

Decision Maker: GENERAL PURPOSES & LICENSING COMMITTEE

Date: 14 September 2016

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Non-Executive Non-Key

Title: FEEDBACK ON 2016 POLLS

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Chief Officer: Doug Patterson, Chief Executive and Returning Officer

Ward: List wards here

1. Reason for report

To advise Members on the key issues relating to the Greater London Authority (GLA) Elections held on Thursday 5 May 2016 and the Referendum on the UK's Membership of the European Union (EU Referendum) on Thursday 23 June 2016, and to give Members the opportunity to give comments on the electoral arrangements.

2. **RECOMMENDATION(S)**

Members note the contents of the report and consider if there is any feedback they want to give the Returning Officer for him to take into account when making arrangements for future elections.

Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: N/A.
 2. BBB Priority: Excellent Council.
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Financial

1. Cost of proposal: N/A
 2. Ongoing costs: N/A.
 3. Budget head/performance centre: Conducting Elections
 4. Total current budget for this head: £N/A
 5. Source of funding: The GLA funds the GLA Elections and the Cabinet Office funds the EU Referendum
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Staff

1. Number of staff (current and additional): 6 full time staff, 3 casual staff and approximately 1,200 temporary staff for each election recruited by the Returning Officer for staff polling stations, opening and verifying postal votes and staffing the count
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: N/A
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Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Statutory requirement. The Council is required to designate one of its officers as Returning Officer for Local Government Elections (includes GLA Elections) under the provisions of Section 35 of the Representation of the People Act 1983. The Returning Officer is personally responsible for the conduct of elections.
 2. Call-in: Call-in is not applicable.
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Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): c238,000 registered electors, candidates, agents and staff
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Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? No.
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: N/A

3. COMMENTARY

3.1 Introduction

The Greater London Authority (GLA) Elections were scheduled to take place on Thursday 5 May 2016 and detailed planning and preparations got under way many months earlier well before the start of 2016.

However on Saturday 20 February 2016, the Prime Minister announced the date of the Referendum on the UK's Membership of the European Union (EU Referendum) as Thursday 23 June 2016. This date was just seven weeks after the scheduled GLA Elections.

To run any major poll is a demanding and significant exercise. To run the EU Referendum only seven weeks after the GLA Elections, under intense scrutiny and with record levels of registration and postal votes was a serious test, as shown below.

3.2 GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY ELECTIONS, 5 May 2016

The GLA Elections are the most complex elections held electing the Mayor of London (under the supplementary vote system where voters have a first and second choice of candidates) and twenty five (25) London Assembly members – fourteen (14) individual Constituency Assembly Members (under the first past the post basis where voters place a cross next to the candidate of their choice) and eleven (11) London wide Assembly Members (under the modified D'hondt formula where voters place a cross next to the party or individual candidate).

3.3 Roles and Responsibilities

The Greater London Returning Officer (GLRO) (Jeff Jacobs, Head of Paid Services, GLA) is the Returning Officer. He is responsible for the co-ordination of the elections at a London wide level and has the power to issue directions.

The Constituency Returning Officer (CRO) (Doug Patterson, Chief Executive, Bromley) is the Returning Officer for the election of the Constituency (Bexley and Bromley) London Assembly Member and is responsible for the conduct and administration of the elections in the constituency (of Bexley and Bromley) including dealing with the nomination process (for the constituency member only), providing the polling stations, appointing poll staff, managing the postal voting process and providing the staff to count the votes for all three contests, subject to the directions issued by the GLRO.

The Borough Returning Officer (BRO) (Paul Moore, Acting Chief Executive, Bexley) is not formally a 'Returning Officer' at these elections but agrees to carry out certain functions within Bexley in support of the CRO.

The London Elects team is a team of staff from the GLA based at City Hall. Unlike previous GLA Elections, the team was drawn from (existing) resources across the GLA (rather than a discrete, separate unit who then left following the election).

3.4 Directions

The GLRO issued the CROs with four (4) directions to ensure consistency across London: the first was in respect of the planning and organising of the elections (preparing project plans and risk register), the second provided for additional wording to be included on poll cards (regarding the availability of the elections booklet on the website); the third provided that the CRO must inform the GLRO of any request for a re-count and the fourth provided that the count would start with the opening of the ballot boxes at 8am on Friday 6 May 2016.

The CRO adhered to all the directions.

3.5 Registering to Vote

These were the first elections to be held on an electoral register entirely under Individual Electoral Registration (IER).

