

SCHEDULE 3

Combined Authority Mayoral Election (Combination of Polls) Rules

PART 4

Contested elections

Poll to be taken by ballot

17. The votes at the poll shall be given by ballot.

The ballot papers

18.—(1) The ballot of every person entitled to a vote at the election shall consist of a ballot paper.

(2) The persons remaining validly nominated, after any withdrawals, and no others, shall be entitled to have their names inserted in the ballot paper at that election.

(3) Every ballot paper must be in the appropriate form, and must be printed in accordance with the appropriate directions set out in the Appendix, and—

- (a) must contain the names and other particulars of the candidates as shown in the statement of persons nominated,
- (b) must be capable of being folded up, and
- (c) must have a number and other unique identifying mark printed on the back
- (d) must be of a different colour from that of any ballot papers used at any relevant election or referendum.

(4) If a candidate who is the subject of a party's authorisation under rule 7(1) so requests, the ballot paper must contain, against the candidate's particulars, the party's registered emblem (or, as the case may be, one of the party's registered emblems).

(5) If a candidate who is the subject of an authorisation by two or more parties under rule 7(3) so requests, the ballot paper must contain, against the candidate's particulars, the registered emblem (or, as the case may be, one of the registered emblems) of one of those parties.

(6) The candidate's request under paragraph (4) or (5) must—

- (a) be made in writing to the returning officer, and
- (b) be received by the returning officer before the last time for the delivery of nomination papers set out in the Timetable in rule 3.

(7) The order of the names in the ballot paper must be the same as in the statement of persons nominated.

The corresponding number list

19.—(1) The returning officer must prepare a list containing the numbers and other unique identifying marks of all of the ballot papers to be issued by the returning officer in pursuance of rule 24 or provided in pursuance of rule 28.

(2) The list must be in the appropriate form in the Appendix or a form to the like effect.

The official mark

20.—(1) Every ballot paper must contain an appropriate security marking (the official mark).

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(2) The official mark must be kept secret, and an interval of not less than five years shall intervene between the use of the same official mark at an election for the same combined authority.

(3) The returning officer may use a different official mark for different purposes at the same election.

Prohibition of disclosure of vote

21. No person who has voted at the election shall, in any legal proceeding to question the election, be required to state for whom he or she has voted.

Use of schools and public rooms

22.—(1) The returning officer may use, free of charge, for the purpose of taking the poll or counting the votes—

- (a) a room in a school maintained or assisted by a local authority (as defined in the Education Act 1996⁽¹⁾) or a school in respect of which grants are made out of moneys provided by Parliament to the person or body of persons responsible for the management of the school,
- (b) a room the expense of maintaining which is met by any local authority.

(2) The use of a room in an unoccupied hereditament for that purpose or those purposes does not render a person liable to any payment by way of council tax or non-domestic rate in respect of that hereditament and any day on which it is so used.

(3) The returning officer must make good any damage done to, and defray any expense incurred by the persons having control over, any such room as is mentioned in paragraph (1) by reason of its being used for the purpose of taking the poll or counting the votes.

Notice of poll

23.—(1) The combined authority returning officer must publish notice of the poll stating—

- (a) the day and hours fixed for the poll,
- (b) the particulars of each candidate remaining validly nominated (the names and other particulars of the candidates, and the order of the candidates' names being the same as in the statement of persons nominated), and
- (c) the names of all persons signing a candidate's nomination paper.

(2) Where a candidate is nominated by more than one nomination paper, the nomination paper referred to in paragraph (1)(c) must be that from which the names and other particulars of the candidate shown in the statement of persons nominated are taken.

(3) The returning officer must, not later than the time of the publication of the notice of the poll, give public notice of—

- (a) the situation of each polling station, and
- (b) the description of voters entitled to vote there,

and the returning officer must as soon as practicable after giving such a notice give a copy of it to each of the election agents.

(4) The notice published under paragraph (3) above shall—

- (a) state that the poll at the combined authority mayoral election is to be taken together with the poll at a relevant election or referendum,

(1) 1996 c. 56.

