

Legislative Council Panel on Constitutional Affairs

**Practical Arrangements for
the 2018 Legislative Council By-election**

PURPOSE

The 2018 Legislative Council (“LegCo”) By-election for the Hong Kong Island Geographical Constituency (“GC”), Kowloon West GC, New Territories East GC and the Architectural, Surveying, Planning and Landscape Functional Constituency (“ASPL FC”) will be held on 11 March 2018. This paper sets out the key electoral arrangements proposed by the Electoral Affairs Commission for the By-election.

BACKGROUND

2. The Electoral Affairs Commission is a statutory and independent body responsible for the conduct and supervision of elections. The Electoral Affairs Commission, supported by the Registration and Electoral Office (“REO”), is making preparations for the 2018 LegCo By-election. The key practical arrangements relating to polling stations, deployment of electoral staff, counting of votes, public inspection of election advertisements, facilitation measures for electors with special needs, Central Command Centre, Media Centre, contingency planning, security planning, etc. are set out in the following paragraphs.

PROPOSED ARRANGEMENTS

Polling Date and Nomination Period

3. In accordance with section 8 of the Electoral Affairs Commission (Electoral Procedure) (Legislative Council) Regulation (Cap. 541D) (“EAC(EP)(LC) Regulation”), the Chief Electoral Officer published a notice in the Gazette on 1 December 2017, announcing that the poll of the By-election would be held on 11 March 2018 with the nomination period from 16 to 29 January 2018.

Number and Allocation of Polling Stations

4. According to the 2017 Final Register of electors published in July 2017, there are about 2.1 million registered electors in the three GCs,

i.e. Hong Kong Island GC, Kowloon West GC and New Territories East GC, and around 7 600 registered electors in the ASPL FC. Around 325 ordinary polling stations will be set up for the three GCs concerned. Around 300 polling stations will also be used for casting the votes of the ASPL FC while the remaining some 25 polling stations will be used solely for casting GC votes as there is no FC elector in the respective areas. In addition, 15 polling stations will be set up in the remaining two GCs, i.e. Kowloon East GC and New Territories West GC to serve some 1 900 ASPL FC electors in these two GCs. We aim to have at least 90% of the polling stations set up at venues accessible to electors with mobility difficulties. To avoid causing confusion to electors, we plan to use venues which had been used as polling stations in the 2016 LegCo General Election as far as possible.

5. We have critically reviewed the arrangement regarding the designation of polling stations, especially those with long queues of electors waiting to cast their votes after the close of poll at 10:30 pm in the 2016 LegCo General Election. Apart from the number of electors allocated to the polling stations concerned, the queuing problem was also caused by the relatively longer time required for issuing two or more ballot papers to each elector and the time taken by each elector to mark the ballot papers in a general election. For the 2018 LegCo By-election, of the 2.1 million registered electors in the Hong Kong Island GC, Kowloon West GC and New Territories East GC, only around 5 700 electors will be issued with two ballot papers. We envisage that the time required for both issuing and marking of ballot papers should be much shorter than that of the 2016 LegCo General Election. To avoid overcrowding, additional ballot paper issuing desk(s) and voting compartment(s) will be set up at polling stations where polling was closed from 10:30 pm to 11:30 pm in the 2016 LegCo General Election. For polling stations where electors had to wait beyond 11:30 pm in the 2016 LegCo General Election, we will take proactive steps to replace the venues with more spacious ones, set up additional polling stations, as well as re-allocate electors to other station(s).

6. Apart from the ordinary polling stations, a maximum of 21 dedicated polling stations (“DPSs”) will be set up at the penal institutions of the Correctional Services Department for the registered electors imprisoned or remanded under the custody of the department to cast votes in the By-election. The exact number of DPSs to be set up will be finalised nearer the polling date when the number of registered electors imprisoned or remanded can be better ascertained. We also plan to set up three DPSs at police stations across the territory for

registered electors who are remanded or detained on the polling day by law enforcement agencies other than the Correctional Services Department, such as the Police, Independent Commission Against Corruption, Customs and Excise Department, to cast their votes.

Polling Hours

7. Following the established arrangement, the polling hours of the ordinary polling stations and DPSs set up at police stations for the 2018 LegCo By-election will run from 7:30 am to 10:30 pm. As for DPSs set up at the Correctional Services Department penal institutions, owing to security considerations, the polling hours will be from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm.

