

**For discussion
on 21 July 2025**

Legislative Council Panel on Constitutional Affairs

**Practical Arrangements for the
2025 Election Committee Subsector By-elections**

PURPOSE

The 2025 Election Committee (“EC”) Subsector By-elections will be held on 7 September. This paper sets out the key practical arrangements proposed by the Electoral Affairs Commission (“EAC”).

BACKGROUND

2. The EAC is an independent statutory body responsible for the conduct and supervision of elections. The EAC, supported by the Registration and Electoral Office (“REO”), is actively preparing for the Election Committee Subsector (“ECSS”) By-elections.

3. Pursuant to section 4 of the Schedule to the Chief Executive Election Ordinance (Cap. 569), the Electoral Registration Officer (“ERO”) has to compile and publish a provisional register (“PR”) of members of the EC and omissions list before the 2025 Legislative Council General Election (“LCGE”). Pursuant to section 5(1) of the Schedule, after the publication of the PR of EC members by the ERO, the EAC must ascertain the number of members to be nominated or elected for respective EC subsectors as soon as practicable. If the number of members of a subsector is less than the number of seats of that subsector, the EAC has to arrange for a supplementary nomination or a subsector by-election to fill the vacancy of that subsector.

4. The REO announced by the publication of a Gazette Notice on 4 July 2025 that a total of 93 vacancies, involving 28 subsectors, in the EC membership to be returned by election will be filled at the ECSS By-elections. Also, a total of 10 vacancies, involving five subsectors, to be returned by nomination will be filled through supplementary nominations by designated bodies (see **Annex** for details).

PROPOSED ARRANGEMENTS

(A) ECSS Registers

5. The Electoral Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Ordinance 2025 introduced provisions to empower the ERO to suitably advance the publication of the ECSS registers in the year of the LCGE through accelerating part of the working procedures, so that the ECSS By-elections in that year can be conducted on the basis of an up-to-date register. Hence, the ERO has published the 2025 ECSS PR on 24 June, whereas the final register will be published on 21 July 2025.

(B) Nomination Period

6. The polling day for the 2025 ECSS By-elections is scheduled for 7 September. In accordance with section 5 of the Electoral Affairs Commission (Electoral Procedure) (Election Committee) Regulation (Cap. 541I), the nomination period must not be less than 7 days and must end not less than 12 days before the polling day. The nomination period for the 2025 ECSS By-elections will run from 22 July (Tuesday) to 4 August (Monday), as gazetted on 4 July 2025.

7. Candidates and designated bodies are required to submit their nomination forms to the Returning Officer (“RO”) of the relevant subsector during the nomination period. In accordance with the legislation, unless approved by the Chief Electoral Officer (“CEO”) to submit nomination forms by other means, candidates/designated bodies must submit nomination forms in person to the relevant RO at the RO’s office

during the nomination period.

(C) Polling Hours

8. Following the arrangement of the 2021 ECSS Ordinary Elections, the polling hours of ordinary polling stations (“OPSs”) and dedicated polling station (“DPS”) set up at police station for the By-elections will run from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. As for DPSES set up at the penal institutions of the Correctional Services Department (“CSD”)(if any), the polling hours will be from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m..

(D) Polling Stations

9. To facilitate subsector voters who are also an authorized representative (“AR”) of a corporate voter (hereinafter referred collectively as “voters”), to cast all their votes at the same polling station, the REO will continue to adopt the combined polling arrangement. The REO plans to set up five OPSs, along with one DPS at a police station for voters who are remanded or detained on the polling day by law enforcement agencies other than the CSD (such as the Police, the Independent Commission Against Corruption and the Customs and Excise Department) on the polling day to cast their votes. DPSs will be set up at the penal institutions for voters who are imprisoned or remanded by the CSD to cast their votes on a need basis.

(E) Electoral Staff

10. The REO will deploy approximately 1 500 experienced electoral staff recruited from various bureaux and departments to handle different electoral duties on the polling day. To ensure the electoral staff understand the voting procedures thoroughly, we will conduct training courses and produce training videos for them. We will also conduct practicum sessions to familiarize them with the various systems and operation procedures, and conduct simulation drills, covering contingency measures for different situations, arrangements for transferring ballot boxes to the Central Counting Station (“CCS”) after the close of poll, and counting rehearsals at the CCS, so as to improve the staff's operational understanding and

response capability.

(F) Polling Arrangements

11. All five OPSs in the By-elections will continue to adopt the Electronic Poll Register (“EPR”) System. Voters may, as guided, collect ballot papers at any ballot paper issuing desk in their allocated polling station, so as to reduce time for receiving the ballot paper and vote casting. To ensure the reliability and stability of the EPR System, the REO has implemented the EAC’s recommendations made in its report on the 2023 District Council Ordinary Election, including the arrangement in strengthening the three-tier confirmation mechanism, under which the Mission Critical System Development and Maintenance Board and the Technical Advisory Committee will review the necessity of any system modifications, the reasonableness of relevant designs, the potential impacts on overall operations, as well as the results and recommendations from the load and stress tests conducted by independent third-party contractors.

