

**For discussion on  
17 December 2018**

**Legislative Council Panel on Constitutional Affairs  
2019 Voter Registration Campaign**

**Purpose**

This paper sets out the publicity plan and main features of the 2019 Voter Registration (“VR”) Campaign.

**Background**

2. The 2019 District Council (“DC”) Ordinary Election will be held in November 2019. In line with the established practice for election years, the Government will organise a large-scale VR campaign. An inter-departmental working group, comprising representatives from the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau, Registration and Electoral Office (“REO”), Home Affairs Department (“HAD”), Information Services Department, Independent Commission Against Corruption (“ICAC”) and Radio Television Hong Kong, has been formed to coordinate the related publicity work and work out the details of the campaign. After consultation with the Electoral Affairs Commission, we have drawn up the publicity plan for the 2019 VR Campaign.

**Timetable for the 2019 VR Cycle and Publication of Registers**

3. Under the current legislation, Hong Kong permanent residents who have reached 18 years of age on or before the statutory deadline for publication of the next final register (“FR”) (i.e. 25 September for the 2019 VR cycle), hold an identity document and ordinarily reside in Hong Kong, are eligible to be registered as electors and vote in elections. Regarding the 2019 VR cycle, the statutory deadline for new registration falls on 2 July 2019. Eligible persons who wish to register as electors but have yet to do so must submit their applications on or before 2 July 2019 so that their registration particulars can be included in the FR to be published in September 2019, and that they can vote in elections conducted thereafter. There is no need for existing electors whose names have been recorded in the current FR published in July 2018 to register

again. However, if there is any change in their registration particulars such as their residential addresses, they should notify the REO on or before the statutory deadline of 2 June 2019 so that the updated particulars can be reflected in the FR to be published in September 2019.

4. Pursuant to the relevant legislation, the 2019 provisional register (“PR”) and omissions list (“OL”) will be published by 1 August 2019 for public inspection. During the public inspection period from 1 August to 25 August 2019, the public may lodge claims or objections against the entries on the PR and the OL. A Revising Officer (“RevO”) will make ruling on any claim or objection received and, taking into account the ruling of the RevO, the REO will publish the FR on or before 25 September 2019. The statutory deadlines for the 2019 VR cycle are set out at Annex.

5. In the 2019 VR cycle, the REO will continue to implement checking measures and carry out statutory inquiry process in order to maintain the integrity of the system as well as to enhance the accuracy and completeness of registration particulars. The checking measures include follow-up inquiries on undelivered poll cards for the by-elections held in 2018; cross-matching of residential addresses of electors with the Housing Department (“HD”), the Hong Kong Housing Society (“HKHS”) and the HAD; checks on residential addresses with multiple electors or multiple surnames of electors; random sample checks on registered and newly registered electors; checks on addresses with incomplete information or suspected non-residential addresses; and checks on addresses situated at buildings already demolished or vacated buildings to be demolished. Apart from sending inquiry letters by post, the REO will use mobile phone short message service/electronic mail (if available) at the same time to remind the relevant electors to respond to the inquiry letters.

## **Main Features of the 2019 VR Campaign**

### *Objectives*

6. The overall objectives for the 2019 VR Campaign are to—
- (a) promote general awareness of the 2019 DC Ordinary Election;
  - (b) promote the VR deadlines for change of registration particulars (i.e. 2 June 2019) and new registration (i.e. 2 July 2019);
  - (c) remind registered electors to fulfil their civic responsibility to take the initiative to notify the REO of any change in their registration

particulars and to submit address proof when applying for change of registered residential address;

- (d) call upon eligible electors of all age groups who have yet to register as electors (including young people) to make registration;
- (e) remind electors to verify their registration status and check their registration particulars via the Online Voter Information Enquiry System (“OVIES”) ([www.voterinfo.gov.hk](http://www.voterinfo.gov.hk)) or the REO’s hotline (2891 1001);
- (f) encourage registered electors and persons who would like to register as electors to provide or update their telephone numbers to the REO so as to enable the REO to contact them in case of need and provide or update e-mail addresses for receiving electoral messages for the sake of protecting the environment;
- (g) remind electors to respond to the REO’s inquiry letters before the statutory deadline (i.e. 2 July 2019); and
- (h) encourage registered electors to cast vote in the 2019 DC Ordinary Election.

In the light of public concern on the accuracy of residential addresses recorded in the electoral registers in recent years, we shall step up publicity during the 2019 VR Campaign to impress upon the public the importance of providing true and accurate information for registration and remind registered electors to update their residential addresses.

### *Timing*

7. The 2019 VR Campaign will run in three stages. The first stage will run from early April to 2 June 2019 (i.e. the statutory deadline for application for change of registration particulars including the address) to remind registered electors to update their particulars with the REO. The second stage will run from 3 June to 2 July 2019 (i.e. the statutory deadline for new registration) to appeal for new registration. The last stage of publicity will run from 1 August to 25 August 2019 (i.e. from the publication of PR and OL to the end of public inspection period) to remind electors to check their registration particulars via the OVIES or the REO’s hotline. We shall also appeal to electors on the OL to respond to the REO’s reminding letters (to be issued in late July 2019) so as to reinstate their registration status, failing which the electors will not be included in the FR to be issued in September 2019 and could not vote in the subsequent

elections, including the 2019 DC Ordinary Election. The entire publicity campaign will last for about five months.