Recruitment and Training of Electoral Staff

8. We have launched a recruitment exercise in November 2017 to recruit electoral staff of different ranks for the 2018 LegCo By-election. We plan to recruit about 12 000 civil servants from various government policy bureaux/departments for polling and counting duties on the polling day, including the manning of the polling-cum-counting stations and the operations at the Central Counting Station (“CCS”) to be set up at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre in Wan Chai.

9. Briefing sessions on the polling and counting procedures and arrangements will be arranged for electoral staff. We will also continue to remind all staff working at polling stations to pay attention to electors with special needs and provide these electors with assistance whenever necessary. Besides, polling management training which covers crisis management, quality polling service and training on emotional quotient, and experience sharing workshops will be organised for staff at the supervisory level. Staff being deployed to compile statistical returns on the polling day will be provided with specialised training on statistical work, while those working in the CCS will need to attend an on-site rehearsal of counting duties on the day before the polling day in addition to the briefing sessions.

Polling Arrangements

10. Pursuant to section 53(4A) of the EAC(EP)(LC) Regulation, an elector who is entitled to cast two or more votes in a LegCo election will be issued with all the ballot papers together on one occasion, and must cast the ballots in the same visit. This polling arrangement allows eligible electors to cast the GC vote and the FC vote at the same polling station. The ballot papers for GCs and ASPL FC will be of different sizes, colours, colour patterns and codes for easy differentiation. As an established practice, there would be dedicated ballot boxes for receiving the two different types of ballot papers separately. To ensure that ballot papers are put in the right ballot boxes, the ballot boxes would bear the same colours to match that of the ballot papers. Furthermore, depending on the number and types of ballot papers to be issued to individual electors, there would be three dedicated cardboards of different colours for holding the ballot papers. Such arrangement is to help polling staff monitor the casting of votes and ensure that no elector will leave the polling station with any ballot paper.

Revised identity document requirement for application for a ballot paper

11. Section 50(1) of the EAC(EP)(LC) Regulation concerning identity document requirement for application for a ballot paper has been amended and the revised requirement has come into operation on 1 December 2017. In accordance with the amended provision, on arrival at a polling station, an elector must present the original of his/her Hong Kong Permanent Identity Card or other specified alternative document(s)¹ to the polling staff inside the polling stations who will verify his/her information against the final register before issuing the ballot paper(s). We will step up the publicity on the revised arrangements and remind electors to bring along their Hong Kong Permanent Identity Cards to the polling stations.

12. An elector who applies for a ballot paper at a DPS set up at a penal institution of the Correctional Services Department should present a

¹ In accordance with section 50(1) of the EAC(EP)(LC) Regulation, other specified documents include –

- (a) the original of an acknowledgement of application for the Hong Kong Permanent Identity Card ;
- (b) the original of a valid Hong Kong Special Administrative Region passport;
- (c) the original of a valid seaman's identity book;
- (d) the original of a valid document of identity for visa purposes; or
- (e) a document evidencing a report to a police officer of the loss or destruction of the person's Hong Kong Permanent Identity Card, together with the original of a valid passport or similar travel document (e.g., a passport other than the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region passport or the Home Return Permit) showing his/her name and photograph, and a copy of his/her Hong Kong Permanent Identity Card in paper form.

document issued by the Commissioner of Correctional Services showing his/her name, photograph and prisoner registration number allocated by the Commissioner to him/her for identification purposes.

Vote Counting Arrangements

Vote counting arrangements for three GCs concerned

13. For the three GCs concerned, we will adopt the same poll-cum-count practice of the 2016 LegCo General Election, with vote counting conducted at individual polling stations after the close of poll. Under this arrangement, polling stations (other than small polling stations (with fewer than 500 registered electors) and DPSs, the counting arrangement of which is explained in paragraph 14 below) will be converted into counting stations immediately after the close of poll. During the conversion process, candidates and their agents may remain inside the polling stations. After the conversion, candidates and their agents, the media and members of the public will be allowed to be present in the counting stations to observe the count. The count will be conducted manually and, during the count, questionable ballot papers will first be separated for later determination of validity by the Presiding Officers (“PROs”). Candidates and their election or counting agents may make representations during the determination process. The decision of the PROs in respect of any ballot paper shall be final and may only be questioned by election petition.

