developed with this goal in mind was the Polling Station/Elector Finder. Twenty one Presiding Officers were identified to run the pilot. They were given a laptop computer with an encrypted USB stick with the finder installed. The idea is to have one PO within each ward with the facility to look up electors on the full register – this would provide an immediate and local source of information, and remove some of the pressure from the CSC and the core team.

The finder included the full register for the entire borough. Using a multiple cell search function, the finder was able to identify the elector and their polling station. If an elector arrived at a polling station and found that they were not on the register for that polling station, the Presiding Officer was able to look up the elector. If the elector could not be found it was likely that they were not registered. If this was the case then the elector would call the Contact Centre. If, however, the elector was registered, then the polling station and polling station address would be displayed. The Presiding Officer is therefore able to direct the elector to the correct polling station without calling the contact centre or the Electoral Services core team for assistance.

The document “Polling Station App Instructions” was produced outlining the steps required to update the data and formula in the Excel document, to be used when preparing for future elections.¹⁰

Data security is an important consideration. A number of systems were put in place; firstly the elector data in the excel spreadsheet was hidden using the VBA editor; the spreadsheet itself was password protected; and the data was accessed on the laptop via an encrypted USB stick. The laptop itself was locked to the desk using a Kensington locking device.

Additional training was provided for the Presiding Officers that were using the Finder. It added an extra 10 minutes to the time a Presiding Officer took to complete their ballot box pickup.¹¹

Auditor IT

Another innovation for this election was the supply of 3G enabled tablet devices for Auditors. Weblabs was commissioned to produce a set of e-forms enabling the Auditor to transmit real time information about the polling station and its staff during their rounds.

The forms included polling station assessment, staff assessment and replacement as well as the hourly poll. The hourly poll was transmitted to a dashboard that was available to the Electoral Services core team and was used to assess turnout. This information was used to help plan the count.

The link to the Hourly Poll Dashboard is:

<https://forms.southwark.gov.uk/elections/Dashboard.aspx>

The tables below show information gathered from the Hourly Poll taken by the Auditor iPads. They show the overall figures from the whole borough (Fig.10.1), an example Ward (Fig.10.2), and an example polling station (Fig.10.3).

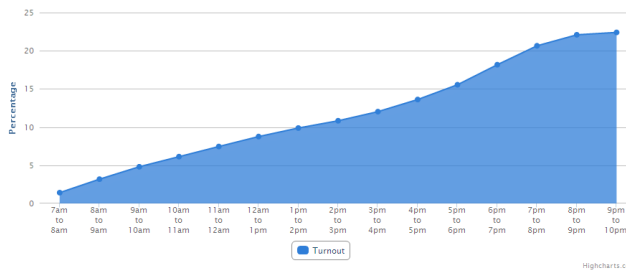
A questionnaire was completed by all Auditors immediately after the election. Auditors were very supportive of this innovation. The iPads were very popular and the e-forms seen as a very useful method of reporting during visits. As this was the first time the e-forms were used, and time was short when developing the forms, there were a number of suggestions on how to improve the usefulness and usability of the e-forms. These suggestions include:

1. The option to write notes within the form.
2. The possibility of having one consolidated form for each polling station rather than a separate form for each item.

¹⁰ A copy of this document is included in Appendix K

¹¹ A screen-shot of the Polling Station/Elector Finder is Appendix L

Whole borough cumulative turnout



Whole borough hourly turnout

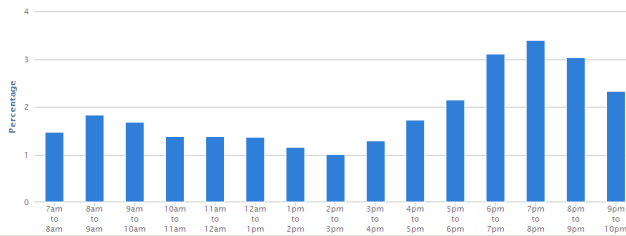


Fig 10.1 Borough Turnout

Brunswick Park

Electorate	9,390
Polling Stations	6
Turnout	2,288 (24.37%)
Dashboard	Return to dashboard

Ward turnout per hour

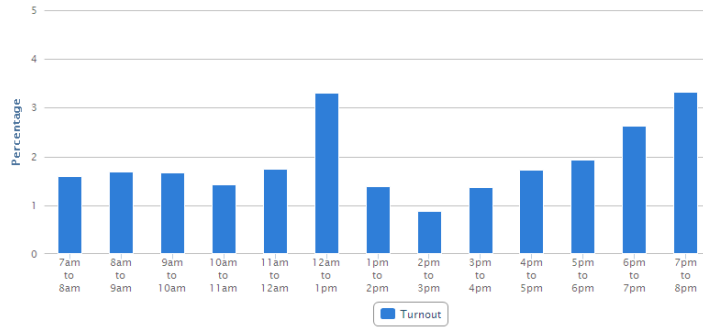


Fig 10.2 Ward Turnout (Brunswick Park)

Election - Dashboard

Oliver Goldsmith Primary School, Southampton Way entrance, Camberwell

Reference	EL1
Electorate	1,357
Ward	Brunswick Park
Presiding Officer	Marlin, Tracey
Poll Clerk	Downes, Kathleen A
Poll Clerk	Dwyer, Laura
Turnout	295 (21.74%)
Dashboard	Return to dashboard

Station turnout per hour

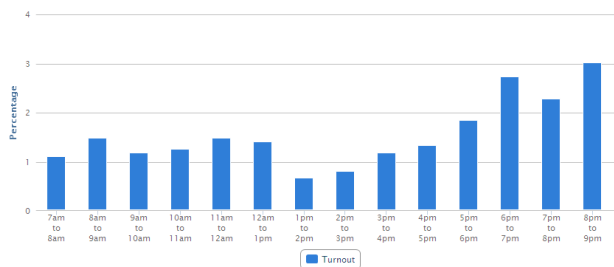


Fig 10.3 Polling Station Turnout (EL1)

Local Count IT

During 2014 Count, IT equipment has been extensively used. IT equipment was provided by Capita IT and the event management company. More details on the actual IT equipment used is provided below.¹²

Laptops and PCs

Each ward supervisor assistant operated a laptop. There were 21 laptops, one per ward. Each laptop had ward specific documentation preloaded. All laptops were stand alone, not connected to the Southwark network. Each DRO also had a PC in their office (two PCs in total). PCs were stand alone and connected to the network. Network connectivity was provided as a contingency for printing. Additional PC connected to printer and scanner was provided for processing any additional postal votes. All laptops and PCs were either rented from LBS IT stock or rented. All laptops and PCs were purpose built by Capita team and tested by Electoral Services team.

Three PCs were used for the purpose of communication with external environment (via twitter) and internally with display screens. Two of those PCs were relocated from the Comms team, one was purpose built by Capita.

Printers

Printers were connected to DRO PCs and Postal votes. Printers were colour printers with functionality to print A4 and A3.

Scanners

One scanner was set up to process any postal votes that may have been found in the ballot boxes during the count.

Radios

Radios were used for communication amongst count and operational teams. Radios were provided by the event management company. They were not part of the IT work package.

Display screens

Event Management Company provided six display screens for the purpose of communication with agents and candidates. Those screens displayed results, announcements, twitter feed and 24h BBC news.

PA system

PA system was used for announcing the results, and provided by the event management company.

USBs

40 USB sticks were purchased for the purpose of transferring data between ward computers and DRO computers as well as developing and distributing ward specific documentation.

Euro Count IT

For Euro count one PC connected to the printer was located in the DRO office. Ten laptops were provided for areas supervisors. Similarly to the local count radios were provided for communication between DROs, ADROs and operational teams.

Use of IT had a positive impact on improving communication with agents and candidates, production of accurate results and staff confidence level in the count process. It is worth noting that additional time was taken to train and brief staff on using the IT equipment.

