

**For discussion
on 21 July 2025**

Legislative Council Panel on Constitutional Affairs

**Practical Arrangements for the
2025 Legislative Council General Election**

PURPOSE

The 2025 Legislative Council General Election (“LCGE”) will be held on 7 December this year. 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. With the support of the Registration and Electoral Office (“REO”), the EAC is actively preparing for the LCGE, which will return 90 members for the geographical constituencies (“GCs”), functional constituencies (“FCs”) and Election Committee constituency (“ECC”) of the eighth-term Legislative Council.

PROPOSED ARRANGEMENTS

(A) Registers of Electors/ Members

3. Pursuant to sections 13 and 20 of the Electoral Affairs Commission (Registration of Electors) (Legislative Council Geographical Constituencies) (District Council Geographical Constituencies) Regulation (Cap. 541A) and sections 29 and 38 of the Electoral Affairs Commission (Registration) (Electors for Legislative

Council Functional Constituencies) (Voters for Election Committee Subsectors) (Members of Election Committee) Regulation (Cap. 541B), the 2025 provisional registers of electors for GCs and FCs will be published on 1 August, while the final registers of electors will be published on 25 September. Pursuant to sections 4 and 40 of the Schedule to the Chief Executive Election Ordinance (Cap. 569), the 2025 provisional register of members of the Election Committee was published on 9 June. After the Election Committee Subsector By-elections on 7 September, the final register of members of the Election Committee will be published on or before 17 September.

(B) Nomination Period

4. The polling day for the 2025 LCGE is scheduled for 7 December. In accordance with section 7 of the Electoral Affairs Commission (Electoral Procedure) (Legislative Council) Regulation (Cap. 541D), the nomination period must not be less than 14 days or more than 21 days, and that it must end not less than 28 days and not more than 42 days before the polling day. The nomination period for the election is to be announced later.

5. Candidates must submit nomination forms to the Returning Officer (“RO”) of the relevant constituency 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 must submit the nomination forms in person to the relevant RO at the RO’s office during the nomination period.

(C) Polling Hours

6. Following the arrangements for the 2021 LCGE, the polling hours for ordinary polling stations (“OPSs”), ECC polling station and dedicated polling stations (“DPSs”) set up at police stations for the election will run from 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 p.m., while the polling hours for DPSs set up at the penal institutions of the Correctional Services Department (“CSD”) (if any) will be from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m..

(D) Polling Stations

7. The REO will continue to adopt the combined polling arrangement to facilitate electors casting all their votes at the same polling station. The REO plans to set up about 600 OPSs for GC and FC electors to cast their votes. The REO also plans to set up an ECC polling station at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (“HKCEC”) for electors of that constituency to cast their ECC, GC and (if any) FC votes.

8. The REO plans to set up DPSs at three police stations located in Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories respectively, for electors remanded or detained by law enforcement agencies other than CSD (such as the Police, the Independent Commission Against Corruption and the Customs and Excise Department) on the polling day to cast their votes. The REO will set up a maximum of 21 DPSs in penal institutions for electors who are imprisoned or remanded by the CSD to cast their votes on a need basis.

9. Making reference to the successful arrangements for the 2023 District Council Ordinary Election (“DCOE”), the REO plans to set up near-boundary polling stations (“NBPSs”) at two schools near Sheung Shui MTR Station, to facilitate GC and FC electors who are in the Mainland or will travel to and from the Mainland on the polling day to cast their votes. To ensure the orderly operation of the related arrangements, the REO plans to require electors to complete prior registration on an online registration system before they could vote at the NBPSs. Moreover, the REO is considering whether there are other suitable venues for setting up additional NBPSs to allow more electors with the need to cast their votes more conveniently.

(E) Electoral Staff

10. The REO is actively recruiting electoral staff from various government bureaux and departments with a view to deploying about 37 000 staff to handle various electoral duties on the polling day. To ensure the electoral staff understand the voting and counting procedures thoroughly, the REO will conduct training courses and produce training

videos for them. REO will also conduct various practicum sessions to familiarize them with the different types of systems and operation procedures, such as the Electronic Poll Register (“EPR”) System, statistical system for electoral statistics, electronic counting (“e-counting”) system, etc. The training content will also emphasize on scenario-based drills to enhance staff’s capabilities in handling contingencies and emergencies.