12. As the number of subsectors involved in the By-elections may be up to 28 and the number of candidates that each voter needs to mark on the ballot paper may range from one to 27, with reference to the polling arrangements for the Election Committee constituency (“ECC”) election of the Legislative Council, the REO will set up ballot paper checking machines in the polling station for use by voters on a voluntary basis to check whether their ballot papers have been marked properly in accordance with the electoral legislation. The ballot paper checking machines will not record or count the choices marked on the ballot papers.

13. The Presiding Officer (“PRO”) will continue to set up special queues for voters with special needs (including persons aged 70 or above, pregnant women, and persons who are unable to queue for a long period of time or have difficulty in queuing due to illness, injury, disability or dependence on mobility aids). The REO will designate a seating area inside the polling station for those voters to take a rest while waiting to be called to proceed to the ballot paper issuing desks.

(G) Preparation of Ballot Paper Accounts and Delivery of Ballot Boxes

14. After the close of poll, each PRO shall complete one consolidated ballot paper account for all the subsectors of their respective polling station to record the estimated total number of ballot papers of all the subsectors inside the ballot box(es). Polling staff will also prioritize the delivery of the ballot box(es) and ballot paper account to the CCS to facilitate the commencement of vote-counting as early as practicable.

(H) Counting Arrangements

15. The By-elections will continue to adopt the central counting arrangement. After the close of poll, polling staff will deliver the ballot boxes to the CCS at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (“HKCEC”) under the escort of a police officer and accompanied by not more than two candidates and/or their agents. The EAC has appointed ROs to oversee the operation of the CCS. As in the past, electronic counting system will be used for the counting of votes in the By-elections. The REO will arrange to conduct stringent quality assurance and system audit to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the system. In the course of counting, candidates and their agents, the media and members of the public are allowed to be present within designated areas in the CCS to observe the count.

16. The procedure on the determination of questionable ballot papers in the By-elections is essentially the same as that in other elections. The ROs will determine the validity of the questionable ballot papers in accordance with the legislation. Candidates and their election agents or counting agents may make representations during the determination process, while the decision of the ROs on the validity of the ballot papers is final.

17. Upon completion of the count, the ROs will make known the counting results to the candidates or their agents present in the CCS. The candidates or their agents may lodge a request for recounting. If such a

request is acceded to by the ROs, the recount will be conducted on the spot. If there is no such request or the request is rejected, the ROs will formally declare the election results.

(I) Ballot Papers and Ballot Boxes

18. The design of ballot papers must conform to the requirements as prescribed in the relevant legislation. The REO will ensure that ballot papers of sufficient quantity are properly prepared. As in the past, blue ballot boxes will be used in the By-elections.

(J) Candidate Facilitation Measures

19. To facilitate candidates' participation and their electioneering in the election, the following new measures will be introduced in the By-elections:

- (a) in addition to cash, cashier orders or cheques, candidates may use the Faster Payment System to pay for their election deposits; and
- (b) most election-related forms, such as forms for authorizing / appointing various types of agents and forms relating to election advertisements, will be available in electronic format. Candidates may use the electronic filling functions and submit the forms through the online platform.

(K) “Introduction to Candidates”

20. The REO will continue to produce “Introduction to Candidates” to provide voters with candidates' personal details and electoral messages for reference before voting. Following the arrangement in the 2021 ECSS Ordinary Elections, candidates who wish to use the “Introduction to Candidates” service must submit to the REO their proposed electoral messages and election-related information to be published within a specified period. The REO will send the “Introduction to Candidates” together with the poll cards to voters for reference, and upload the

“Introduction to Candidates” onto the election website before the polling day.

(L) Postage-free Election Mail

21. Under section 38 of the Schedule to Cap. 569, validly nominated candidates may send one postage-free election mail to each voter for self-promotion or campaigning purposes. The Ordinance also allows validly nominated candidates of the same subsector to send joint election mail free of postage. The REO will issue guidelines to candidates on the relevant arrangements.

(M) Address Labels and Candidate Mailing Label System

22. The REO will continue to provide address labels of voters¹ to candidates using the postage-free election mailing service. The REO will also maintain its established practice of providing the “Candidate Mailing Label System” upon candidates’ request. The system holds mailing data of voters for the relevant subsectors (including voters’ names and addresses, and also email addresses if provided by the voters) for candidates to send election mail to voters as required, or to send election mail to voters through electronic means by electronic mail. The system will remind candidates to use voters’ personal information properly, such as using the “blind carbon copy” function to prevent inadvertent disclosure of voters’ email addresses and the potential legal consequences of non-compliance. Candidates must sign an undertaking on the proper use and disposal of voters’ information before being issued address labels and/or the “Candidate Mailing Label System”.