Customer Service Centre (CSC)

There is a well-established working relationship between Electoral Services and the CSC, with the CSC team dealing with Electoral Services queries throughout the year. Calls to the Electoral Services helpline go directly to the CSC. In the run up to the election, and on polling day, it was important that the CSC were able to deal with queries efficiently.

¹² The IT distribution plan is Appendix M.

What Worked Well:

- As the CSC have been involved in several previous elections, along with the annual canvass and year-round registration, effective processes are already in place enabling CSC staff to deal with calls. These include a senior ES officer delivering briefings to CSC staff and providing reference materials to be used when dealing with calls.
- As in previous years, the CSC were able to deal with the majority of calls without escalating these to the ES core team.

Areas for Improvement:

- It is sometimes the case that CSC officers either do not refer to reference materials directly when dealing with calls, or do not correctly understand the content. This can result in callers sometimes being given incorrect advice, for example in regards to postal voting and the reissuing process.

Recommendations

Information Technology - Polling Station/Elector Finder

Rec. 53. That the Elector/Polling Station Finder be sent to an Excel consultant for refining.

Rec. 54. That the result also displays the elector number.

Information Technology – Auditor

Rec. 55. That a “focus group” (including Auditors and Electoral Services staff and a representative from Weblabs) get together to develop the forms further, both in usability and content, for future elections.

Information Technology – Customer Service Centre

Rec. 56. There is already a great deal of focus on ensuring that callers to the CSC are given correct advice. However, it would be useful to discuss ideas with the CSC management team in advance of the 2015 election to minimise the risk of incorrect information being given to customers– and complaints arising because of this.

Information Technology - Communications

Rec. 57. Maintain and build on the Southwark Decides identity.

Rec. 58. Ensure that all understand the importance of copy and print deadlines to avoid the additional expenses incurred due to slipping print deadlines. Greater understanding of the election timetable and deadlines would also assist in establishing realistic timeframes for printing and publications.

Rec. 59. Increase the resources dedicated to the installation and take-down of venue signage to four people.

Rec. 60. Book a room for sign storage and preparation at least three weeks in advance.

14. Polling Day

Polls were open from 0700 to 2200. Core team activities began before 0600. Triage was expected to be completed by 23h30.¹³ The closing down of postal vote opening and the final preparations for the count were expected to finish in the early hours of Friday morning. In response to a recommendation from the 2010 review that members of the core team were allocated adequate breaks during the day, a detailed schedule of events and staff duties was produced for polling day and hotel rooms were made available. Most, but not all, members of staff were able to take advantage of these provisions. There was an issue with the availability of rooms at the hotel as check-in was after the first member of staff started their break.

Before 0600, members of the Electoral Services core team arrived at Queen's Road ready to provide assistance to polling station staff during setup.

From 0600 polling station staff arrive at their polling station to begin setup for the 0700 opening. At this time the Auditors begin their first round of visits to ensure Presiding Officers are on-track and that all staff arrived at their polling station on time.

From 0600 Standby Poll Clerks arrived at Queens Road ready to be deployed at a polling station should any additional staff be required or if any staff failed to turn up.

From 0700 the Electoral Services team and the Election Response Team begin taking calls from electors.

From 0900 postal vote re-issue and emergency proxy applications are accepted at Tooley Street.

Postal vote opening is conducted from 1700 and is resumed again from 2200 as postal vote packs arrive from the polling stations. This year the closing down of postal vote opening did not finish until 0500 the following morning.

The delivery of triage equipment takes place during the day. From 2030 triage staff arrive at each of the three triage locations to be assigned tasks and to receive last minute training before the ballot boxes start arriving from 2200.

Ballot boxes, and other polling station equipment, are then transferred from triage to the count venue. Ballot paper accounts are entered into the count IT and the ballot boxes are assigned to their count tables and stored overnight.

¹³ The timeline is shown in Appendix N.

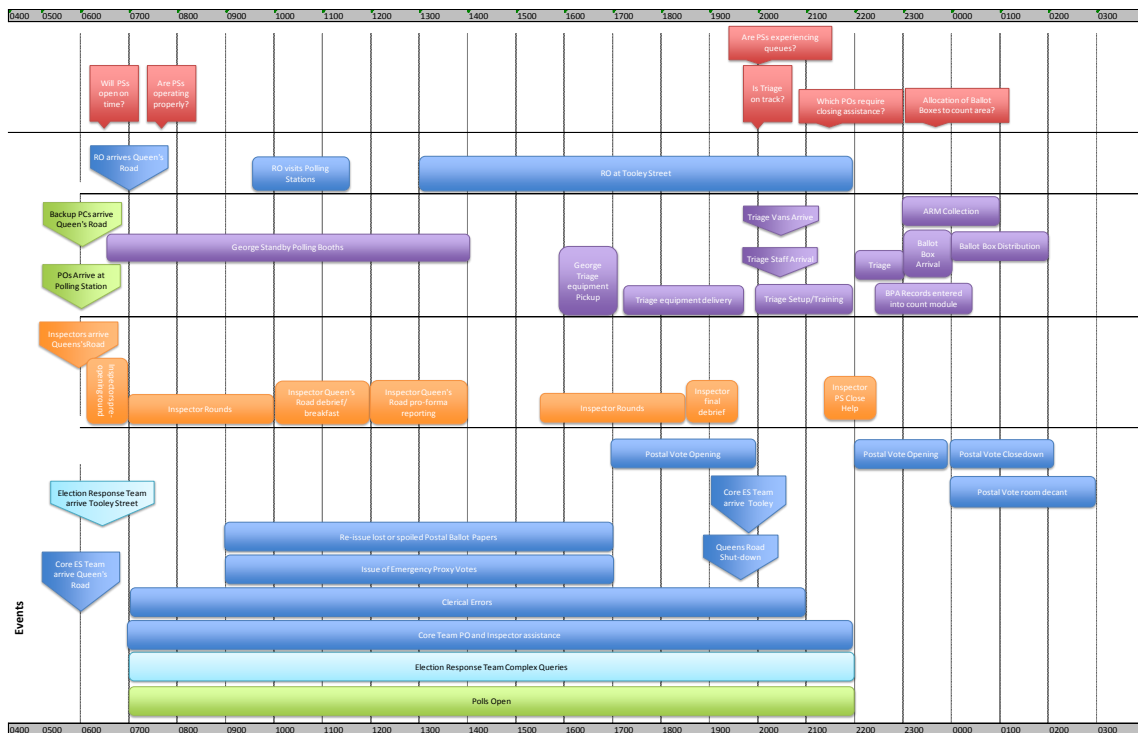


Fig 12.1 Polling Day Timetable

Recommendations

- Rec. 61. Arrangements should be made to ensure staff on breaks, have access to a hotel room. A staff member should be assigned to perform the check-in prior to any breaks.
- Rec. 62. It would be advisable if Triage staff were asked to prioritise processing any postal vote wallets received at the polling stations to ensure the postal count can be completed in a timely manner.
- Rec. 63. Further analysis of the postal vote closing down process should be undertaken, so that adequate resources can be made available for subsequent elections. In particular steps need to be taken to reduce the number of postal votes coming in to the count venue at the close of poll – a second collection of postal votes during the day is suggested.

15. Triage

Overview

Triage is a process introduced for the 2009 European Parliamentary election whereby ballot boxes are collected from 3 sites spread across the borough to ease the pressure on Presiding Officers at the end of a very long polling day.

For the 2014 combined election three sites are identified, one in the North of the Borough, one in the centre of the Borough and one in the South. The Idea is that only a third of Presiding Officers are met at the point where polling station equipment is handed over to election officials. The result is that Presiding Officers spend less time in queues waiting to hand over their equipment.

Ballot boxes and other polling station equipment are taken from the Presiding Officer's car, checked and then placed in trucks which deliver the equipment to the count venue and to Archival Record Management (ARM) for storage.

For the first time the Triage process was headed by John Wade. As John was new to the position a great deal of time was dedicated by Caroline Richards during the planning stage. The three Triage locations for this election were Tooley Street (North), Chumleigh Gardens (Central) and Francis Peek (South).