In accordance with the law and in order to maintain the accuracy of the electoral register, 2,819 electors in the Borough were removed from this register in December 2015 because they had failed to register under IER (despite numerous communications).

In addition to this, following publication of the new register, in January 2016 all electors who had not responded to the 2015 annual canvass were reviewed (a legal process to check entitlement to remain registered) and 2,257 were deleted from the register, as they did not respond within the prescribed time.

In these circumstances, it was unclear how many would seek to be registered in the lead up to these elections.

The cut-off date for registering to vote at the GLA Elections was midnight on Monday 18 April 2016.

Whilst IER – and on line registration in particular – brings greater opportunity to engage local residents in the democratic process, it does lead to potential for a high number of applications for registration close to the deadline for an election and for duplicate applications i.e. where an application can be matched to an individual already on the register at the same address (see Appendix 1).

3.6 Poll Cards

The format and wording of poll cards is prescribed by law and there is no discretion to amend or change it.

Shortly after the formal election period began with the publication of the Notices of Elections on Monday 21 March 2016, some 240,000 poll cards were delivered by royal mail to all registered electors in the Borough (including polling station voters, postal voters, proxies and postal proxies) and to properties where there were no persons registered (including empty properties).

This gave residents ample time to update their registration information or to apply for an absent vote before the relevant cut-off date.

There were a few complaints from electors who did not receive their poll cards. Royal Mail was not aware of any problems with the deliveries. The electors were advised that they did not need the poll card to vote – so long as their details were on the register and they went to their polling station, staff would issue them their ballot papers.

3.7 Polling Stations

Several changes were made to the officially appointed polling stations at the GLA Elections:

- A mobile unit was sited opposite Edgebury Primary School (due to major building works at the School)
- Blenheim Children & Family Centre was used in place of Blenheim Primary School building
- Castlecombe Children & Family Centre was used in place of Castlecombe Primary School building

- The Hawes Down Centre was used in place of the Glebe Primary School building

Thirty eight (38) schools are used in the Borough as polling stations. Notification of the date of the GLA Election was originally given to these schools some five years ago (when notification of the dates of the scheduled elections for the next twenty years was given). Head teachers are regularly reminded by the Electoral Office of these dates so that they have plenty of time to plan well in advance and minimize disruption to the school. It also enables parents to be made aware of the situation well in advance so that they can put in place appropriate child care arrangements. The Department for Education generally supports schools being made available for use as polling stations and encourages Head teachers to re-arrange the school calendar so that the school meets the requisite number of days of education.

However, the CRO has the right by law to request to use a room within a school as a polling station (free of charge save for a reasonable amount for additional heating, lighting and additional caretaking). Schools cannot refuse such a request (unlike private premises where there is always the risk the use for polling may be refused – especially at short notice)

Unfortunately, there are some Head teachers who are still unhappy with their schools being used as polling stations and there were a few issues on polling day at a small number of schools (where voters/staff were not given full access). The CRO also received a few complaints from parents objecting to the closure of their child's school. The situation was exacerbated this year by the Government's decision to hold the EU Referendum soon after the scheduled GLA Elections.

The CRO will continue to offer to work with Head teachers and will look at alternative premises, where suggested. However, the choice of suitable potential premises is limited by a range of factors including that the polling station must be located within the relevant polling district, the building must be suitable (sufficient space and adequate heating and lighting), accessible for people with restricted mobility, and consistently available at the CRO's request (consistency in the use of polling venues is essential to avoid any confusion that might be caused to electors by moving to alternative premises). Ideally it should be a well-known building and located centrally within the polling district.

3.8 Postal Voting

The total number of postal votes issued at the GLA Elections was 35,478 (slightly higher than at last year's General Election)

The issuing of postal votes went smoothly with the first mail out (the bulk of the postal votes – some 32,000 packs) being sent out from the printers by first class post on Wednesday 20 April 2016. This included all those electors with permanent postal votes and those who applied up to the beginning of April 2016.

Residents who applied after this and up to the deadline of Tuesday 19 April 2016, did not receive their packs until closer to polling day – this is because although the Electoral Office sent the data to the printers the day after the deadline, it took several days to print, issue and check these postal packs before they could be sent out on Friday 22 April 2016.

Most residents received their postal packs the day after they were despatched. A small number of complaints were received from residents about the non-receipt of their postal vote packs but in most cases replacement postal votes were issued to these people (up to 5pm on polling day).