- (b) specify the parliamentary constituency, local counting area, Assembly constituency, voting area or, as the case may be, the relevant local authority and, in the case of an election to fill a casual vacancy, the electoral area for which the relevant election is held, and
- (c) where the polls are to be taken together in part of the electoral area only, specify that part.

Postal ballot papers

24.—(1) The returning officer must, in accordance with regulations made under the 1983 Act, issue to those entitled to vote by post a ballot paper and a postal voting statement in the appropriate form in the Appendix, or a form to the like effect, together with such envelopes for their return as may be prescribed by such regulations.

(2) The returning officer must also issue to those entitled to vote by post such information as he thinks appropriate about how to obtain—

- (a) translations into languages other than English of any directions to or guidance for voters sent with the ballot paper,
- (b) a translation into Braille of such directions or guidance,
- (c) graphical representations of such directions or guidance,
- (d) the directions or guidance in any other form (including any audible form).

(3) The postal voting statement must include provision for the form to be signed and for stating the date of birth of the elector or proxy (as the case may be).

(4) In the case of a ballot paper issued to a person at an address in the United Kingdom, the returning officer must ensure that the return of the ballot paper and postal voting statement is free of charge to the voter.

Provision of polling stations

25.—(1) The returning officer must provide a sufficient number of polling stations and, subject to the following provisions of this rule, must allot the electors to the polling stations in such manner as the returning officer thinks most convenient.

(2) One or more polling stations may be provided in the same room.

(3) The polling station allotted to electors from any parliamentary polling district wholly or partly within the electoral area must, in the absence of special circumstances, be in the parliamentary polling place for that district, unless that place is outside the electoral area.

(4) The returning officer must provide each polling station with such number of compartments as may be necessary in which the voters can mark their votes screened from observation.

Appointment of presiding officers and polling clerks

26.—(1) The returning officer must appoint and pay a presiding officer to attend at each polling station and such clerks as may be necessary for the purposes of the election, but the returning officer must not appoint any person who has been employed by or on behalf of a candidate in or about the election.

(2) The returning officer may, if the returning officer thinks fit, preside at a polling station and the provisions of these Rules relating to a presiding officer shall apply to a returning officer so presiding with the necessary modifications as to things to be done by the returning officer to the presiding officer or by the presiding officer to the returning officer.

(3) A presiding officer may do, by the clerks appointed to assist him or her, any act (including the asking of questions) which the presiding officer is required or authorised by these Rules to do at a polling station except order the arrest, exclusion or removal of any person from the polling station.

Issue of official poll cards

27.—(1) The returning officer must as soon as practicable after the publication of the notice of the election send to electors and their proxies an official poll card.

(2) An elector’s official poll card must be sent or delivered to the elector’s qualifying address⁽²⁾, and a proxy’s to the proxy’s address as shown in the list of proxies.

(3) The official poll card must be in the appropriate form in the Appendix, or a form to the like effect, and must set out—

- (a) the name of the combined authority to which the election relates,
- (b) that the election is a combined authority mayoral election,
- (c) the elector’s name, qualifying address and number on the register,
- (d) the date and hours of the poll and the situation of the elector’s polling station,
- (e) such other information as the returning officer thinks appropriate,

and different information may be provided in pursuance of sub-paragraph (e) to different electors or descriptions of elector.

(4) In the case of an elector with an anonymous entry, instead of containing the matter mentioned in paragraph (3)(c), the poll card must contain such matter as is specified in the appropriate form in the Appendix.

(5) Paragraph (7) of rule 8 shall apply for the interpretation of this rule.

(6) If the returning officer and the returning officer for each relevant election or referendum think fit, an official poll card issued under this rule may be combined with the official poll card issued at every relevant election or referendum.

Equipment of polling stations

28.—(1) The returning officer must provide each presiding officer with such number of ballot boxes and ballot papers as in the returning officer’s opinion may be necessary.

(2) The same ballot box may be used for the poll at the combined authority mayoral election and the poll at every relevant election or referendum, if the returning officer thinks fit.