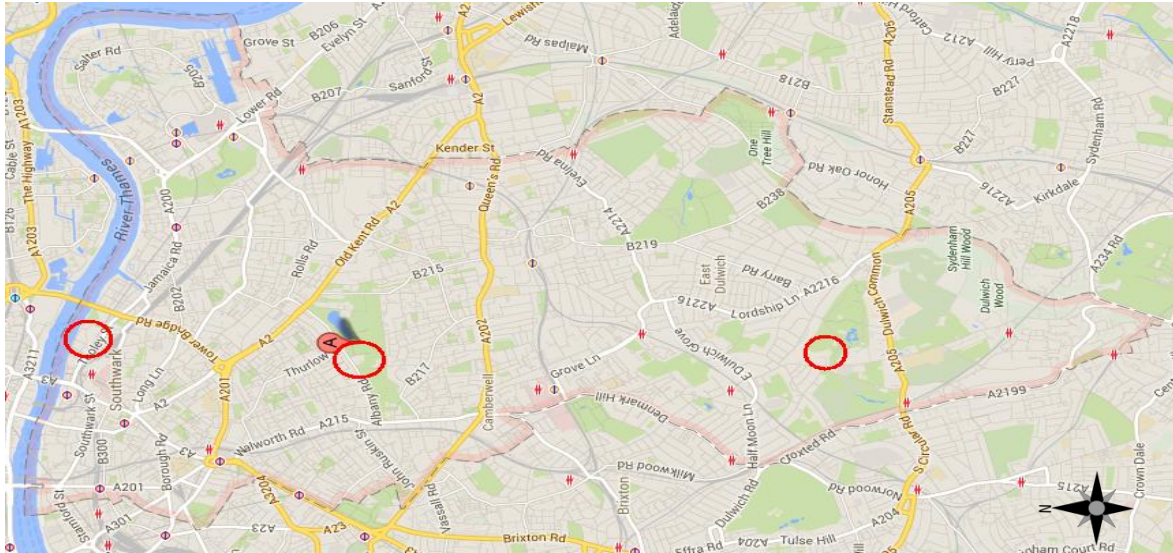


Fig 7.5 Location of the three triage sites

Tooley Street (North)

Tooley Street acted as the Triage site for the northern polling stations. As Tooley Street also doubled as the count venue, ballot boxes were also delivered to Tooley Street from the other two triage locations.

Tooley Street has been used on a number of occasions as a triage site, most recently during the East Walworth by-election in 2012. Preparations for triage include the closing of Shand Street and Barnham Street to create a one way traffic system that passes through the fleet parking bays at the rear of the building to the loading bay on Barnham Street where triage takes place.

A team of 20 were employed to perform the various triage duties.

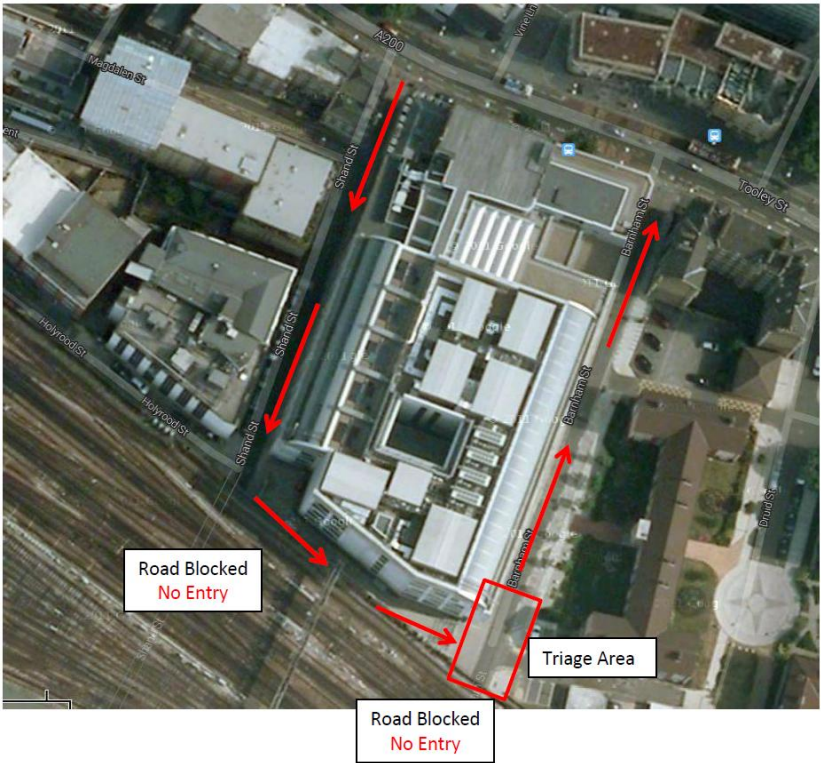


Fig 7.6 Triage Route for Tooley Street

Chumleigh Gardens (Central)

This election was the first time that Chumleigh Gardens was used as a triage site. The central triage site at previous elections was the council building located on Cator Street. Cator Street is no longer available.

Presiding Officers enter the site from Albany Road. They travel along the path to the east of the Chumleigh Gardens buildings to a marquee tent where the transfer of equipment takes place. Ballot boxes are loaded into a van with a second van used to store the equipment that is later picked up by ARM. Once the transfer is complete the cars travel along the path to the exit on Wells Way.



Fig 7.7 Chumleigh Gardens triage location



Fig 7.8 Chumleigh Gardens triage on the night



Fig 7.9 Triage Route for Chumleigh Gardens

Francis Peek (South)

As with Chumleigh Gardens, this was the first election where the Francis Peek building was used as a triage site. The Francis Peek building is located in the car park on the western end of Dulwich Park. The entrance is via College Road. The car park is large and the building is ideal for temporary storage of polling station equipment.

Additional resources required for Francis Peek include a large gazebo, which was large enough to fit two cars side by side and 2 large free standing flood light towers for the access road and the car park.

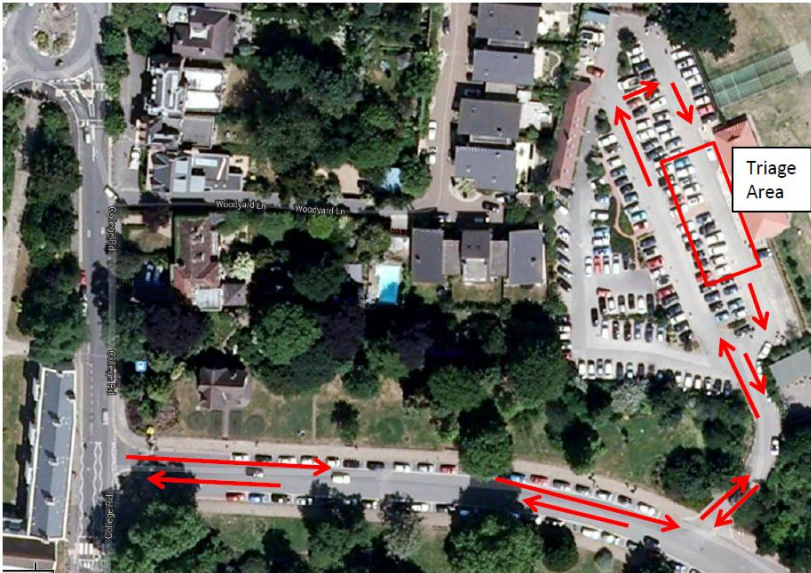


Fig 7.10 Triage Route for Francis Peek



Fig 7.11 Francis Peek Triage location

Recommendations

Rec. 64.

That the cars at Tooley Street be parked side by side rather than one in front of the other. This will speed up the process as the cars behind will not have to wait for the car in front to leave.

16. The Count

In line with the recommendations of the 2010 review two key changes to the count were implemented in 2014 relating to the timing and venue respectively.

Timing

The RO agreed to implement recommendation from the review of the 2010 Local Election to shut down of activities following the arrival of ballot boxes at the count venue on polling day until the start of the count process the following morning. All staff who worked on polling day were able to

go home (or to a nearby hotel) to get some rest before the count began the following day. This decision was in line with a significant number of other London Boroughs.