Bromley always has a high take up/return of postal votes and these GLA Elections were no different with 27,686 packs being returned (78.04%) by close of poll on Thursday 5 May 2016.

The personal identifiers (signature and date of birth) on every returned postal pack are checked and verified against those held on file from the original applications. This is a huge logistical process with the CRO requiring suitable accommodation (Great Hall) for some two weeks before polling day, and is totally dependent on IT systems.

Four scheduled postal vote opening sessions took place before polling day, with a further two sessions on polling day.

Some 27,500 personal identifiers were checked with 837 postal votes being rejected for the following reasons:

Reason	Number
No signature	107
No date of birth	139
Neither signature nor date of birth	87
Mismatched signature	123
Mismatched date of birth	131
Both mismatched	215
Ballot paper unreturned	30
Postal voting statement unreturned	5
TOTAL REJECTED	837

Once the personal identifiers were verified, the postal ballot papers were placed in ballot boxes, sealed and stored securely in a Committee room before being transported to the count venue following close of poll on Thursday 5 May 2016 in readiness for the count the following day.

Due to the high number of postal votes that are now returned to the polling stations and Civic Centre on polling day (approximately 3,000), undertaking the checking and verifying of the personal identifiers could have caused significant delays to the count process, if the counting of votes had been undertaken immediately following close of poll on Thursday night and the CRO is mindful that at future elections, he will have to plan accordingly.

A total number of 419 proxy votes were appointed for these GLA Elections with 8 emergency proxies being appointed on polling day.

3.9 Polling Day

Polling day itself ran remarkably smoothly. All equipment was delivered to the polling stations the day before polling, and all polling stations were staffed and opened on time to receive voters for the 7.00am start.

Polling went smoothly in most polling stations. There were a couple of issues with residents being unable to vote because their details were not on the register (they had not registered under IER) but these were dealt with by the Electoral Office and the individuals were advised to register before the deadline for the EU Referendum to avoid a re-occurrence of the situation.

There was also an issue with the register at one of the polling stations in Darwin. The Presiding Officer noticed very early on that a page was missing from the register. The Polling Station Inspector was contacted and dealt with the issue within an hour of polling starting. No voters were disenfranchised.

There were also a few issues with regard to the accessibility of the polling station but these were dealt with and no formal complaints were received. The CRO was particularly mindful about the issues that had arisen in this regard at the 2015 General Election. The CRO's staff had worked closely with the Head teachers at La Fontaine Academy and the neighbouring school, Trinity Church of England Primary School Academy (formerly Princess Plain Primary School) to ensure that voters had full access to the polling station. Both schools were closed on polling day, gates opened, parking facilities made available and additional signage displayed. The new arrangements worked well.

Polling finished at 10pm and there were no reported queues at any of the polling stations in Bromley.

Presiding Officers returned their sealed ballot boxes, unused ballot papers and other election materials to the Bromley Civic Centre.

A small team checked the ballot paper accounts (for arithmetical errors) and staff opened and verified the final postal votes (handed into the polling stations and Civic Centre by 10pm). The sealed ballot boxes were then loaded on to waiting lorries and delivered to the count venue at ExCel in readiness for the e-counting of the votes the next day on Friday 6 May 2016.

3.10 The e-Count

Due to the length of time that it would take to count the votes for the Mayor of London and London Assembly and following a cost benefit analysis undertaken by London Elects, the GLRO took the view that based on speed and accuracy, the fact that e-counting was tried and tested for GLA Elections, e-counting should be used again in 2016.

In 2012, the e-count was delivered by IntElect. Following negotiations by the GLRO, the contract was extended with minor variations to the specification and signed off in 2014. There followed extensive performance and resilience testing to ensure the system was fit for purpose and that an accurate result could be declared within ten hours.

The count was conducted at three venues – Alexandra Palace, ExCel and Olympia. Bexley and Bromley constituency counted at Excel together with four other constituencies (City and East, Greenwich and Lewisham, Havering and Redbridge, and Lambeth and Southwark)

Constituencies supplied their own staff. The CRO appointed 102 staff for the Bexley and Bromley constituency. Most staff were allocated specific roles and received training – initially through a portal which included computer based training modules and videos, and then attending a day at a training site where there was practical experience on the system and the opportunity to meet IntElect staff who would be working on the count on the day.

The speed of the count depends on the scanning machines being kept working at all times.