### *Activities*

8. We shall adopt a multi-pronged approach in publicity and organise a variety of activities to disseminate various VR message and appeal for applications for new registration and change of registration particulars as set out in paragraph 6 above. Extensive publicity will be sustained throughout the campaign to arouse public awareness of the messages.

9. The territory-wide Hong Kong Identity Card replacement exercise will start in end December 2018. Apart from the five Registration of Persons Offices under the Immigration Department (“ImmD”), we shall also set up VR counters at the nine centres for the territory-wide Hong Kong Identity Card replacement exercise. VR counters will also be set up in government offices, higher education institutions and locations with high public patronage, and Voter Registration Assistants (“VRAs”) will be deployed to assist the public in registering as electors or updating their registration particulars. Furthermore, the REO will set up VR counters at venues of major recruitment examinations organised by the Civil Service Bureau to appeal to and assist the candidates (mainly young people) in registering as electors. The REO will also set up VR counters at the support service centres for ethnic minorities (“EMs”) for distribution of application forms and provision of registration service.

10. We plan to reach out to persons of different age groups and backgrounds through community outreach programmes as part of our effort to encourage VR and updating of residential addresses. We shall also distribute leaflets prepared by the ICAC to remind the public of the importance of providing true and accurate information for registration as electors, and disseminate the message that any person who knowingly or recklessly gives false or misleading information for VR will commit an offence regardless of whether the person concerned has voted at an election or not.

11. To encourage electors to update their particulars with the REO after moving home, we shall deploy VRAs to conduct visits to newly occupied residential buildings. We shall also continue to—

- (a) write to all households in newly-completed private and public housing estates to remind them to report change in address with provision of address proof and appeal to persons who have yet to register as electors to register early;

- (b) identify electors who have moved into new public housing estates through cross-matching of records with the HD and the HKHS and assist them in updating their registered addresses; and
- (c) collaborate with the ImmD to appeal electors to apply for change of registered addresses with provision of address proof based on their updated residential addresses furnished to the ImmD, where the persons concerned have given consent for such data transfer.

12. According to the 2018 FR, there are about 3.81 million geographical constituencies electors, representing a registration rate of 79.8%. Both the total number of electors and the registration rate are the highest on record. The registration rate of eligible young people aged between 18 and 30 is 70.8%. To encourage more young people to register, we shall carry out the following activities —

- (a) in addition to traditional publicity channels, the REO will make use of the social media and websites such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and Yahoo to disseminate VR messages to the general public, including young people;
- (b) registration counters will continue to be set up at the Registration of Persons Offices under the ImmD to encourage and help young people register when they visit these offices to apply for or collect their adult identity cards;
- (c) VR application forms and posters will be sent to higher education institutions and secondary schools, seeking their assistance including the student unions to distribute application forms to students and to encourage them to register as electors; and
- (d) VRAs will be deployed to higher education institutions to assist eligible students to register. For senior secondary students, the REO will continue to appeal to students to register as electors when they turn 18 through the annual school visiting programme.

13. To reach out to the EMs, we shall carry out EM-focused publicity measures, including placement of advertisements in EM language newspapers, broadcasting announcements in EM language radio programmes, and distribution of promotional leaflets and VR application forms.

*Publicity measures*

14. In addition to the above activities, we shall launch a series of publicity measures to raise the community awareness about VR. We are working out the details of publicity measures and plan to adopt the following means—

- (a) production of Announcements in the Public Interest on VR for broadcasting on television, radio and internet platforms, government websites, residential estates and government buildings;
- (b) radio and television programmes;
- (c) press release and newspaper advertisements;
- (d) advertisements at MTR stations, bus shelters and other means of public transport;
- (e) printed publicity materials including leaflets, posters, banners and appeal letters;
- (f) giant publicity banners for display at external walls of government buildings;
- (g) electronic advertisements on popular websites and mobile applications including GovHK and GovHK Notifications;
- (h) promotional items such as banners, buntings and posters for display in all districts; and
- (i) hotline service for handling public enquiries related to VR.

We have been using new media channels in recent years for more extensive and efficient dissemination of information to the public, with a view to enhancing the publicity efforts and the effectiveness of the publicity measures.

**Estimated Expenditure**

15. The budget for the 2019 VR campaign is about \$21 million covering the afore-mentioned programmes and related publicity measures. Provision for the campaign will be reserved by the REO to meet the requirement.

**Views Sought**

16. Members are invited to comment on the publicity plan of the 2019 VR Campaign as set out in this paper.

**Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau  
Registration and Electoral Office  
December 2018**

**Statutory Deadlines for the 2019 Voter Registration (“VR”) Cycle<sup>Note</sup>**

Major Events for VR	Statutory Deadline for the 2019 VR Cycle (District Council Election Year)
Existing electors to apply for change of registration particulars	2 June
The public to submit VR applications for new registration or existing electors to submit applications for de-registration	2 July
The Electoral Registration Officer (“ERO”) to publish the provisional registers and omissions lists	1 August
The public to submit claims and objections	25 August
The Revising Officer to conduct hearings and make rulings on claims and objections (including reviews of rulings)	11 September
The ERO to publish the final registers	25 September

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<sup>Note</sup> The statutory deadlines for the VR cycle means that the relevant action has to be made on or before the relevant date as listed.