(3) Every ballot box must be so constructed that the ballot papers can be put in it, but cannot be withdrawn from it, without the box being unlocked or, where the box has no lock, the seal being broken.

(4) The returning officer must provide each polling station with—

- (a) materials to enable voters to mark the ballot papers,
- (b) copies of the register of electors for the electoral area or such part of it as contains the names of the electors allotted to the station,
- (c) the parts of any special lists prepared for the election corresponding to the register of electors for the electoral area or the part of it provided under sub-paragraph (b),
- (d) a list consisting of that part of the list prepared under rule 19 which contains the numbers (but not the other unique identifying marks) corresponding to those on the ballot papers provided to the presiding officer of the polling station.

(5) The reference in paragraph (3)(b) to the copies of the register of electors includes a reference to copies of any notices issued under section 13B(3B) or (3D)⁽³⁾ of the 1983 Act in respect of alterations to the register.

(2) See section 8(8)(b) of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (c. 2) for meaning of “qualifying address”.

(3) 1983 c. 2. Section 13B was inserted by the Representation of the People Act 2000 (c. 2), section 8 and Schedule 1; subsections (3B) and (3D) were inserted by the Electoral Administration Act 2000 (c. 22), section 11.

- (6) The returning officer must also provide each polling station with—
- (a) at least one large version of each ballot paper which must be printed on the same colour paper as the corresponding ballot paper and must be displayed inside the polling station for the assistance of voters who are partially sighted,
 - (b) an enlarged hand-held sample copy of the ballot paper for the assistance of voters who are partially sighted which must be clearly marked as a specimen provided only for the guidance of voters, and
 - (c) a device of such description as is set out in paragraph (11) for enabling voters who are blind or partially sighted to vote without any need for assistance from the presiding officer or any companion (within the meaning of rule 39(1)).
- (7) Where notwithstanding paragraph (2) above separate ballot boxes are to be used, each ballot box must be clearly marked with—
- (a) the election or referendum to which it relates, as shown on the ballot papers for that election or referendum,
 - (b) the words “Place the [*specify colour of ballot papers in question*] ballot papers in here”.
- (8) The combined authority returning officer must prepare and provide each returning officer with—
- (a) a notice in the appropriate form in the Appendix giving directions for the guidance of voters in voting, must be printed in conspicuous characters and exhibited inside and outside every polling station, and
 - (b) the following notice which must be exhibited in every compartment of every polling station—
 - PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION
 - ([Specify colour] ballot paper)
 - Vote for ONLY ONE CANDIDATE by putting a cross [X] in the box next to your choice.
 - *EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION
 - ([Specify colour] ballot paper)
 - Vote ONLY ONCE by putting a cross [X] in the box next to your choice.
 - *[Specify name of council] COUNCIL ELECTION
 - ([Specify colour] ballot paper)
 - *[Vote for NO MORE THAN ... CANDIDATES by putting a cross [X] in the box next to EACH of your choices.]
 - *[Vote ONLY ONCE by putting a cross [X] in the box next to your choice.]
 - *[Specify name of combined authority] COMBINED AUTHORITY MAYORAL ELECTION
 - ([Specify colour] ballot paper)
 - *[Vote for ONLY ONE CANDIDATE by putting a cross [X] in the box next to your choice.]
 - *[Vote by putting a cross [X] in the box
 - In column A next to your FIRST CHOICE candidate
 - In column B next to your SECOND CHOICE candidate
 - Your first and second choices should be different.]
 - *LOCAL MAYORAL ELECTION FOR [specify name of authority]

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([Specify colour] ballot paper)

*[Vote for ONLY ONE CANDIDATE by putting a cross [X] in the box next to your choice.]

*[Vote by putting a cross [X] in the box

In column 1 next to your FIRST CHOICE candidate

In column 2 next to your SECOND CHOICE candidate

Your first and second choices should be different.]

*POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER ELECTION FOR [specify police area]

([Specify colour] ballot paper)

*[Vote for ONLY ONE CANDIDATE by putting a cross [X] in the box next to your choice.]

*[Vote by putting a cross [X] in the box

In column 1 next to your FIRST CHOICE candidate

In column 2 next to your SECOND CHOICE candidate

Your first and second choices should be different.]

*[Specify other] ELECTION/REFERENDUM

([Specify colour] ballot paper)

[Specify voting instructions in accordance with the legislation governing the election or referendum]

PUT NO OTHER MARK ON THE BALLOT PAPER OR YOUR VOTE MAY NOT COUNT.

*[PLEASE DO NOT FOLD THE BALLOT PAPERS FOR [specify the elections and/or referendum(s) at which the votes are to be counted electronically]. Post them, face downwards, in the [*appropriate] ballot box.]

*Complete or omit as necessary.

Alternatively, insert such information as the combined authority returning officer may decide.

(9) The combined authority returning officer may also provide copies of the notice mentioned in paragraph (8) in such other form described in section 199B of the Representation of the People Act 1983(4) as the combined authority returning officer thinks appropriate and, if the returning officer agrees, these may also be exhibited inside and outside the polling station.

(10) Where the Electoral Commission publishes information about the supplementary vote system to be used at combined authority mayoral elections, the combined authority returning officer may provide each returning officer with a copy of that information for exhibition at a polling station.

(11) The device referred to in paragraph (6)(c) must—

- (a) allow a ballot paper to be inserted into and removed from, or attached to and detached from, the device easily and without damage to the paper,
- (b) hold the ballot paper firmly in place during use, and
- (c) provide suitable means for the voter to—
 - (i) identify the spaces on the ballot paper on which to mark a vote, and
 - (ii) identify the candidate to which each such space refers, and

(4) 1983 c. 2. Section 199B was inserted by the Electoral Administration Act 2006 (c. 22), section 36.

(iii) mark the vote on the space the voter has chosen.

Appointment of polling and counting agents

29.—(1) Subject to paragraphs (5), (6) and (7), before the commencement of the poll each candidate may appoint—

- (a) polling agents to attend at polling stations for the purpose of detecting personation, and
- (b) counting agents to attend at the counting of the votes.

(2) The same person may be appointed as a polling agent or counting agent by more than one candidate.

(3) For each count, one (but no more than one) counting agent may be designated as a person authorised to require a re-count under rule 53.

(4) A designation under paragraph (3) must be made at the same time as the person's appointment as a counting agent.

(5) Not more than four polling agents, or such greater number as the returning officer may by notice allow, shall be permitted to attend at any particular polling station.

(6) If the number of such agents appointed to attend at a particular polling station exceeds the allowed number, the returning officer must determine which agents are permitted to attend by lot, and only the agents on whom the lot falls shall be deemed to have been duly appointed.

(7) The returning officer may limit the number of counting agents, but in doing so must ensure that—

- (a) the number is the same in the case of each candidate, and
- (b) the number allowed to a candidate must not (except in special circumstances) be less than the number obtained by dividing the number of clerks employed on the counting by the number of candidates.

(8) For the purposes of the calculations required by paragraph (5), a counting agent appointed for more than one candidate is a separate agent for each of the candidates for whom the agent has been appointed.

(9) Notice in writing of the appointment, stating the names and addresses of the persons appointed, must be given by the candidate to the returning officer and must be so given not later than the fifth day (disregarding any day referred to in rule 4(1)) before the day of the poll.

(10) Notices of the appointment of polling agents and counting agents which are required by paragraphs (9) and (11) to be given to the returning officer must be given to that returning officer who discharges the functions specified in regulation 5 of the Combination of Polls Regulations.

(11) If an agent dies, or becomes incapable of acting, the candidate may appoint another person in his or her place, and must forthwith give to the returning officer notice in writing of the name and address of that other person.

(12) Any appointment for a candidate authorised by this rule may be made and the notice of appointment given to the returning officer by the candidate's election agent, instead of by the candidate.