14. To protect the secrecy of votes, GC ballot papers of the small polling stations as well as DPSs (after sorting according to the GCs at the Ballot Paper Sorting Stations) will be delivered to the respective main counting stations under police escort and accompanied by not more than two candidates and/or their agents for mixing with other ballot papers cast therein before counting.

15. Upon completion of the count at a counting station, the PRO will make known the counting results to the candidates or their agents present who will then have the opportunity to request a re-count of votes. If there is such a request which is accepted by the PRO, the re-count will be conducted on-the-spot immediately. If there is no request or further request for a re-count², the PRO will report the counting results to the Statistical Information Centre for consolidation. After consolidating all the counting results of a GC, the Statistical Information Centre will report the aggregate counting results of the GC to the Returning Officer (“RO”)

²Or when such request is rejected by the PRO as being unreasonable in accordance with section 79A(2) of the EAC(EP)(LC) Regulation.

of the GC concerned at the Media Centre in the CCS, who will make known the aggregate counting results to the candidates concerned or their agents present. The candidates or their agents will at that time have the opportunity to request a re-count of votes at all the counting stations of the GC. If there is such a request which is accepted by the RO, a re-count will be conducted at all the counting stations concerned immediately. When there is no request or further request for a re-count³, the RO will formally announce the election result on stage at the Media Centre.

Vote counting arrangements for FC

16. The vote counting arrangements for the ASPL FC would largely follow those adopted in the 2016 LegCo General Election, with votes to be counted centrally in the CCS at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre. After the close of poll, polling staff (including those in the small polling stations and DPSs) will deliver the ballot boxes for the ASPL FC to the CCS under police escort and accompanied by not more than two candidates and/or their agents.

17. Under the supervision of a Chief Returning Officer in the CCS, a counting zone will be set up in the CCS for the counting of the ASPL FC votes. During the counting process, candidates and their agents, the media and members of the public are allowed to be present in the designated areas of the CCS to observe the count.

18. The count will be conducted manually as in the case for the GCs. Questionable ballot papers will be separated during the counting process for subsequent determination by the RO. Upon completion of the count, the RO will make known the counting results to the candidates or their agents present in the CCS, and the candidates or their election agents will then have the opportunity to request a re-count of votes. If there is such a request which is accepted by the RO, the re-count will be conducted on-the-spot. When there is no request or further request for a re-count⁴, the RO shall formally announce the election result on stage at the Media Centre.

³ Or when such request is rejected by the RO as being unreasonable in accordance with section 79A(6) of the EAC(EP)(LC) Regulation.

⁴ Or when such request is rejected by the RO as being unreasonable in accordance with section 79(2) of the EAC(EP)(LC) Regulation.

Design of Ballot Papers and Ballot Boxes

19. Same as in the 2016 LegCo General Election, candidates will be allowed to have certain specified particulars relating to them, in addition to their names and candidate numbers, printed on the ballot papers in the 2018 LegCo By-election. The size of the ballot papers will depend on the number of candidates contesting in the constituency. The candidates will be invited to check the final proofs of the ballot papers to ensure that the information contained therein is accurate before the ballot papers are printed. A full-scale check on the ballot papers will also be conducted to ensure that they are correctly and properly printed.

20. We will ensure that the total quantity of ballot papers will be sufficient to cater for 100% turnout and for the replacement of inadvertently marked ballot papers. Suitable security measures will be in place at the REO premises where the ballot papers are processed, stored and distributed. Security guards will be hired and closed-circuit televisions will be installed. Same as the arrangements for previous public elections, the PROs and their deputies are responsible for delivering the ballot papers to the polling stations. No ballot papers will be stored in other premises such as reserve polling stations or fallback venues.

21. The PROs and their deputies will be reminded to keep safe custody of the ballot papers and unseal them only before the poll starts. The PRO concerned will inform the candidates/election agents/polling agents who are present at the polling station at 7:00 am on the polling day of the quantity of ballot papers kept by him/her and where the ballot papers are placed and they may observe the unsealing of the packets of ballot papers.

22. Two kinds of ballot boxes will be used in the 2018 LegCo By-election, i.e. a blue one for GC ballot papers and a red one for FC ballot papers. The back of the ballot papers will be printed with patterns bearing the same colours corresponding to that of their respective ballot boxes. This arrangement will provide easy identification for electors to insert the ballot papers into the correct ballot boxes so that polling staff can monitor the vote casting process and provide assistance if necessary.