The commencement of validation of the ballot papers was set at 09.00. In order to meet this timetable all election staff had to be at their posts by 08:30 to enable all candidates, agents and observers who wished to be at the start of the count to be addressed by the RO at 08:45. A target completion time for the count was set for planning purposes as 22:00.

Tooley Street

The election fell close to the end of the school term and consequently the count venue used for past elections was not available. After careful consideration of venue requirements and the assessment of five alternative venues the RO decided to use the council offices at Tooley Street as a count venue for this election. This move was supported by the project board and the Chief Officer Team of the council. Tooley Street offered a series of advantages, namely :-

- Tooley Street is readily accessible by public transport
- The building is fully accessible with good reception facilities for people with disabilities.
- Counting a Borough election requires a significant amount of space both for the counts and the election preparation (1800m²). This amount of space is available at Tooley Street as the flexible nature of the workspaces in the building allowed for the ready relocation of staff.
- Strong relationships were in place with the suppliers of facility management, IT and event management within the building.
- A wide range of rooms were available for training and meetings
- Café and catering facilities were available on site
- Alternative arrangements were readily available for Council staff working normally

The count was a large and complex project impacting all operations out of the Tooley Street premises. The following Project Quality Criteria were established by the project board:-

- The count venue is to be set up correctly and meet the requirements in terms of provision of facilities and services.
- All staff roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and all staff are well informed about their role during the counts.
- All attendees informed about the day programme for the count and made aware of the count processes followed, and the progress made on the results.
- All equipment required for the count has been tested and additional quantity is available in case of unforeseen circumstances.
- The contingency plans have been developed and contingency arrangements are available to be put in place in case of emergency.
- All count processes are transparent and procedures are in place to follow in case of issues or any ambiguities on the process.
- The lines of communications are clearly defined and there are clear escalation procedures in place.

A dedicated project manager was recruited to coordinate all the required deliverables necessary for a successful count after the completion of the poll and postal voting; ending with the return of spaces used for the count process to a “business as usual” state,¹⁴

¹⁴ these are set out in Appendix P

The project manager established a weekly Count Mobilisation Team meeting schedule in the lead-up to the count. The purpose of this group was to provide a forum for risks, issues and work stream discussions and to promote a joined up approach to the counts.

Friday, 23.05

No	Workstream	Task	01:00	02:00	03:00	04:00	05:00	06:00	07:00	08:00	09:00	10:00	11:00	12:00	13:00	14:00	15:00	16:00	17:00	18:00	19:00	20:00	21:00	22:00	23:00	00:00	Resources	Notes and Assumptions	
36	Count L	Count Manager arrives at Tooley St for handover of Ballot						x																			Des Waters		
37	FM (Interserve)	Security Staff start arriving via rear entrance						x																					
38	CPI/Des W	PM handover - BP registration memory stick, keys to room G01 and issues list						x																					
39	EVM	Radio allocation to key staff from Event offices						x																				Pure Solutions core team	
40	BB/Count L	PM handover - BP registration memory stick, keys to room G01 and issues list						x																				Christos P/ Des W	
41	EVM	Key Front of house staff arrive						x																				PS core team, Count mobilisation team leads	
42	Staff	Senior count staff arrive to Tooley Street						x																				RO, DROs	
43	FM	Building re-opened						x																				Senior Count officers to re-open the building.	
44	EVM	Tea and Coffee set up in staff rest area						x																				Unity Café staff, PS core team	
45	EVM	Unity Café staff arrives						x																				Unity Café staff	
46	EVM	Accreditation of count and management staff						x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		Accreditation staff	Reduced number of desks in the afternoon
47	FM	Keep TV in the staff dinner switched off						x																				Colin	
48	EVM	Front of house staff arrive						x																				EVM, PS, Sec, Cleaning, FM, customer service, accreditation staff, AV staff, Comms, RO, DROs, Count PM, Count mobilisation team	
49	Count L	Senior staff briefing (Readiness Check)						x																				Check readiness status of all services	
50	Staff	Count staff arrive at Tooley Street						x																				ADRO, Supervisors, Count Assistants, Finance analysts, floorwalkers, EVM, PS, Sec, Cleaning, FM, customer service, accreditation staff, AV staff, Comms,	
51	EVM	Front of house staff briefing						x																				Reduced number of desks in pm	
52	EVM	Unity Café Staff tea and Coffee stations open (staff)						x																					
53	EVM	Accreditation of candidates, agents and approved visitors begin						x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			
54	EVM	Unity Café Opening hours (visitors)						x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		Unity Café staff	
55	FM	Ensure fire alarm test wont go off						x																				Keith	
56	Count L	Count staff take their count positions - supervisors' briefing						x																				Supervisors, Count Assistants, DROs	Count staff will be allocated to a ward prior to the count day. The
57	Count L	All count staff at ward stations						x																					
58	Count L	Candidates, agents and approved visitors briefing						x																				RO, DROs, ADROs, candidates and agents	PA System?
59	EVM	Comms, AV and PA system in operation						x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		Pure Solutions contractor, Comms, EVM	
60	Count L	Verification process starts at all wards (ground floor)						x																				Count staff	
61	Verify EU	EU verification process starts (3rd floor)						x																				EU verification staff	To ensure RO is present at the start of both local and EU verification
62	EVM	Unity Café - mid-morning break starts (Staff)						x																					
63	EVM	Unity Café - staff lunch set up						x																					
64	Count L	Verification figures declared - turnout for each ward and ballot paper numbers announced						x?	x?	x?																		RO, DROs, Comms, AV	Estimate time
65	EVM	Unity Café - Lunch (staff)						x	x	x																			
66	PV	Postal Votes closed & room locked up						x	x	x																		1 x PV supervisor	After Verification is finished
67	Staff	Count stand-by staff released						x																				ADRO, DRO	
68	Count L	Sorting process completion at all wards						x?	x?	x?																		Count staff	Estimate time
69	Count L	Counting process completion at all wards, announcement of results						x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		RO, DROs, Comms, AV	
70	Verify EU	EU verification process completed						x?	x?	x?																		EU verification staff	Packing up commences - agreed no of ballot papers into ballot box (incl

MASTER Count Ops Plan v1.1.xlsx

Printed on: 21/05/2014

Count set up and layout

Tooley Street Layout objectives

A building plan was developed in consultation with the Tooley Street facilities management client team, the communications team and their appointed event management contractor. Following a series of test runs it became clear that the ground floor alone would not provide sufficient space for conducting a combined election and the project board accepted that a significant portion of the third floor in order to accommodate the verification of the European ballot together with election staff rest facilities. This decision was agreed with COT. The areas required for the count were unavailable for other use from 17:00 Wednesday 21 May with all areas to be available for business as usual by the start of the next normal working day following the count, Tuesday 27 May.

A key objective in deciding the building layout for the count was to maximise the circulation space for candidates, agents and observers, allowing sufficient access to all areas of the count, as well a comfortable environment whilst awaiting the declaration of the result. It was also considered preferable that facilities for election staff and BAU staff were kept separate from those made available for count visitors and candidates. Accordingly the main Atrium was designated as the declaration area and the Unity café was made exclusively available for count visitors.