(N) Public Inspection of Election Advertisements

23. To comply with public inspection requirements, candidates must, within three working days after the publication of election advertisements (“EAs”), submit copies of the EAs, related materials and documents to the

¹ Except voters who have already provided email addresses to the REO for receiving candidates’ election mail electronically and have requested not to receive any election mail.

ROs, or upload electronic copies to a public platform maintained by the CEO (the “central platform”) or a public platform maintained by the candidate (the “candidate’s platform”). Where uploading EAs to the central platform or candidate’s platform is not feasible (such as campaign messages delivered through interactive and real-time means, video streaming or live broadcast through social media and communication websites on the Internet), candidates may upload hyperlinks of such EAs to the central platform or the candidate’s platform to comply with the public inspection requirements.

(O) Central Command Centre and Statistical Information Centre

24. The REO will set up a Central Command Centre (“CCC”) and a Statistical Information Centre (“SIC”) within the CCS. The CCC will monitor both the polling and counting processes while providing centralized command and support / enquiry services. The SIC, which will also be set up at the HKCEC, will collect and compile voter turnout statistics and verify the counting results obtained from the CCS. The voter turnout rates will be published via press releases and the dedicated website for the By-elections.

(P) Media Centre

25. The REO will set up a Media Centre at the HKCEC to disseminate relevant information to candidates and their agents, the media and members of the public, with designated areas for their use.

(Q) Security Plan

26. Under Schedule 1 to Cap. 541I, PROs and ROs must maintain order at the polling stations and the CCS respectively. On the polling day, if any person misconducts himself or herself at or near a polling station or the CCS, or fails to comply with lawful orders of the PROs or ROs, the relevant officer may order the person to leave immediately.

27. The REO will work with the Police and law enforcement agencies to prepare a comprehensive security plan to ensure public order at the polling stations, the CCS and the Media Centre, and to safeguard government properties, as well as enhancing the cybersecurity measures.

(R) Contingency Plan

28. Under section 24 of Schedule to Cap. 569 and Schedule 1 to Cap. 541I, the ECSS elections, polling or counting may be postponed in the event of specified incidents. The EAC will establish a Crisis Management Committee to provide professional advice to the EAC as needed when postponement or the urgent handling of related matters have to be due to specified incidents, in order to determine the best course of action.

ADVICE SOUGHT

29. With less than two months remaining before the ECSS By-elections, the Government will provide full support to, and cooperation with, the EAC's preparatory work to ensure the election is conducted smoothly in an open, honest, fair, safe, orderly, efficient and user-friendly manner.

30. Members are invited to offer their views on the arrangements set out in this document.

Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau
Registration and Electoral Office
July 2025

2025 Election Committee Subsector By-elections
Number of vacancies in the membership of the Election Committee
(“EC”) to be returned by nomination and election

Sector	Item	Subsector	Vacancies in the membership of the EC to be returned by nomination	Vacancies in the membership of the EC to be returned by election
First Sector	1	Catering	-	1
	2	Commercial (first)	-	2
	3	Commercial (second)	-	1
	4	Commercial (third)	-	1
	5	Employers’ Federation of Hong Kong	-	1
	6	Finance	-	0
	7	Financial services	-	0
	8	Hotel	-	1
	9	Import and export	-	2
	10	Industrial (first)	-	2
	11	Industrial (second)	-	1
	12	Insurance	-	0
	13	Real estate and construction	-	2
	14	Small and medium enterprises	-	1
	15	Textiles and garment	-	0
	16	Tourism	-	1
	17	Transport	-	1
	18	Wholesale and retail	-	0
Subtotal (First Sector)			0	17

Sector	Item	Subsector	Vacancies in the membership of the EC-to be returned by nomination	Vacancies in the membership of the EC to be returned by election
Second Sector	1	Accountancy	3	0
	2	Architectural, surveying, planning and landscape	-	1
	3	Chinese medicine	0	1
	4	Education	-	2
	5	Engineering	-	0
	6	Legal	0	1
	7	Medical and health services	-	3
	8	Social welfare	-	0
	9	Sports, performing arts, culture and publication	2	1
	10	Technology and innovation	1	5
Subtotal (Second Sector)			6	14
Third Sector	1	Agriculture and fisheries	-	1
	2	Associations of Chinese fellow townsmen	-	7
	3	Grassroots associations	-	8
	4	Labour	-	2
	5	Religious	3	-
Subtotal (Third Sector)			3	18
Fourth Sector	1	Members of the Legislative Council	-	-
	2	Heung Yee Kuk	-	5
	3	Representatives of associations of Hong Kong residents in the Mainland	1	-
	4	Representatives of members of Area Committees, District Fight Crime Committees, and District Fire Safety Committees of Hong Kong and Kowloon	-	6
	5	Representatives of members of Area Committees, District Fight Crime Committees, and District Fire Safety Committees of the New Territories	-	6
Subtotal (Fourth Sector)			1	17