The count process started at 8am. All scanning machines were up and running in the Bexley and Bromley constituency count within twenty minutes or so. Staff worked very efficiently and effectively over the next seven hours or so with the count being concluded early afternoon. We were the first constituency to declare across London even though we had one of the highest turnouts (49.85%) and most ballot papers to scan and adjudicate.

However, whilst the scanning and adjudication of votes went extremely well across all constituencies, an IT problem occurred with the consolidation of the results by the GLRO at City Hall. It was later established that this was due to a fault in the e-counting software code used to consolidate the results. This delayed the announcement of the results until 11:30pm for the eleven London Members and shortly after midnight for the Mayor of London.

Full details of the results are available at www.londonelects.org.uk/im-voter/election-results/results-2016

The deadline for election petitions has passed and no challenges were received.

A number of reports and investigations relating to the conduct of these elections are now being undertaken to ensure that lessons are learnt and improvements are made.

3.11 REFERENDUM ON THE UK'S MEMBERSHIP OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, 23 June 2016

Just a few days after the GLA Elections, the Notice of Referendum was published on Tuesday 17 May 2016 triggering the start of the statutory timetable for the EU Referendum with polling day on Thursday 23 June 2016.

3.12 Roles and Responsibilities

The Chief Counting Officer (CCO) (Jenny Watson, Chair of the Electoral Commission) is responsible for the management of the EU Referendum across Great Britain and Gibraltar – she has the power to issue directions.

The Regional Counting Officer (RCO) (Barry Quirk, Chief Executive of London Borough of Lewisham) is appointed by the CCO for each electoral region (London) and is responsible for co-ordinating the planning and administering of the poll across their electoral region and for managing the local totals for the electoral region, which will be fed into the UK-wide result.

The Counting Officer (CO) (Doug Patterson, Chief Executive of London Borough of Bromley) is responsible for the conduct of the Referendum in his electoral area (London Borough of Bromley) including the transmission of the local totals to the RCO.

3.13 Directions

The CCO issued ten (10) directions to COs to ensure consistency across Great Britain (see Appendix 2). These included specific dates for the despatch of poll cards and postal vote packs, and the timing and manner of the count.

3.14 Registering to Vote and extending the Registration Deadline

The deadline for registering to vote at the EU Referendum was midnight on Tuesday 7 June 2016.

However, at about 10.15pm there was an issue (due to unprecedented level demand) with the Government's Register to Vote website that meant that individuals could not complete applications.

Ministers decided that this should not affect those who wanted to vote at the EU Referendum and therefore took through secondary legislation extending the registration deadline by 48 hours to 11.59pm on Thursday 9 June 2016.

This created some practical challenges and impacted on existing work plans. Changes were made to the timetable (although the deadline for applying for a postal vote in time for the EU Referendum remained the same unaffected and continued to be 5pm on Wednesday 8 June

2016). The finalisation of registers was delayed and this impacted on the printing and checking of the registers for the polling stations.

The total number of applications for registration received in Bromley immediately following the deadline for the GLA Elections and by the (extended) registration deadline for the EU Referendum was substantial as Appendix 1 shows.

It should also be noted that:

- As a consequence of the Electoral Commission's public awareness campaign on registering to vote, numerous electors mistakenly formed the opinion that they needed to specifically register to vote at the EU Referendum. Unprecedented numbers of duplicate applications were received in Bromley and across Great Britain. It is now being recommended that a look up facility is made available for individuals to check if they are registered
- The total number of **overseas electors** registered in Bromley by the (extended) registration deadline was 1,417, with 882 registering since 17 March 2016 (there are usually about 150 registered overseas electors in Bromley)
- **European electors** marked with a 'G' on the electoral register were not entitled to vote at the EU Referendum. Unfortunately, due to a software issue, in some parts of Britain poll cards were sent out to these electors causing some confusion and attracting media attention. No poll cards were sent out to European citizens in Bromley
- The Cabinet Office has subsequently apologised for the lack of communication over the extended deadline and accepts that improvements are needed

3.15 Barnet Report

As a consequence of issues in the London Borough of Barnet at the GLA Elections (incomplete registers), an independent report was commissioned by them and made available to other local authorities.

The CO took the recommendations in this report into account when planning for the EU Referendum. Processes and procedures were immediately examined and a number of changes and improvements were implemented at Bromley (see Appendix 3).

3.16 Polling Stations

The same polling stations used at the GLA Elections, were used at the EU Referendum - the only change was that a different building (on the opposite side of the road) was used at Harris Academy, Lennard Road.