23. The REO will carefully and thoroughly test the capacity of the ballot boxes to be used in the 2018 LegCo By-election and will ensure that there will be sufficient ballot boxes to cater for a 100% turnout of the registered electors.

Free of Postage Promotional Letters and Address Labels

24. Under section 43 of the Legislative Council Ordinance (Cap. 542) and section 101A of the EAC(EP)(LC) Regulation, a validly nominated candidate may post, free of postage, one letter to each elector of the constituency for which he/she is nominated. The purpose is to enable the candidate to send election mail to promote or advertise himself/herself to electors.

25. To facilitate candidates' sending out election mail by free postage, it has been an established practice of the REO to provide each candidate upon request with a set of address labels pertaining to the electors in the constituency concerned. Following the green measures implemented since the 2012 LegCo General Election, we will continue to offer candidates the choice to select between address labels printed on a household basis (i.e. one address label for one household) and address labels printed on an individual basis (i.e. one address label for each individual elector) except those who have provided the REO with their e-mail addresses. Address labels will be printed and provided to the candidates normally within five working days upon receipt of the requests.

26. We will also continue the practice of providing, upon request, each validly nominated candidate with a computer disc (referred to as Candidate Mailing Label System) containing the mailing information of electors (including the names and addresses extracted from the 2017 Final Register of electors and, if provided by the electors during voter registration, e-mail addresses of electors) in the constituency. Candidates may make use of the information in the Candidate Mailing Label System to generate address labels according to their own needs for posting of election mail or send out electronic election mail to the electors' e-mail addresses. We will continue to have a message printed on the paper cover and user guide of the disc to remind candidates that the personal information of electors can only be used for the purpose of electioneering activities of the 2018 LegCo By-election so that when the candidates use the disc, they can readily notice the message and the legal consequences of not taking heed of the reminder. The Candidate Mailing Label System programme will also include a pop-up message to remind candidates on the protection of electors' personal data.

27. Candidates, when requesting the address labels or the Candidate Mailing Label System, are required to sign an undertaking regarding the use of the information of electors. To further protect the

privacy of individual electors, we have reinforced our advice and reminder to candidates by including in the undertaking the following –

- (a) when using e-mails for mass distribution of electronic election mail to electors, candidates are required to use “b.c.c.” function or other proven means which will not reveal the e-mail addresses of individual electors to other recipients; and
- (b) candidates should make every endeavour to prevent any disclosure of electors’ personal data to unauthorised persons, and in the event of inadvertent disclosure of electors’ personal data, to prevent any misuse of the relevant information by third parties, including but not limited to informing the third parties that they are in possession of electors’ personal data obtained for the purpose of compiling a register of electors and requiring them to delete the relevant information immediately.

Submission of Election Advertisements

28. Same as the 2016 LegCo General Election, in order to comply with the public inspection requirement stipulated in the electoral law, candidates must deposit copies of their election advertisements and the relevant information/documents with ROs, or post the electronic copies onto a central platform maintained by the Chief Electoral Officer (referred to as Central Platform) or an open platform maintained by the candidate (referred to as Candidate’s Platform) for public inspection within one working day after the publication of the election advertisements in the manner specified by the Electoral Affairs Commission. For those election advertisements of which posting onto the Central Platform or Candidate’s Platform is not practicable (e.g. electioneering messages of interactive and spontaneous nature through social networking and communication websites on the internet), candidates only need to post the hyperlinks to those websites onto the platform in order to satisfy the public inspection requirement. The above arrangement, which has been working fine in past elections, will continue in the 2018 LegCo By-election.

Introduction to Candidates

29. Under the present arrangement, candidates are free to make use of “Introduction to Candidates” leaflets/booklets which are published by the REO to promote their candidatures, as long as the requirements under the law and the Electoral Affairs Commission guidelines are

satisfied. Candidates who wish to make use of the leaflets/booklets must submit the content of their candidatures to be printed in the leaflets/booklets, in a format specified by the Electoral Affairs Commission, to the REO before the end of the nomination period. The REO will mail the leaflets/booklets, together with the poll card, to the electors before the polling day.