(13) In the following provisions of these Rules references to polling agents and counting agents shall be taken as references to agents—

- (a) whose appointments have been duly made and notified, and
- (b) where the number of agents is restricted, who are within the permitted numbers.

(14) Any notice required to be given to a counting agent by the returning officer may be delivered at, or sent by post to, the address stated in the notice of appointment.

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(15) A candidate may do any act or thing which any polling or counting agent of the candidate's, if appointed, would have been authorised to do, or may assist his or her agent in doing any such act or thing.

(16) A candidate's election agent may do or assist in doing anything which the candidate's polling or counting agent is authorised to do; and anything required or authorised by these Rules to be done in the presence of the polling or counting agent may be done in the presence of a candidate's election agent instead of his polling agent or counting agent.

(17) Where by these Rules any act or thing is required or authorised to be done in the presence of the polling or counting agent, the non-attendance of any agent or agents at the time and place appointed for the purpose shall not, if the act or thing is otherwise duly done, invalidate the act or thing done.

Notification of requirement of secrecy

30.—(1) The returning officer must make such arrangements as the returning officer thinks fit to ensure that—

- (a) every person attending at a polling station (otherwise than for the purpose of voting or assisting a voter with disabilities to vote or as a constable on duty there) has been given a copy in writing of the provisions of subsections (1), (3) and (6) of section 66 of the 1983 Act, and
- (b) every person attending at the counting of the votes (other than any constable on duty at the counting) has been given a copy in writing of the provisions of subsections (2) and (6) of that section.

(2) In this rule, a reference to a constable includes a person designated as a community support officer under section 38 of the Police Reform Act 2002⁽⁵⁾ (police powers for employees).

Return of postal ballot papers

31.—(1) Where—

- (a) a postal vote has been returned in respect of a person who is entered on the postal voters list, or
- (b) a proxy postal vote has been returned in respect of a proxy who is entered on the proxy postal voters list,

the returning officer must mark the list in the manner prescribed by regulations made under the 1983 Act.

(2) Rule 47(4) does not apply for the purpose of determining whether, for the purposes of this rule, a postal vote or a proxy postal vote is returned.

Admission to polling station

32.—(1) The presiding officer must exclude all persons from the polling station except—

- (a) voters,
- (b) persons under the age of 18 who accompany voters to the polling station,
- (c) the candidates and their election agents,
- (d) the polling agents appointed to attend at the polling station,
- (e) the clerks appointed to attend at the polling station,

(5) 2002 c. 30.

- (f) persons who are entitled to attend by virtue of any of sections 6A to 6D of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000,
 - (g) the returning officer and the returning officer's clerks,
 - (h) the combined authority returning officer and the combined authority returning officer's clerks,
 - (i) the constables on duty,
 - (j) the companions of voters with disabilities, and
 - (k) persons entitled to be admitted to the polling station at a relevant election or referendum with which the poll at the combined authority mayoral election is combined.
- (2) The presiding officer must regulate the total number of voters and persons under the age of 18 who accompany them to be admitted to the polling station at the same time.
- (3) Not more than one polling agent shall be admitted at the same time to a polling station on behalf of the same candidate.
- (4) A constable or person employed by a returning officer or by the combined authority returning officer must not be admitted to vote in person elsewhere than at their own polling station allotted to them under these Rules, except on production and surrender of a certificate as to that person's employment which must be in the appropriate form in the Appendix, or a form to the like effect (in these Rules referred to as "a certificate as to employment on duty on the day of the poll"), and signed by an officer of police of or above the rank of inspector or by the returning officer or combined authority returning officer, as the case may be.
- (5) Any certificate surrendered under this rule must forthwith be cancelled.
- (6) In this rule, a reference to a constable includes a person designated as a community support officer under section 38 of the Police Reform Act 2002 (police powers for employees).