A number of Head teachers remained unhappy with their school being used as a polling station for a second time and in such a short period. In some isolated instances, the CO was required to remind the Head teachers of his powers in this regard. In the meantime, the CCO sent a letter to the Secretary of State asking that she and her officials do everything possible to encourage schools (across England) to make their buildings available for this purpose.

3.17 Postal Votes

An unprecedented number, 41,227 postal vote packs were issued at the EU Referendum (some 5,000 more than at the GLA Elections just a few weeks earlier) with 37,170 (over 90%) packs being returned by 10pm on Thursday 23 June 2016.

In accordance with the CCO's directions, postal vote packs were sent out much earlier than usual.

The CO was also required by direction to issue the poll cards within 5 days of the publication of the Notice of Referendum. These cards included prescribed information around the date postal votes would be despatched. The deadline for applying for postal votes was after this date and this caused some confusion to those electors who applied immediately before or after that date.

A number of complaints were received from voters about the 'late delivery' of their postal vote pack. In most cases this was where the voter had submitted his application for a postal vote after the bulk of the data had been sent to the printers (at the end of April). These postal votes (some 35,000) were sent out around 27 May 2016 to those electors with long term arrangements and those who had applied for postal votes for the GLA Elections.

However, voters who applied for a postal vote after this data had been sent (end of April 2016), had their postal votes printed and despatched intermittently (subject to the printers schedule) but by 13 June 2016 at the latest.

Unfortunately some voters had not indicated they were going away and therefore they were not around to receive the pack.

If the Elections Office is aware that an elector is likely to be away when the packs are delivered, then staff usually attempt to contact the elector and suggest a proxy vote. Unfortunately due to the high volumes of applications being received, the team were not always able to do this at this poll.

There was also an incident where a Member complained that postal vote packs were being held in the post room rather than being put away securely. In part, this was due to some practice changes because not all the accommodation (committee rooms and council chamber) was available throughout the referendum period for the management of the returned postal vote packs.

The CO undertook an urgent investigation into the complaint and was satisfied that the integrity of the process was not affected because all the postal votes were recorded and access to the post room was limited out of office hours. However, he gave an unequivocal direction that all postal votes were to be stored securely, out of sight, out of office hours.

Four scheduled postal vote opening sessions took place in the Great Hall before polling day, with a further two sessions on polling day (one being held off site at the count venue).

Some 37,170 personal identifiers were checked with 548 postal votes being rejected for the following reasons:

Reason	Number
No signature	74
No date of birth	70
Neither signature nor date of birth	51
Mismatched signature	100
Mismatched date of birth	98

Both mismatched	57
Ballot paper unreturned	53
Postal voting statement unreturned	45
TOTAL REJECTED	548

A total number of 2,413 proxy votes were appointed at this poll (an increase of over 500%) for this Referendum with 76 emergency proxies being appointed on polling day (an increase of over 900%). These volumes were again, unprecedented

3.18 Polling Day

Despite the extreme weather conditions overnight and consequent difficulties with polling station venues and staff travel, the Referendum poll proceeded as planned with electors in Bromley experiencing no (or minimal) disruption.

Polling went ran very smoothly despite there being further thundery downpours in the afternoon and early evening, which could have caused a late surge of voters going to the polling stations later in the evening when the rain finally stopped.

Some colleagues across London were not as fortunate – having to redirect electors to alternative polling stations and arranging for the late printing of additional ballot papers.

Staff at polling stations reported they were busy and turnout was expected to be high.

There was one issue which caused some complaints on polling day around the accessibility at Pickhurst Junior Academy but the CO and his staff dealt with this during the day.

Polling finished at 10pm and there were no reported queues at any of the polling stations in Bromley.

Presiding Officers returned their sealed ballot boxes, unused ballot papers and other polling materials to the (new) count venue at Kent County Cricket Ground, Worsley Bridge Road, Beckenham, Kent BR3 1RL.

3.19 The Count

Planning of the count accommodation had started at the beginning of the year before the date of the Referendum poll was announced.

It had become evident that a marquee at the rear of the Old Palace at the Civic Centre, would not be an option on this occasion due to i) the uncertainty of the date of the EU Referendum, ii) the number of wedding ceremonies that had already been booked, and iii) the unlikely availability of a specialist company to supply a (large) marquee at short notice.