(F) Polling Arrangements

11. Except for DPSs and a small number of OPSs with unstable network coverage or difficulties in providing support, the EPR System will continue to be used in polling stations for this election. Electors 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 papers 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 DCOE, 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 system modifications, the reasonableness of relevant designs, the potential impacts on the overall operations, as well as the results and recommendations of the load and stress tests conducted by independent third-party contractors.

12. Since an ECC elector must vote for a number of candidates that is equal to the number of members to be returned (i.e. 40), with reference to previous arrangements, the REO will set up ballot paper checking machines for use by electors on a voluntary basis to check whether their ballot papers have been marked properly in accordance with the relevant electoral legislation. The ballot paper checking machines will not record or count the choices marked on the ballot papers.

13. The REO will continue to set up special queues for electors 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 also designate a seating area inside the polling station for the aforementioned electors to take a rest if needed, while waiting to be called to proceed to the ballot paper issuing desks to collect their ballot papers.

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

14. After the close of poll for the FC election, each Presiding Officer (“PRO”) shall complete one consolidated ballot paper account for all FCs of that polling station to record the estimated total number of ballot papers of all FCs inside the ballot box(es). Polling staff will also prioritize delivery of the related ballot box(es) and ballot paper account to the Central Counting Station (“CCS”) to facilitate the commencement of vote-counting as early as possible.

(H) Counting Arrangements

Geographical Constituencies

15. For GC ballot papers, the REO will continue to adopt the poll-cum-count arrangement in polling stations. After the close of poll, the polling stations (except DPSs, ECC polling station and small polling stations (“SPSs”)) will be converted into counting stations immediately. GC ballot papers from DPSs, ECC polling station (after sorting by GCs at a Ballot Paper Sorting Station) and SPSs will be delivered under police escort and accompanied by not more than two candidates and/ or their agents to the relevant Main Counting Station (“MCS”) for counting. As in the past, counting will be conducted manually. Candidates and their agents, the media and members of the public may observe the counting process within the designated areas at the counting stations. The PRO will determine the validity of the questionable ballot papers in accordance with the legislative requirements. If necessary, candidates and their election agents or counting agents may make representations, while the decision of the PROs on the validity of ballot papers is final.

16. After completion of the count, the PROs will inform candidates or their agents present of the counting results, who may request for a recount if necessary. If the PRO accedes to the request, a recount will be conducted on the spot. If there is no such request or the request is rejected, the PRO will notify the Statistical Information Centre (“SIC”) of the related counting results. The SIC will compile the overall counting results for each GC and report them to the relevant RO at the CCS, who will inform candidates or their agents present of the overall results. At this stage, candidates or their agents may request a recount of all ballot papers from counting stations of that GC. If there is no such request or the request is rejected, the RO will formally declare the election results.

Functional Constituencies

17. For FC ballot papers, the REO will continue adopting the central counting arrangements. After the close of poll, polling staff (including those in DPSs, ECC polling station and SPSs) will deliver FC ballot boxes to the CCS at the HKCEC under police escort and accompanied by not more than two candidates and/ or their agents.

18. The REO has completed the procurement procedures for the e-counting system for the FCs. Preparatory work is currently underway as planned, including system testing, workflow design and staff deployment, contingency plans, etc., to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the entire counting process. 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.

Election Committee Constituency

19. For the ECC, the central counting arrangements will also continue to be adopted. After the close of poll, staff of the ECC polling station will deliver the ECC ballot boxes to the CCS, also located at the HKCEC, under police escort and accompanied by not more than two candidates and/ or their agents. The ECC will continue to use e-counting machines for the count. The REO will arrange to conduct stringent quality

assurance and system audit on the system to ensure its accuracy and reliability. 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.

Other Arrangements

20. The procedures on the determination of questionable ballot papers for the FCs and the ECC are essentially the same. The ROs will determine the validity of the questionable ballot papers in accordance with the legislative requirements. If necessary, 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.

21. Upon completion of the count, the RO 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 a recount of votes if necessary. If such a request is accepted by the RO, the recount will be conducted on-site. If there is no relevant request or the request is rejected, the RO will formally announce the election results.