Facilitation Measures for Electors with Special Needs

30. As in previous elections, the REO will continue to make the best endeavours to facilitate the exercise of the right to vote by electors with special needs. We have reviewed past experience and will implement the following facilitation measures in the 2018 LegCo By-election –

- (a) to assist electors with mobility difficulties and as set out in paragraph 4 above, we aim to have at least 90% of our polling stations set up in accessible venues. Where circumstances permit, we would install temporary ramps at the polling stations to facilitate wheelchair users. We will also remind electors who have mobility difficulties or are wheelchair users, through location maps attached to poll cards and various promotion channels, that if they have been allocated to an inaccessible polling station, they may apply to the REO at least five days before the polling day for re-allocation to an accessible polling station. We will approach the Hong Kong Society for Rehabilitation for arrangement of Rehabuses to transport electors with mobility difficulties to and from the polling stations on request;
- (b) to assist electors with hearing impairment, all polling stations are provided with a pictorial voting aid to assist the electors to understand the voting procedures. Sign language translation has been incorporated in the Announcements in the Public Interests and where there is a practical need, such translation service will also be made available at candidates' briefing;
- (c) to assist electors with visual impairment, we have since the 2012 LegCo General Election appealed to the candidates to provide the text version of their "Introduction to Candidates" for uploading onto the dedicated website (www.elections.gov.hk) to facilitate the online reading of the relevant information using software aids by persons with visual impairment. We will continue this practice in the

2018 LegCo By-election. At the same time, we will continue the arrangement to collect the e-mail addresses of electors with visual impairment via the Voter Registration website (www.voterregistration.gov.hk) and to send them the relevant polling information (including hyperlinks to the candidates' introductory leaflet) electronically. Upon receipt of the e-mail, the electors would then be able to read the electronic polling information with the aid of a computer. Other facilitation measures such as provision of Braille templates and Braille list of candidates at the polling stations will continue; and

- (d) to facilitate ethnic minority electors who cannot speak English or Chinese to understand the voting procedure, all polling stations will be equipped with explanatory notes in the seven languages commonly used by the ethnic minority groups in Hong Kong. In addition, we shall collaborate with the Centre for Harmony and Enhancement of Ethnic Minority Residents to provide interpretation service in seven languages (Bahasa Indonesia, Tagalog, Thai, Hindi, Nepali, Urdu and Punjabi), through the REO telephone hotline service, to help electors of ethnic minorities understand the voting procedures and to respond to their enquiries on election-related matters during the two weeks prior to the election as well as on the polling day. Arrangement will also be made with the Centre for Harmony and Enhancement of Ethnic Minority Residents for providing the interpretation service over the phone if electors of ethnic minorities make a request to the PROs for language assistance at the polling stations.

— A summary list of the facilitation measures which the REO plans to put in place to serve electors with special needs is at the **Annex** for reference.

Reduction of Paper Consumption on Election-related Materials

31. For environmental protection, we will continue to adopt various measures to reduce paper consumption on election-related materials, including –

- (a) where possible, bulky materials to be provided to candidates for reference will be distributed in an electronic format;

- (b) providing printed address labels of electors (excluding those who have provided REO with their e-mail addresses) to candidates only upon request;
- (c) providing candidates with the e-mail addresses of electors, if available, for sending electronic election mail;
- (d) appealing to electors to register their e-mail addresses with the REO through GovHK and encouraging candidates to send their election mail by electronic means to electors who have provided their e-mail addresses;
- (e) encouraging candidates to use household address labels to send promotional letters to electors and suggesting them to include a message in their election mail to encourage the recipient electors to share and pass on the election mail to other electors residing at the same address after reading;
- (f) allowing candidates to submit electronic copies of the election advertisements onto an open platform for public inspection;
- (g) allowing candidates and electors to submit certain electoral forms or notices through electronic means⁵ as permitted under the existing legal provisions;
- (h) keeping the size of the “Introduction to Candidates” to a reasonable minimum by allocating to each candidate on the leaflet at 1/4 of an A4 page;
- (i) using recycled paper or paper made from wood-pulp derived from sustainable forest to print electoral documents as far as practicable; and
- (j) exploring possible ways to recycle waste paper left after the election.

Furthermore, all electoral documents such as “Introduction to Candidates” and ballot papers will be printed with environmentally friendly ink.

⁵ Electronic means include sending the relevant electoral forms by facsimile, by electronic mail, and, where applicable, by submission of electronic forms attached with digital signatures via a platform maintained by the REO.

