

**Legislative Council Panel on Constitutional Affairs**

**Practical Arrangements for the 2007 Legislative Council  
Hong Kong Island Geographical Constituency By-election**

**INTRODUCTION**

This paper sets out the key electoral arrangements for the 2007 Legislative Council (“LegCo”) Hong Kong Island Geographical Constituency (“GC”) By-election (“the LegCo By-election”) to be held on 2 December 2007.

**BACKGROUND**

2. The Electoral Affairs Commission (“EAC”) is a statutory and independent body responsible for the conduct and supervision of elections. The EAC, supported by the Registration and Electoral Office (“REO”), is making preparations for various electoral arrangements for the 2007 LegCo By-election. The key practical arrangements relating to the polling and counting of votes are set out in the following paragraphs.

**DETAILED ARRANGEMENTS**

**Nomination Period, Polling Date and Polling Hours**

3. In accordance with section 8 of the Electoral Affairs

Commission (Electoral Procedure) (Legislative Council) Regulation (Cap. 541D), the Chief Electoral Officer published a By-election notice in the gazette on 21 September 2007, announcing that the poll of the LegCo By-election would be held on 2 December 2007, and that the nomination period would be from 17 October 2007 to 31 October 2007.

4. Same as the 2004 LegCo Election and the 2007 District Council (“DC”) Election, the polling will be conducted from 7:30am to 10:30pm.

### **Number and Allocation of Polling Stations**

5. In the 2007 DC Election to be held on 18 November, around 100 polling stations will be set up on Hong Kong Island if all the DC Constituency Areas in the region are contested. The REO has approached the venue management of the relevant premises for permission to use these premises as polling stations for the LegCo By-election as well. As some of these premises will be engaged for other activities and will not be available for the By-election, REO is looking for other suitable venues as replacements. According to the 2007 Final Register of GC electors published on 25 September 2007, there are about 620,000 electors registered for the Hong Kong Island GC. With around 100 polling stations to be set up for the By-election, there will be an average of about 6,200 voters assigned to each polling station.

### **Vote Counting Arrangements**

6. Same as the 2004 LegCo Election for GCs and the 2007 DC Election, the vote counting will be conducted at individual polling

stations. Immediately after the close of the poll, a polling station will be converted into a counting station. Candidates, their agents and members of the public will be allowed to be present in the counting station to observe the count.

7. When the count starts, the Presiding Officer (“PRO”) for a polling station will assume the role of the counting supervisor. He/she will be assisted by the polling staff, who will then take up the role of counting staff. He/she will also be responsible for determining the validity of questionable ballot papers in the polling station. Upon completion of the count, the PRO will make known the counting results to candidates or their agents present at the polling station. The candidates or their agents will then have the opportunity to request a recount of votes. If there is such a request, the recount will be performed on-the-spot. When there is no request or further request for a recount<sup>1</sup>, the PRO will report the counting results to an Assistant Returning Officer (“ARO”). After consolidating the counting results of all the counting stations under their charge, the AROs will report the consolidated results to the Returning Officer (“RO”). The RO will make known the consolidated counting results to the candidates or their agents present in the Media Centre (details in paragraph 9(a) below) who will then have the opportunity to request a recount of votes for all the polling stations. If there is such a request, recount will be performed at all the polling stations. When there is no request or further request for a recount<sup>1</sup>, the RO will formally announce the election result.

---

<sup>1</sup> Or when such request is rejected by the PRO or RO as being unreasonable in accordance with section 79(A) of Electoral Affairs Commission (Electoral Procedure) (Legislative Council) Regulation (Cap 541D).

## **Design of Ballot Papers and Ballot Boxes**

8. The ballot paper of the LegCo By-election will follow the design used in the 2004 LegCo Election. Candidates will be allowed to have certain specified particulars relating to them printed on the ballot papers. To ensure that sufficient ballot boxes will be provided to the polling stations, the REO is carefully and thoroughly testing the ballot boxes for use in the LegCo By-election. There will be an adequate provision of ballot boxes to cater for a 100% turnout of the registered electors.

## **Other Related Measures**

9. Other key measures which will be put in place to ensure the smooth conduct of the 2007 LegCo By-election are as follows.

- (a) Media centre: A media centre will be set up in the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre to facilitate the dissemination of voter turnout statistics and election result to the candidates, the media and the public. Any media announcements will also be made available at the media centre.
- (b) Organisation and set-up of the Central Command Centre: The Central Command Centre (“CCC”) on the polling day will be set up in the REO office in Guardian House. It will be supervised by the Chief Electoral Officer of the REO, and all units of the Centre will be accommodated in the same place to facilitate communication and coordination.

- (c) Compilation of voter turnout statistics: A statistical information centre will be set up inside the CCC to collect the turnout figures from all the polling stations. The voter turnout figures will be made available to the public through press releases to the media, through the website of REO and dissemination at the media centre on an hourly basis.
  
- (d) Staff recruitment: About 2,600 staff members from various Government Bureaux/Departments will be recruited and trained to carry out polling and vote counting duties on the polling day. In view of the tight timeframe in the organization of the By-election, the electoral staff required will be recruited among those who have served as electoral staff for the 2007 DC Election. As far as possible, they will be posted to the same polling station where they have served in the 2007 DC Election.
  
- (e) Staff training: The polling and vote counting arrangements in the 2007 DC Election and LegCo By-election are very similar. As the electoral staff to be recruited for the LegCo By-election will have already attended the training and briefing sessions on the polling and vote counting arrangements for the 2007 DC Election and also gained experience in the actual operation of a polling station at the DC Election, they should be familiar with the polling and vote counting arrangements. However, to further strengthen their experience in and understanding of the polling and vote counting arrangements, refresher training will be provided.

- (f) Contingency planning: There will be four depots set up in the four administrative districts of the Hong Kong Island to provide quick replenishment of supplies where necessary. Each depot will be equipped with vehicles for urgent deployment if the need arises. The REO will draw up a comprehensive contingency plan to deal with various incidents on the polling day.

### **ADVICE SOUGHT**

10. Members are invited to express views on the arrangements set out in this paper.

Registration and Electoral Office

October 2007