

**For discussion
on 20 January 2020**

**Legislative Council Panel on Constitutional Affairs
2020 Voter Registration Campaign**

Purpose

This paper sets out the overall publicity plan and proposed main features of the 2020 Voter Registration (“VR”) Campaign.

Background

2. The 2019 Final Register (“FR”) carried around 4.13 million registered electors, representing a registration rate of 86.1%. Both the total number of electors and the registration rate are the highest on record. The 2020 Legislative Council (“LegCo”) General Election will be held in the third quarter of 2020. In line with the established practice for election years, the Government will organise a large-scale VR campaign. In this regard, 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 (“RTHK”), 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 2020 VR Campaign.

Timetable for the 2020 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 FR (i.e. 25 July for the 2020 VR cycle), hold an identity document and ordinarily reside in Hong Kong, are eligible to be registered as electors and vote in elections. For the 2020 VR cycle, the statutory deadline for new

registration falls on 2 May 2020. Eligible persons who wish to register as electors but have yet to do so must submit their applications on or before 2 May 2020 so that their registration particulars can be included in the FR to be published in July 2020, such that they will be able to vote in elections conducted thereafter, including the 2020 LegCo General Election.

4. There is no need for existing electors whose names have been recorded in the current FR to register again. However, if there is any change in their registration particulars such as their residential addresses, they should submit an application for change of particulars along with an address proof issued within the last three months to the REO on or before the statutory deadline of 2 April 2020, so that the updated particulars can be reflected in the FR to be published in July 2020.

5. Pursuant to the relevant legislation, the 2020 provisional register (“PR”) and omissions list (“OL”) will be published by 1 June 2020 for public inspection. During the period of public inspection from 1 June to 25 June 2020, the public may lodge claims or objections against the entries on the PR and the OL. Any claim or objection received will be determined by a Revising Officer (“RevO”) and, taking into account the rulings of the RevO, the REO will publish the FR on or before 25 July 2020.

6. The statutory deadlines and procedures for VR are set out at **Annex**.

Main Features of the 2020 VR Campaign

Objectives

7. The overall objectives for the 2020 VR Campaign are to -
- (a) promote general awareness of the upcoming 2020 LegCo election;
 - (b) promote the VR deadlines for Change of Particulars (“COP”) (2 April 2020) and new registration (2 May 2020), and remind electors to use the correct forms for COP (REO-2) and new registration (REO-1) respectively;

- (c) remind registered electors to submit address proof when applying for change of registered residential address, otherwise, their registered address¹ cannot be updated for the use in the 2020 LegCo General Election;
- (d) call upon eligible electors of all age groups who have yet to register as electors to make registration;
- (e) encourage electors to provide their updated phone number and email address for any follow-up contact by the REO and for receiving election mail from validly nominated candidates;
- (f) remind registered electors to verify their registration status and check their registration particulars via the Online Voter Information Enquiry System (“OVIES”) or the REO’s hotline; and
- (g) encourage registered electors to cast vote in the 2020 LegCo election.

Timing

8. The 2020 VR Campaign will run in three stages. The first stage will run from February / March to 2 April 2020 (i.e. the statutory deadline for application for change of registration particulars) to remind registered electors to update their particulars with the REO. The second stage will run from 3 April to 2 May 2020 (i.e. the statutory deadline for new registration) to appeal for new registration. The final stage of publicity will run from 1 to 25 June 2020 (i.e. from the publication of PR and OL to the end of the claims and objections period) to remind electors to check their registration particulars via OVIES or the REO’s hotline. In the final stage, we will also appeal to electors on the OL to respond to the REO’s reminding letters (to be issued in late May 2020) so as to reinstate their registration status, failing which the electors will not be included in the FR to be issued in July 2020, thus cannot cast their vote in the subsequent elections, including the 2020 LegCo General Election.

¹ The registered address of electors will be used for allocating the constituency and polling station for the elector, as well as for receiving election mail from REO and validly nominated candidates.

Activities

9. We will adopt multiple approaches in publicity and organise a variety of activities to disseminate the VR message and appeal for new registration and COP. These activities will be supported by other awareness-raising measures.

10. The first community outreach programme will be conducted in February / March 2020. Throughout the campaign period, we will, as in the past campaigns, set up roving registration counters at the five Registration of Persons Offices and nine new centres for territory-wide identity card replacement exercise under the Immigration Department (“ImmD”), government offices, locations with high public patronage (such as public housing estates) as well as deploy Voter Registration Assistants (“VRAs”) 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 in registering as electors if the examination date matches with our publicity period.

11. 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 will 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 commits an offence regardless of whether the person concerned has voted at an election or not.

12. To encourage electors to update their particulars with the REO after moving home, apart from strengthening of publicity efforts, HAD will deploy VRAs to conduct visits to newly occupied residential buildings as far as practicable. We will 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 Housing Department and the Hong Kong Housing Society and assist them in updating their registered addresses; and
- (c) collaborate with the ImmD to appeal to electors, where the persons concerned have given consent for such data transfer from ImmD to REO for follow-up verification, to apply for change of registered addresses with provision of address proof based on their updated residential addresses or other particulars.

13. To reach out to the ethnic minorities (“EMs”), HAD will take into account the latest channel available to reach EMs to carry out targeted publicity measures, including placement of advertisements in EM language newspaper, broadcasting announcements in EM language radio programmes, and distribution of promotional leaflets and VR forms. The REO will also set up VR counters at the support service centres for EMs for distribution of application forms and provision of registration service.

Publicity measures

14. In addition to the above activities, we will launch a series of publicity measures to raise the awareness of the community about VR and to achieve the objectives in paragraph 7 above. Where suitable, we can arrange to clearly display all relevant statutory deadlines on large-scale publicity to be deployed across the entire VR cycle to supplement the following publicity measures to be deployed in specific phase(s) as appropriate –

- (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) press release and newspaper advertisements;
- (c) advertisements at MTR stations, bus shelters and other means of public transport;

- (d) printed publicity materials including leaflets, posters, banners and appeal letters;
- (e) giant publicity banners for display at external walls of government buildings;
- (f) electronic advertisements on popular websites and mobile applications including GovHK and GovHK Notifications;
- (g) promotional items such as banners, buntings and posters for display in all districts;
- (h) messages on utility bills and educational filmlets on clean elections; and
- (i) hotline service for handling public enquiries related to VR.

15. We have stepped up the use of the new media in recent years for more extensive and efficient dissemination of information to the public. We will continue to make use of social media like Facebook, Instagram and YouTube to disseminate VR messages in order to better reach the public.

Financial Implications

16. The budget for the 2020 VR Campaign is about \$21.41 million covering the afore-mentioned programmes and related publicity measures. Provision for the campaign will be reserved by the REO to meet the requirement.

Advice Sought

17. Members are invited to comment on the publicity plan and the main features of the 2020 VR Campaign as set out in the paper.

Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau
Registration and Electoral Office
January 2020

Statutory Deadlines Concerning Voter Registration in 2020

Statutory Deadline	Major events for VR
2 April	An elector to apply to the Electoral Registration Officer (“ERO”) for reporting change in registration particulars.
2 May	<p>An applicant to apply to the ERO for new registration.</p> <p>An elector under inquiry process to make written response to the ERO.</p>
1 June	The ERO to publish and make available the provisional register (“PR”) and omissions list for public inspection.
25 June	The public to make a claim or objection to the registration in the PR.
11 July	The Revising Officer to fix a hearing and make a ruling for each notice of claim or objection received.
25 July	The ERO to publish and make available the final register for public inspection.