It was essential to identify a suitable alternative venue as early as possible. A site visit was undertaken of the Kent County Cricket Ground (KCCG) at the beginning of January 2016 to see if access arrangements for vehicles and parking, the size of the accommodation, lighting, IT and facilities for those attending were suitable.

The CO was happy that this venue would be suitable for the verification and counting of the votes at the EU Referendum, and booking arrangements were made.

The CCO had directed that the verification and counting of votes should commence at 10pm and that arrangements were structured in such a way as to break down the verification and count into a number of self-contained 'areas' smaller than the voting area, with the totals of these 'areas' aggregated into a single total for the voting area.'

The CO decided that in order to comply with this direction, the verification and count processes would be undertaken on a ward basis (although postal votes would be included which originated from across the borough) and then the results from each ward would be aggregated to achieve an overall result for the (Bromley) area.

The count started at 10pm with the postal vote ballot boxes which were already at the venue. The ballot boxes from the polling stations began to arrive shortly after 10.15pm

Under the Referendum rules, the total number of ballot papers in each ballot box is verified with the number on the ballot paper account submitted by the presiding officer at each polling station (or by the Supervisor in charge of the postal vote session). This is known as Stage 1. This stage is critical in ensuring the accuracy of the result as it means that when the votes are sorted into votes for each answer to the referendum question (i.e. 'Remain' and 'Leave') and counted (known as Stage 2), the count total can be compared to the verification total to identify any discrepancies. Unlike some polls where a small difference is tolerated, the RCO had instructed that only 100% would suffice.

The count process for this Referendum was quite straightforward although turnout was high (78.9%) with some 182,500 votes being cast in Bromley. Verification (Stage 1) was concluded and the counting of votes (Stage 2) being started in most wards by 2am on the Friday morning. The result for each ward was then aggregated to achieve an overall result for the Borough. This was submitted to the RCO through a results collation system shortly after 5am (see Appendix 4 & 5).

The CO considers that although the count process was successful and the result accurate, there were some issues with the venue around the parking of vehicles in the roadway outside (hindering access to the venue including the return of the ballot boxes by the Presiding Officers), the high air temperature in the Main Hall and facilities for those attending the count. However, this was the first time the venue had been used for this purpose and lessons will be taken forward, if used again.

The CO was contacted by three agents (from the 'Leave' campaigners) after the count. One agent complimented the CO on the conduct of the count and his staff. The other two agents raised questions about the transparency of the process (including the sortation of the votes by supervisory staff). The CO has responded and will be considering improvements at future elections in conjunction with party agents.

3.20 Conclusion

Preparing and delivering these two polls in such close proximity caused intense pressure, weeks of dedication and some huge challenges including:

- Confusion to staff and voters
- Different voting systems and franchises
- Cross over timetables
- Issues with the election management systems
- Impact of Individual Electoral Registration
- Problems with data runs for poll cards and postal votes
- Schools not wanting to close for two (polling) days
- Voter expectation of instantaneous outcomes (registering and replies to emails)

- Significant numbers of registration applications from both ordinary electors and overseas electors, postal vote applications, proxy vote applications and emergency proxy vote applications
- Huge increase in workloads for Election Office
- Impact of problems that occurred in Barnet
- Impact of social media increasing all the time (pencilgate!)

However, notwithstanding all these challenges both polls were delivered successfully in Bromley without any major problems and no legal challenges.

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None directly arising from this report

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The funding for the GLA Elections is met by an allowance from the GLA and funding for the EU Referendum is met by an allowance from the Cabinet Office. Expenditure will be contained within these allowances.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Council is required to designate one of its officers as Returning Officer for Local Council Elections (includes these GLA Elections) under the provisions of section 35 of the Representation of the People Act 1983. The Returning Officer is personally responsible for the conduct of these elections.

The rules and regulations for the conduct of the GLA Elections and the EU Referendum are primarily contained in the Representation of the People Act 1983, the Representation of the People (England and Wales) Regulations 2001, the Greater London Authority Act 1999, European Union Referendum Act 2015 and Act and the European Union Referendum (Conduct) Regulations 2016.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

Some Council employees are recruited by the Returning Officer to help with the various duties concerning the conduct of these polls. However, a majority of staff are recruited from other sources.

Under the provisions of section 35(6) of the Representation of the People Act 1983 the Council shall place the services of its officers at the disposal of the Returning Officer.

Non-Applicable Sections:	[List non-applicable sections here]
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	[Title of document and date]