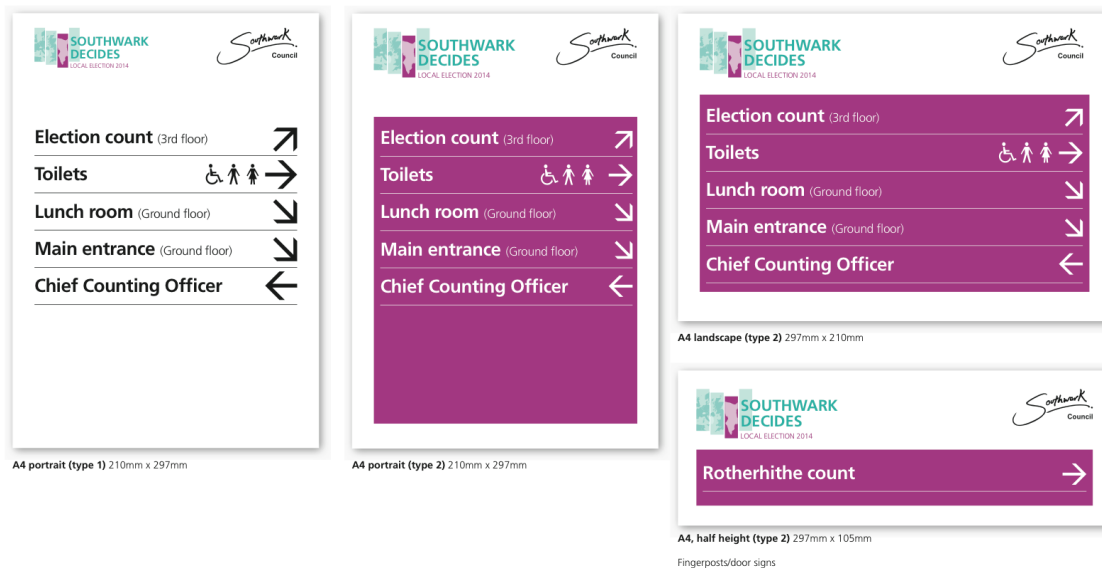


Count area Layout

Three main count areas were established namely European ballot verification (3rd Floor), Borough election east (Zones 1 & 2) and Borough election west (zones 3-5). Each area was managed by a DRO and each managed by an ADRO. Each ward was allocated eight count assistants, one supervisor and one assistant supervisor.

Signage

A comprehensive signage scheme was developed by the Communications team, using the “Southwark Decides” branding.



Reception

A key objective for the building reception was that all staff, candidates and agents should be able to easily enter the count prior to its commencement. For the first time the details of all those requiring access was managed by an electronic attendance tracking system, which generated passes for the event. Passes were made available to staff and agents prior to the day and all those with a valid pass were able to enter the count by simply scanning their pass through a scanner at the entrance. Six reception desks were made available for staff and visitors.

Catering

A paid service offering tea coffee and meals was offered by the Unity café for candidates and other count visitors. As continued attendance of count staff on site for the entirety of the count was required in order to meet the planned count completion time it was decided that on site catering be provided for staff and thus a staff rest area was established on the 3rd floor offering a packed lunch and tea at no charge. On Thursday extra staff worked to prepare for Friday.

On Friday the staff catering service ran smoothly. On Friday 510 afternoon lunch bags were ordered and all were used. However due to the earlier than expected completion of the count some 200 teas were unused.

The cash service café was not as busy as anticipated as not as many visitors used the Unity Café. There was a considerable amount of wastage as a result; over 50 sandwiches were wasted and over 60% of salads wasted. A breakfast service was particularly affected; over 60% less sales than on the normal Friday breakfast. The communicated estimates were over 500 visitors to visit Unity Café for cash service but this did not materialise. On Sunday correct numbers were ordered and everything was used.

Business as Usual (BAU) Council Services

The running of the count at Tooley Street at the same time as other council services had a significant risk of impacting on the ability to offer the "Business as Usual". This was mitigated to some degree by the fact that many council personnel were engaged to work on the election poll or count and that the election was immediately before the spring bank holiday, which meant that many staff had taken leave on the Friday. For those services which were running, a second reception was set up for Council visitors, and staff were directed to a temporary entrance to the rear of the building.

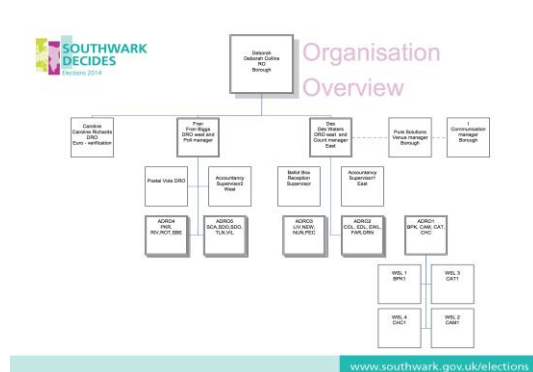
Internal communications developed and implemented a communications strategy aimed at all staff (council staff and all contractors) affected by the count event taking place. This included

Electronic (email, source) and visual (posters, display) communication informing the council staff members and council contractors of:

- The Elections Count taking place at Tooley St.
- Procedures for desk clearance for those members of staff directly affected by the count.
- Arrangements for dual use of the building and changes to working arrangements during the count period (e.g. access restrictions).
- Certain facilities not being available on the day of the Count.

Roles and responsibilities at the Count

Specific roles and responsibilities were established for all count staff. The count management structure is set out below.



Roles and responsibilities were a key part of the training of ADRO's and count supervisors undertaken by the count manager. The training also included a test event at which staff were able to familiarise themselves the count documentation and systems, staff management and candidate and agent issues. This training was reinforced by an information pack and briefing given by the DRO's immediately prior to the commencement of the count



The Role

The Count Supervisor is responsible for:

- > Managing the execution of each count step
- > Leading a ward team of 8 Count Assistants during each count step
- > At all times during the count process, preserve its integrity by maintaining neat and tidy count tables and transparency in all actions and decisions
- > Accurate recording of each count step using the documents provided
- > Ensuring adjudicated ballot papers are counted correctly
- > Good communication with ADROs to ensure timely and accurate transfer of information

The Area Deputy Returning Officer (ADRO) is responsible for:

- > Managing the count process
- > Communicating to Count Supervisors when to execute each count step
- > At all times during the count process, preserve its integrity by ensuring count steps are being conducted efficiently, accurately and transparently with no external interference
- > Make decisions on doubtful votes and communicate all decisions transparently in full view of Agents and Candidates
- > Maintain good communication with Count Supervisors for timely and accurate transfer of count information
- > Maintain good communication with the Returning Officer for declaration

www.southwark.gov.uk/elections

Information for Visitors to the count

On the 30th April RO held a briefing for all candidates, agents and observers on the arrangements for the administration of the poll and the count. The meeting was well attended. As result of feedback from this meeting some changes were made to the access arrangements on the day, including bringing forward to times of opening of the reception and the pre-printing of passes.

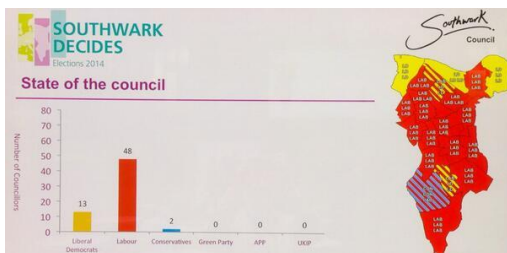
A new departure for the count was the provision of an information pack for candidates (Full pack attached as appendix ?)

Welcome Pack Contents

- Getting to Tooley Street
- Count Timetable
- Access and Accreditation
- Facilities at Tooley Street
- Layout of the Venue
- Key Officer
- Postal Votes Process
- Election Count Process
- Code of Conduct
- The Count Secrecy Requirements
- Doubtful Ballot Papers Guide

www.southwark.gov.uk/elections

The progress of the count was communicated to candidates and visitors primarily through five display screens with the primary screen located in the atrium. Information was also shared on a dedicated twitter feed. A clear process of information validation and sign off was put in place by the Communications team to ensure the accuracy of information. Urgent issues such as calls for agents to attend count zones were communicated through a dedicated public address system



Testing of equipment and documentation

As part of the ADRO training a Test event of the count was held a month in advance of the elections. Lessons learned from the event led to changes in process and documentation e.g. in the marking of adjudicated ballots. A significant amount of documentation testing and re-design took place prior to the

eventual sign off by the RO. One significant change related to the production of a new rejected and rejected in part count form.