Media Centre

32. A Media Centre will be set up in the CCS to facilitate the dissemination of counting results to the candidates, the media and the public. In addition to the setting up of a stage for the declaration of all election results, there will be designated areas for use by candidates, their agents, the media and the public including the supporters of the candidates. If needed, media announcements will be made through the Media Centre. To enhance transparency in the counting process and following the practice in the 2016 LegCo General Election, we will post up the counting results of individual counting stations at the Media Centre and release interim aggregate counting results starting from the early morning of 12 March 2018 until the election results have been declared by the ROs.

Central Command Centre

33. A Central Command Centre will be set up each at REO's office in Kowloonbay International Trade and Exhibition Centre and the CCS on the polling day to oversee the conduct of the poll and vote counting, and to provide central command and helpdesk/support services.

Statistical Information Centre

34. An Statistical Information Centre will be set up each inside the Central Command Centre at REO's office in the Kowloonbay International Trade and Exhibition Centre and the CCS. The former is to collect and consolidate voter turnout statistics and counting results collected in respect of the GCs from the polling-cum-counting stations. The latter is to consolidate counting results collected from the CCS for the ASPL FC. The same arrangement was made in the 2016 LegCo General Election and has proved to be efficient and reliable. The voter turnout figures will be made available to the public through press releases and the dedicated website for the 2018 LegCo by-election on an hourly basis. The interim counting results will also be released through such channels until all election results have been announced.

Contingency Planning

35. We will put in place the same mechanism in handling contingencies as in the 2016 LegCo General Election to cater for the postponement/adjournment of election or the poll or count for the 2018 LegCo By-election, as specified in Schedule 2 to the EAC(EP)(LC) Regulation. As regards other logistical arrangements, suitable

contingency measures will be implemented to make available a number of reserve polling and counting stations, standby electoral staff and transport services, extra electoral materials, a fallback CCS, etc. to ensure the smooth conduct of the election.

36. Section 7(3) of Schedule 2 to the EAC(EP)(LC) Regulation requires that the postponed election or the adjourned poll or count should be held not later than 14 days from the date on which it would have been held. As it has been the established practice to hold the poll on a Sunday to facilitate electors to cast their votes, the postponed election or the adjourned poll would normally resume on the following Sunday as far as circumstances permit. For contingency planning, in the case of the 2018 LegCo By-election, the fallback date would then be 18 March 2018 if postponement or adjournment is required.

Security Planning

37. We will prepare a detailed security plan to ensure public order and safeguard government properties at the CCS and the Media Centre. We will strictly follow the internal physical and technical security guidelines governing the use of personal data only on a “need-to-know” and “need-to-use” basis and provide sufficient training to staff in handling of personal data and security matters etc.

ADVICE SOUGHT

38. Members are invited to comment on the arrangements set out in this paper.

Registration and Electoral Office
December 2017

Facilitation Measures for Electors with Special Needs

(A) Electors with mobility difficulties

1. As far as circumstances permit, the Registration and Electoral Office (“REO”) aims to have at least 90% of polling stations set up in venues which are accessible to electors with mobility difficulties or who are wheelchair users. Where feasible, temporary ramps will be set up at polling stations to facilitate these electors.
2. Telephone number of the polling station will be posted near the ramp leading to the station. If necessary, electors with mobility difficulties can contact the polling staff for assistance.
3. Through the polling station location map sent together with the poll card to electors, the REO will advise whether the allocated polling station is accessible to electors with mobility difficulties or who are wheelchair users. If these electors are allocated to inaccessible polling stations, they may apply to the REO at least five days before the polling day for re-allocation to a special polling station set up in an accessible venue.
4. The REO will upon request approach the Hong Kong Society for Rehabilitation, for arrangement of Rehabuses to transport electors with mobility difficulties to and from polling stations.
5. All accessible polling stations will be equipped with enlarged voting compartments with lower polling tables to facilitate electors who are wheelchair users.
6. If necessary, electors can seek help from the Presiding Officer (“PRO”) to mark the ballot paper on their behalf according to their choice inside a voting compartment with a polling officer serving as a witness. Where space permits, one of the voting compartments at each polling station will be separated from the remaining compartments in order to prevent electors at the adjacent

compartments from overhearing the conversation between the polling staff and electors concerned.