(I) Ballot Papers and Ballot Boxes

22. Ballot papers for the Legislative Council GCs, FCs and ECC will all be designed in accordance with the formats specified in Schedule 3 to Cap. 541D, and with reference to the designs and styles adopted in previous elections. For easy identification, ballot boxes in three different colours, which will be blue, red and white respectively, will continue to be used for collecting GC, FC and ECC ballot papers in this election. Ballot papers will also be printed in colours corresponding to their ballot boxes.

(J) Candidate Facilitation Measures

23. To facilitate candidates running in the election and in their electioneering work, the following new measures will be introduced in this election -

- (a) in addition to cash, cashier's orders or cheques, candidates may also use the Faster Payment System to pay for 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 function and submit these forms through the online platform.

(K) "Introduction to Candidates"

24. The REO will continue to produce "Introduction to Candidates" to provide electors with candidates' personal details and electoral messages for reference before voting. Following the arrangement in the 2021 LCGE, candidates for GCs, FCs and ECC 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 electors for reference, and upload the "Introduction to Candidates" onto the election website before the polling day.

(L) Postage-free Election Mail

25. Under section 43 of the Legislative Council Ordinance (Cap. 542), validly nominated candidates may send one postage-free election mail to each elector in their constituency for self-promotion or campaign purposes. The Ordinance also allows specified categories of validly nominated candidates to send joint election mail free of postage. Letters

sent by validly nominated candidates for a GC may contain information about other validly nominated candidates of the same GC; letters sent by validly nominated candidates for the Labour FC or ECC may contain information about other validly nominated candidates of the same constituency. The REO will issue guidelines on the relevant arrangements to candidates.

(M) Address Labels and Candidate Mailing Label System

26. The REO will continue to provide address labels of electors for the relevant constituency¹ 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 contains mailing information of electors for the relevant constituency (including electors’ names and addresses, and email addresses if provided by electors would also be included) for candidates to send election mail to electors as required, or to send election mail to electors’ email addresses electronically. The system will remind candidates to use electors’ personal information properly, such as using the “blind carbon copy” function to prevent inadvertent disclosure of electors’ email addresses and the potential legal consequences of non-compliance. Candidates must sign an undertaking on the proper use and disposal of electors’ information before being issued address labels and/or the “Candidate Mailing Label System”.

(N) Public Inspection of Election Advertisements

27. 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 RO, or upload electronic copies to a public platform maintained by the CEO (“central platform”) or a public platform maintained by the candidate (“candidate’s platform”). Where uploading EAs to the central platform or candidate’s platform is not feasible (such as campaign

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

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

28. The REO will set up a Central Command Centre ("CCC") at each of its Kwun Tong office and the CCS, to monitor polling and counting processes, and to provide centralized command and support/ enquiry services.

29. A SIC will also be set up at each of the Kwun Tong office and the CCS. The former will collect and compile voter turnout statistics and verify the GC counting results collected from polling-cum-counting stations, while the latter will verify the FC and ECC counting results collected from the CCS. Voter turnout rates will be published via press releases and the dedicated election website.

(P) Media Centre

30. 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

31. Under sections 46 and 69 of Cap. 541D, PROs and ROs must maintain order at polling-cum-counting stations and the CCS respectively. On the polling day, if any person misconducts himself or herself at or near a polling-cum-counting 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.

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

(R) Contingency Plan

33. Under section 44 of Cap. 542 and Schedule 2 to Cap. 541D, the LCGE, 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 considered due to specified incidents, in order to determine the best course of action.

(S) Guidelines on Election-related Activities

34. Before each LCGE, the EAC would review and update the guidelines on election-related activities to remind candidates and other parties of the related statutory requirements, and to establish a code of conduct for election-related activities which are not covered by the legislation. The EAC has launched a public consultation on the Proposed Guidelines on Election-related Activities in respect of the Legislative Council Election on 3 July 2025. The consultation period of which will end on 1 August. The EAC welcomes members of the public to submit their views to the EAC during the consultation period. The EAC will consider the views received and initially plans to issue the guidelines in September.

ADVICE SOUGHT

35. The Government has been maintaining close communication with the EAC, and will provide full support to, and cooperation with, the EAC on the preparatory work to ensure the LCGE is conducted smoothly in an open, honest, fair, safe, orderly, efficient and user-friendly manner.

36. 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