WARD: BPK
Brunswick Park

Pair Number

Counting Form Number: 21

Counting Form Type: Rejected and Rejected in Part

Total number of BPs on this Counting Form: C3

REJECTED & REJECTED IN PART COUNT FORM

If you make a mistake whilst completing this form then shade in the box and ensure the box is not included in the total

RO / DROs Decision	RECORDED BALLOT PAPERS		RECORDED BALLOT PAPERS		Total Number of Rejected Ballot Papers = A + B + C + D F	
	REJECTED IN PART 1-15 grid Total		REJECTED Want of official mark 1-15 grid Total			REJECTED Voting for more candidates than the voter is entitled to 1-15 grid Total
	BP ALLOWED 2 VOTES 1-15 grid Total		REJECTED Writing or mark by which the voter could be identified 1-15 grid Total			
	BP ALLOWED 1 VOTE 1-15 grid Total					

Blake, Jennifer 1-15 grid Total	Burgess, Radha Elizabeth 1-15 grid Total	Dawson, Elizabeth 1-15 grid Total	Fidgett, Alexis 1-15 grid Total	Masters-Kelly, Conor 1-15 grid Total	Phillips, Stephen George Beva 1-15 grid Total	Spring, Andy 1-15 grid Total
widlicki, Pawel Kazimierz Ada 1-15 grid Total	hurogood-Hyde, Tomas Willia 1-15 grid Total	Williams, Mark 1-15 grid Total	Wingfield, Ian 1-15 grid Total	Wood, Rebecca 1-15 grid Total	Zuleta, Lorraine 1-15 grid Total	

For supervisor use ONLY

Total no. of BPs counted F + G + H	No. of ballot papers reconciled V = W? Y/N	Total number of valid votes in this counting sheet Sum of Candidates' Totals	Total no. of valid votes expected = (E x 2) + (C + D)	Number of votes reconciled X = Y? Y/N
If number of votes does not reconcile what is the difference X - Y	Check count requested for the BPs on this counting form Y/N	DRO signature	Supervisor Assistant Signature Date Entered into Form C4	

The contingency plans

The project board considered the contingency arrangements required in the event that access to Tooley Street was either delayed or denied.¹⁵

Count processes and procedures

Count documentation and stationary was designed to ensure that all count processes were clear to candidates and agents. This included the use of branded party labels, new ballot paper transfer processes and revised procedures for the stamping of adjudicated ballot papers¹⁶

¹⁵ Contingency Plan Appendix Q

¹⁶ Election Count Document List Appendix R

MacStamp 3.5 – 67mm x 27mm – Black Ink

REJECTED IN PART
 Allow for 1 Vote
 Allow for 2 Votes

MacStamp 5 – 58mm x 28mm – Black Ink

REJECTED
 Voter Identified
 Over-voting
 Unmarked or uncertain
 No official mark



MacStamp 1 – 36mm x 13mm – Black Ink

**REJECTION
OBJECTED TO**

MacStamp 1 – 36mm x 13mm – Black Ink (for Postal Votes)

**PROVISIONALLY
REJECTED**

MacStamp 0 – 23mm x 8mm – Black Ink

ALLOWED



MacStamp 1 – 36mm x 15mm – Red Ink

REJECTED

Lines of communications

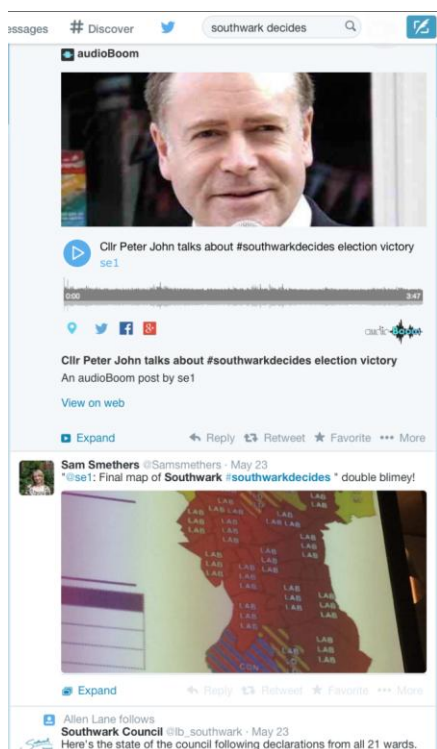
The count management hierarchy was established as discussed above. A radio network was established for communications using two channels, one for Electoral services and the other for facilities and event management.

THE ELECTIONS COUNT ESCALATION PROCESS

Escalation	RO, DRO's	Comms Manager	Event Manger
	Deborah Collins, Des Waters, Fran Biggs	Robin Campbell	Paul Cowell
Count Process	X		
Candidates & Agents Behaviour	X		
Count staff behaviour in all zones	X		
Problems with documentation (paper and IT)	X		
Ballot Papers queries	X		
Vote reconciliation queries	X		
Approval of communication content	X		
Complaints about the count process management	X		
Security of Ballot boxes	X		
Access to the count zones/ wards	X		
Press enquiries		X	
External public enquiries about the elections		X	
Content of display screens		X	
Communication of approved content		X	
Facilities requests			X
Venue requests			X
Management staff behaviour			X
Suppliers requirements			X
Technical & IT problems			X
Catering issues			X
Connectivity and technical issues of display screens, AV, PA system			X
Complaints about the event facilities			X

Communications and Event Management

The communications team was responsible for a number of activities for this election. A Southwark elections “look and feel” was developed. The “Southwark Decides” brand was designed in such a way that it could be used for future elections. The branding was used in all communications from the website, to the count stationery and signage. Social media (twitter) was used for the first time to disseminate information before and during the count. A dedicated staff member was on hand during the count to publish approved tweets.



The communications team assisted with Council staff regarding recruitment. Emails were sent to all of the council’s staff promoting election roles (e.g. count assistants). This also encouraged council managers to support staffing for the elections. Messages were also published on The Source, and in The Source in Brief.

The communications team was responsible for the publication of official notices from the RO, RRO and Electoral Services. These included the Notice of Election, the publication of election results, and advertising the Candidates and Agents meetings.

What went well	Cause	Capitalising Actions
The timing of the count contributed significantly to the smooth running of the process.	Staff were in place on time and visitors were rested from the day of the poll.	Support of COT and political parties
Tooley Street proved to be a very effective venue for the count	Accessible flexible space Availability of facilities Experienced facility and event management	Commitment and confidence from the senior management to the organisation of the Elections count at Tooley Street.
Decision on using Tooley Street as a count venue was made in time to allow early planning.	Early option appraisal	Support from the project board, senior management team and CEO contributed to the project success.
Regular Count Mobilisation Team meetings.	It had pull together all elections count project delivery resources in one place. CMT meetings supported development of the project team spirit and gave opportunity to discuss dependencies.	Commitment from the delivery teams to regularly provide update on their deliverables. Provision of an open forum to discuss project issues and dependencies. Communication of decisions made, and issues discussed from the project board level to the project team level – enabling open communication both ways top-down and bottom-up.