(B) Electors with Visual impairment

1. All the election websites have incorporated accessible designs. Most of the information or documents on the websites are convenient for browsing by persons with visual impairment with the aid of screen reading software.
2. Appeal will be made to candidates to provide a text version of their “Introduction to Candidates” for uploading onto the dedicated website (www.elections.gov.hk) to facilitate online reading of the relevant information using screen reading software by persons with visual impairment.
3. Electors with visual impairment may provide/update their email addresses for receiving soft copy of electoral information from the REO by completing an electronic form at the Voter Registration website (www.voterregistration.gov.hk). They would be reminded through Short Message Service to read the e-mail issued by the REO.
4. The number of the enquiry hotline (2891 1001) will be read out in radio Announcements in the Public Interest (“APIs”) and TV APIs so that persons with visual impairment may obtain information relating to electoral arrangements through the hotline.
5. A web accessible version of the TV APIs will be available on the dedicated website to facilitate electors.
6. Electors with visual impairment can call the dedicated telephone line (2893 3762) provided to them by the REO. The operator would read the information on the “Introduction to Candidates” to them and provide other electoral information.
7. A Braille list of candidates with the candidate numbers, candidates’ names and the names of prescribed bodies will be available at polling

stations to facilitate electors with visual impairment to read the relevant information.

8. Braille templates will be available at polling stations to facilitate electors with visual impairment to mark the ballot papers themselves.
9. If necessary, electors can seek help from the PRO to mark the ballot paper on their behalf according to their choice inside a voting compartment with a polling officer serving as a witness. Where space permits, one of the voting compartments at each polling station will be separated from the remaining compartments in order to prevent electors at the adjacent compartments from overhearing the conversation between the polling staff and electors concerned.
10. Electors with visual impairment may bring along their guide dogs into the polling stations.

(C) Electors with hearing impairment

1. Sign language interpretation and subtitles will be included in all election-related TV APIs.
2. All polling stations will provide an “Illustration on Guidance on Voting Procedure” (“pictorial voting aid”) to assist electors with hearing impairment to understand the voting procedures. The pictorial voting aid will be uploaded onto the dedicated website for electors’ reference before the poll.

(D) Ethnic minority electors and electors in need

1. Electoral information in seven ethnic minority languages, including Bahasa Indonesia, Tagalog, Thai, Hindi, Nepali, Urdu and Punjabi will be available on the dedicated website.
2. Electoral information in Bahasa Indonesia, Tagalog, Thai, Hindi, Nepali and Urdu will also be available on the homepage of the Home Affairs Department’s Race Relations Unit (www.had.gov.hk/rru).

3. Information on the election will be broadcast in five ethnic minority languages (Bahasa Indonesia, Thai, Hindi, Nepali and Urdu) on radio.
4. Polling stations will be equipped with a Language Assistance Folder which will contain guides on voting procedure written in the aforesaid seven ethnic minority languages to assist ethnic minority electors in casting votes.
5. The REO will collaborate with the Centre for Harmony and Enhancement of Ethnic Minority Residents (commonly known as “CHEER”) to provide free interpretation service in the aforesaid seven ethnic minority languages, through the REO’s dedicated telephone line, to help electors of ethnic minorities understand the voting procedures and to facilitate their making of enquiries on election-related matters during the two weeks leading up to the election as well as on the polling day.
6. Electoral information in the aforesaid seven ethnic minority languages will be posted in eight support centres for the ethnic minorities run by non-governmental organisations.

(E) Other electors with special needs

1. A pictorial voting aid explaining the voting procedures will be provided at all polling stations to assist electors in need (e.g. electors with intellectual differences, electors with speech or communication impairment, electors who are not familiar with Chinese or English, etc.) to understand the voting procedure. The pictorial voting aid will be uploaded onto the dedicated website for electors’ reference before the poll.
2. Electors who are unable to cast their votes on their own can seek help from the PRO to mark the ballot paper on their behalf according to their voting choice. The whole process will be witnessed by another polling officer to ensure that the voting will be conducted in a fair manner. According to current legislation, all polling staff (including the PRO) must sign a declaration of secrecy in the specified form and

must comply with various requirements concerning voting secrecy. To further protect the privacy of the electors concerned, where space permits, one of the voting compartments at each polling station will be separated from the remaining compartments in order to prevent electors at the adjacent compartments from overhearing the conversation between the polling staff and electors concerned.