High quality of communication internal and external messages and products (e.g. signage, welcome packs, look and feel concept, templates)	Elections count requirements were detailed in the Communication work package.	The work package lead worked closely with the project manager. Timelines for key deliverables were developed early and communicated to the stakeholders. Team took the ownership of the work package. Clear communication schedule and messages content were developed by the project team.
Use of laptops at the ward level to support the votes reconciliation and production of accurate results. Laptops operated by the Assistants to Word Supervisors.	Reduced pressure on the Word Supervisors to oversee the process and complete paperwork.	Provision of 'hand-on' training on how to use laptops to Ward Supervisors and their assistant to allow them to practice on the exact same documentation as during the count.
Radio communication between Local count and EU verification and during EU count.	Ability to communicate with key count staff and operational leads on different channels smoothen running of the count and improved communication between staff in various locations.	Use of multiple channels. Radios allocated to key staff. Hand free head set attached to the radios allowed confidential communication as well as enabled key staff to multitask.
Early involvement of the Tooley Street facilities team in planning and building transformation.	Facilities team know building very well and was able to resource and assist with all activities required prior, during and after elections count.	Development of the operational plan in cooperation with the facilities team provided them with an in-depth understanding of the projects objectives and outcomes as well as gave them greater ownership of the plan. Dedication of the facilities team to the job catalysed by good leadership.
Reception management was well resourced and organised, with no candidates or agents waiting to be attended to.	Experience of the event management	Early communication wit candidates and visitors Early provision of accreditation
Strong relationships were built with third party contractors and suppliers	Strong project management and supply chain management	

Areas for improvement	Cause	Lessons Learned
Accurate estimation of number of guests attending the count.	Late confirmation of number of candidates and agents did not allow finalisation of the guest numbers until one week before the count.	Obtain data from previous election to allow earlier estimation of guest numbers. Any updates to the estimated guest number should be communicated to all suppliers to ensure that planning is in line with the latest estimates.
It was reported that there was some confusion over the access arrangements through the second reception desk and that the lift at second reception is not big enough to cope with number of visitors.	More BAU staff and visitors than expected on Wednesday and Thursday, 21 and 22 May.	Improve the plan for dealing with BAU staff and visitors or consider closing the building on the day of the count
Zone 3 in the west count area was rather cramped	Level of uncertainty as to the number of visitors attending the wards concerned	Need to review ward allocation for future elections.

Recommendations

- | | |
|----------|--|
| Rec. 65. | Tooley Street should be established as the primary venue of choice for all future elections. Depending on the type of election consideration could be given to the use of a single floor as well as the need to consider closing the building for normal council business. |
| Rec. 66. | The “Southwark Decides” brand and social media should be used for all future elections |
| Rec. 67. | Floor plans for the building need to agreed earlier to give suppliers longer lead in times |

17. Security and Integrity

The Electoral Commission produced the document *Code of conduct for campaigners: postal voting, proxy voting and polling stations*. The contents of this document were agreed to by all parties in March 2013. The code provides a guide for campaigners, electoral administrators, and police to what is, and is not, considered acceptable behaviour at polling stations and in the community during the lead-up to polling day. The code covers all those actively involved in campaigning in elections in Great Britain.

This document was distributed to candidates and agents in the weeks leading up to polling day. It is recommended that this document is kept up-to-date and used in future elections.

A London-wide meeting was held with representatives from all boroughs and the Met Police’s Single Points of Contact (SPOC) prior to the election. This was attended by Fran Biggs and Des Waters. Ongoing communication in the period leading up to the elections ensured that any security issues were dealt with as required. In the event there were no issues raised with the SPOC that needed attention from the RO or the electoral services team.

The close co-ordination with the borough police team, including the safer neighbourhood team, resulted in attendance at the polling stations by uniformed police officers at different points during the day. The POs had all necessary contact details, and had received training on any potential security issues they may be faced with on polling day.

What worked well:

- The integration of security considerations throughout all the processes for polling day, postal votes and the count ensured that there was no question of any impropriety during these elections. The compilation of a detailed plan brought these issues to the forefront of the preparations

Areas for improvement:

- It is important to maintain the current levels of attention to this important area, and to thoroughly analyse each new election from a security and integrity perspective.

Recommendations

- | | |
|----------|--|
| Rec. 68. | The same level of attention to security and integrity issues should be given to these issues for all elections, with the additional requirement that any specific issues relating to each election are taken into consideration. |
|----------|--|

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18. Performance Against Election Project Criteria

Project Brief Quality Expectations

The elections must be run in a way that clearly shows that there is complete impartiality throughout the process – the integrity of the electoral process provides the residents of the borough with certainty that the administration is properly elected.

Performance: Overall, candidates, agents and all involved in the election thought the count was exceptionally well run and there were no issues with the integrity of the poll. No petitions were lodged.

Every elector who wishes to cast a vote must be able to do so, within the legal framework – there must therefore be information available to electors to enable them to vote.

Performance: The Southwark Council website was updated with information for electors in the lead-up to the election. In addition the communications team published advertisements and articles in local publications. Poll Cards were posted out in the weeks before polling day and information on how to vote was erected within polling stations as required by law.

Internal customers (colleagues and contractors) expect the electoral services team to be highly professional at all times. This includes any contracting processes as well as inter-departmental relationships.

Performance: The electoral services team maintained a professional relationship with internal teams and external contractors.

Project Brief Acceptance Criteria

All polling stations should open and close on time, with no elector unable to vote as a result of error.

Performance: All polling stations opened and closed on time. Every effort was made to resolve any issues experienced by electors throughout the day in line with the legislative framework. In addition to the call centre, staff members from the Southwark legal department were on hand to respond to queries from electors during polling hours. The Tooley Street offices were opened to the public for the purpose of issuing emergency proxies and the re-issuing of postal votes.

Count for borough council elections completed by 10pm on Friday 23 May 2014.

Performance: Ward declarations began at approximately 1630. The final declaration was made before 1900.

Count for European Union Parliamentary election completed by 10pm on Sunday 25 May 2014 (subject to regional returning officer requirements for communication of borough results).

Performance: The count for the European Union Parliamentary election was completed by 1900.

No challenge to the election results.

Performance: There has been no challenge to the election results. Feedback from agents indicates high satisfaction with the administration of the count.

19. Summary of Recommendations

Election management

- Rec. 1. That the project team structure and the appointment of specific project management resources be used for all future Borough wide elections
- Rec. 2. Resource planning, especially within the core team, to be done at least 6 months prior to the election. The work packages to be developed in advance and allocated to the leads with at least 6 months notice

Registration

- Rec. 3. Investigate the possibility of purchasing the required software from Xpress to enable the encryption of data for European authorities, before the next EU election.
- Rec. 4. POs to be reminded in their training of the importance of providing electors with only the ballot papers which they are entitled to receive.

Nominations

- Rec. 5. The advice from counsel that an additional line could be added to the nomination paper should be implemented for the general election in 2015. This will increase the likelihood of nomination papers being accepted more quickly, as any entry that fails can be crossed through with the result that the last subscriber then becomes activated.
- Rec. 6. Election agents and candidates should be encouraged to submit their nomination papers for informal checking as early as possible. The register for nomination papers will be the register that is valid at the notice of election, the 1 April register for elections held in early May.

Postal Votes

- Rec. 7. The re-issuing process built on existing knowledge and practice, introducing a more structured and project-managed approach, resulting in a marked improvement on previous years. This approach should be continued for future elections.
- Rec. 8. The instructions/briefing notes given to CSC staff should be overhauled for the 2015 election. A step-by-step process would be helpful and more user friendly for CSRs.

Ballot Paper Allocations

- Rec. 9. A polling district review is scheduled for October/November 2014. This will be an opportunity to correct existing imbalances between polling districts, to the extent that is possible with limited buildings available for use as polling stations. This will enable an appropriate borough-wide allocation to be made which is less than 100%, without a manual adjustment being required due to the considerable variation in turnout and number of electors in each polling district.
- Rec. 10. Increase the postal vote allocation, to cater for a significant increase in the number of postal voters at the deadline. In 2015 this will be on a constituency basis, but the risk for the next borough elections in 2018 should be borne in mind.

Emergency Proxies

- Rec. 11. The strong processes which were developed for emergency proxy votes should That the cars at Tooley Street be parked side by side rather than one in front of the other. This will speed up the process as the cars behind will not have to wait for the car in front to leave.
- Rec. 12. Dedicated IT provision for emergency proxies in 2015 should be considered, as the number of applications may increase for a UK parliamentary election.
- Rec. 13. The provision of detailed information on emergency proxy voting for the CSC should be looked at for 2015 – including a step-by-step process.

Venues

- Rec. 14. ID passes should be tested prior to polling day.
- Rec. 15. Facilities Manager for Queens Road, should be consulted early, along Client and Service Improvement Manager and user of QR2.
- Rec. 16. There is still room for improvement in the booking process, for Polling stations including clear maintenance of records and improved communication with venue contacts. Booking letters and the methods for updating information to be improved before the next election.
- Rec. 17. Initial contact with venues for the 2015 election should take place early – during the second half of 2014.
- Rec. 18. Requests for updated contact details should be made, bearing in mind that these can change again before May 2015.
- Rec. 19. Developing a specific procedure for finding alternative venues would be of benefit. This should include assistance from council colleagues in community engagement and property.
- Rec. 20. If we have issues finding a suitable polling station location, we should enlist the help of ward councillors at an early stage.
- Rec. 21. Check the Council Assembly timetable to avoid a room scheduling clash prior to setting the training schedule. This is already BAU as electoral services consult with the constitutional team to get details of committee meetings and council assembly. This will be particularly important when national or regional elections are held, as council business is more likely to continue.
- Rec. 22. Book rooms early and arrange regular meetings with the responsible parties to ensure the work is being done.

Ballot Box preparation

- Rec. 23. That the Damilola Taylor building be investigated as an alternative venue. This may provide better parking provision.
- Rec. 24. Access to office space with internet connectivity and printing should be investigated at the CLC, if this venue is used again.
- Rec. 25. Presiding Officer parking alternatives be investigated, including any possibility of using half of the parking spaces at the CLC.
- Rec. 26. More staff could be used to help with the initial set up of the folders and hall on the day of collection.
- Rec. 27. Signage should be erected at reception so that POs entering CLC do not wait at reception to be told where to go to collect their ballot boxes.
- Rec. 28. Having Auditors at the venue on PO pickup day worked well. They were there to explain the issuing of ballot papers, the mock-up polling station and the bagging process. This was a continuation of existing practice and helped develop a team approach.
- Rec. 29. Agency staff could be employed on the day of assigning ballot papers to ballot boxes to help with the heavy lifting.

Presiding Officer Folder

- Rec. 30. That a staff member be allocated the task of inserting final documents into the folder at the ballot box preparation venue on the morning of the Presiding Officer pickup.
- Rec. 31. That bagging up procedures and other documents are finalised well in advance of the printing deadline.

- Rec. 32. Tighter co-ordination of printing requirements, with allocated resource to focus on the printing of the folders, working with the outsourced print supplier.

Polling Station Equipment

- Rec. 33. That staff members limit their time in the basement at any one go. This can be done by having a roster where other staff members can take over for periods.
- Rec. 34. That the equipment audit and the purchasing of additional equipment be done early; properly labelling and organising equipment so that it is easy to locate.

Equipment - Ballot Boxes

- Rec. 35. All grey ballot boxes to be checked, with their matching lids. The older ballot box lids/rims should be consolidated so there is only one type. The larger group of grey ballot boxes to be kept by electoral services, with their correctly matched lids. New black ballot boxes to be bought to make up any shortfall in the number of ballot boxes.

Equipment - Storage

- Rec. 36. That key-card access is provided for the basement to restrict/monitor access.
- Rec. 37. That a professional service be employed to clean the concrete dust.
- Rec. 38. That FM is consulted on any possibility of making the basement space more usable and accessible.

Equipment - Transportation

- Rec. 39. For the transportation of miscellaneous items, for example sending a couple of boxes to QR2, we should have a Southwark van on standby. The Environment and Leisure Department have many vans. Explore possibilities with Ian Smith, Head of Environmental Services, Environment and Leisure.
- Rec. 40. That two vans be used rather than one van that was delivering ballot box equipment to Camberwell Leisure Centre on the Friday.
- Rec. 41. The delivery team and the equipment plan worked well, and there is as a consequence confidence that this part of the electoral process is adequately resourced and managed.

Election Staffing – Electoral Response Team

- Rec. 42. The deployment of the ERT team could be usefully developed for 2015. However, this would require increased resources, more intensive training and shadowing of the ES core team, and the development of process guidance specifically for the ERT. The ERT members would need to be released from their usual duties for some days, in order to make sure that they are effective in their election duties.

Staff Recruitment

- Rec. 43. The recruitment and retention processes followed by electoral services should be assessed by HR. This would ensure that processes are fair and proportionate. It is not possible to undertake full HR procedures when selecting individuals to undertake election duties, but some level of rigour is required, to make sure that those used in elections are adequately trained and can be fired if their work is not of a sufficient standard.

Election Staffing – Standby Poll Clerks

- Rec. 44. A review of how many standby poll clerks should be available at any time should be conducted. An option to be considered is to have some on standby in the morning to cover the opening of

polls then replaced by a second team that would cover the afternoon and the close of polls.

Election Staffing – Training

- Rec. 45. Strict limits on numbers at training sessions should be observed. This enables the trainers to assess the understanding of trainees.
- Rec. 46. Order enough EC handbooks for all polling station staff.
- Rec. 47. A full assessment (and rating) of polling station staff should be undertaken as part of the training process. Staff who do not demonstrate a clear understanding of processes should not be employed. Suggest more effective use of quiz or short questionnaire after training has been completed.
- Rec. 48. Highlight how to deal with European “K” marked electors in the PO training.
- Rec. 49. A review of Triage staff numbers should be conducted. Some argue that there are too many staff at each venue.
- Rec. 50. That Triage training should be done on the night rather than the week before. Lead officers (and 2nd Officer) should be trained beforehand and they can then conduct the training on the night. There are upsides to this (including fewer payments for training) but the downside is that the training is currently used to collect employment details as well.

Election Staffing – Staff Payments

- Rec. 51. That, in consultation with payroll, and taking into account the date of the next election, a detailed plan be formulated and a guidance note for Electoral Services staff be formulated to ensure payments are made quickly and correctly after the election.
- Rec. 52. That additional resources (temporary members of staff) be assigned to the task of completing payments in addition to a member of the core team.

Information Technology - Polling Station/Elector Finder

- Rec. 53. That the Elector/Polling Station Finder be sent to an Excel consultant for refining.
- Rec. 54. That the result also displays the elector number.

Information Technology – Auditor

- Rec. 55. That a “focus group” (including Auditors and Electoral Services staff and a representative from Weblabs) get together to develop the forms further, both in usability and content, for future elections.

Information Technology – Customer Service Centre

- Rec. 56. There is already a great deal of focus on ensuring that callers to the CSC are given correct advice. However, it would be useful to discuss ideas with the CSC management team in advance of the 2015 election to minimise the risk of incorrect information being given to customers– and complaints arising because of this.

Information Technology - Communications

- Rec. 57. Maintain and build on the Southwark Decides identity.

Rec. 58. Ensure that all understand the importance of copy and print deadlines to avoid the additional expenses incurred due to slipping print deadlines. Greater understanding of the election timetable and deadlines would also assist in establishing realistic timeframes for printing and publications.

Rec. 59. Increase the resources dedicated to the installation and take-down of venue signage to four people.

Polling Day

Rec. 60. Book a room for sign storage and preparation at least three weeks in advance.

Rec. 61. Arrangements should be made to ensure staff on breaks, have access to a hotel room. A staff member should be assigned to perform the check-in prior to any breaks.

Rec. 62. It would be advisable if Triage staff were asked to prioritise processing any postal vote wallets received at the polling stations to ensure the postal count can be completed in a timely manner.

Rec. 63. Further analysis of the postal vote closing down process should be undertaken, so that adequate resources can be made available for subsequent elections. In particular steps need to be taken to reduce the number of postal votes coming in to the count venue at the close of poll – a second collection of postal votes during the day is suggested.

Triage

Rec. 64. That the cars at Tooley Street be parked side by side rather than one in front of the other. This will speed up the process as the cars behind will not have to wait for the car in front to leave.

The Count

Rec. 65. Tooley Street should be established as the primary venue of choice for all future elections. Depending on the type of election consideration could be given to the use of a single floor as well as the need to consider closing the building for normal council business.

Rec. 66. The “Southwark Decides” brand and social media should be used for all future elections

Rec. 67. Floor plans for the building need to agreed earlier to give suppliers longer lead in times

Security and Integrity

Rec. 68. The same level of attention to security and integrity issues should be given to these issues for all elections, with the additional requirement that any specific issues relating to each election are taken into consideration.