Keeping of order in station

- 33.**—(1) It is the presiding officer's duty to keep order at the polling station.
- (2) If a person misconducts themselves in a polling station, or fails to obey the presiding officer's lawful orders, that person may immediately, by the presiding officer's order, be removed from the polling station—
- (a) by a constable in or near that station, or
 - (b) by any other person authorised in writing by the returning officer to remove him or her,
- and the person so removed shall not, without the presiding officer's permission, again enter the polling station during the day.
- (3) Any person so removed may, if charged with the commission in the polling station of an offence, be dealt with as a person taken into custody by a constable for an offence without a warrant.
- (4) The powers conferred by this rule must not be exercised so as to prevent a voter who is otherwise entitled to vote at a polling station from having an opportunity of voting at that station.

Sealing of ballot boxes

- 34.** Immediately before the commencement of the poll, the presiding officer must—
- (a) show the ballot box, empty, to such persons, if any, as are present in the polling station, so that they may see that the box is empty,
 - (b) lock up the box (if it has a lock),
 - (c) place the presiding officer's seal—

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- (i) on the lock, or
 - (ii) where the ballot box has no lock, on the box,
- in such a manner as to prevent its being opened without breaking the seal,
- (d) place the box in his or her view for the receipt of ballot papers, and
 - (e) keep the box locked and sealed or, as the case may be, sealed.

Questions to be put to voters

35.—(1) At the time of the application for a ballot paper (but not afterwards), the questions specified in the second column of the following Table—

- (a) may be put by the presiding officer to a person applying for a ballot paper who is mentioned in the first column, and
- (b) must be put if the letter “R” appears after the question and the candidate or his election or polling agent requires the question to be put:

<i>Q</i> <i>No</i>	<i>Person applying for ballot paper</i>	<i>Question</i>
1	A person applying as an elector	<p>(a) Are you the person registered in the register of local government electors for this election for a combined authority mayor as follows? <i>read the whole entry from the register</i> [R]</p> <p>(b) Have you already voted here or elsewhere at this election for a combined authority mayor otherwise than as proxy for some other person? [R]</p>
2	A person applying as proxy	<p>(a) Are you the person whose name appears as AB in the list of proxies for this election for a combined authority mayor as entitled to vote as proxy on behalf of CD? [R]</p> <p>(b) Have you already voted here or elsewhere at this election for a combined authority mayor as proxy on behalf of CD? [R]</p> <p>(c) Are you the spouse, civil partner, parent, grandparent, brother, sister, child or grandchild of CD? [R]</p>
3	A person applying as proxy for an elector with an anonymous entry (instead of the questions at entry 2)	<p>(a) Are you the person entitled to vote as proxy on behalf of the elector whose number on the register of electors is (<i>read out the number</i>)? [R]</p> <p>(b) Have you already voted here or elsewhere as proxy on behalf of the elector whose number on the register of electors is (<i>read out the number</i>)? [R]</p>

<i>Q</i>	<i>Person applying for ballot paper</i>	<i>Question</i>
<i>No</i>		(c) Are you the spouse, civil partner, parent, grandparent, brother, sister, child or grandchild of the person whose number on the register of electors is (<i>read out the number</i>)? [R]
4	A person applying as proxy if the question at entry 2(c) or 3(c) is not answered in the affirmative	Have you already voted at this election for a combined authority mayor on behalf of two persons of whom you are not the spouse, civil partner, parent, grandparent, brother, sister, child or grandchild? [R]
5	A person applying as an elector in relation to whom there is an entry in the postal voters list	(a) Did you apply to vote by post? (b) Why have you not voted by post?
6	A person applying as proxy who is named in the proxy postal voters list	(a) Did you apply to vote by post as proxy? (b) Why have you not voted by post as proxy?

(2) In the case of an elector in respect of whom a notice has been issued under section 13B(3B) or (3D) of the 1983 Act, the references in the questions at entries 1(a) and 3(a), (b) and (c) to reading from the register shall be taken as references to reading from the notice issued under section 13B(3B) or (3D) of the 1983 Act.

(3) A ballot paper must not be delivered to any person required to answer any of the above questions unless he has answered each question satisfactorily.

(4) Except as authorised by this rule, no inquiry shall be permitted as to the right of any person to vote.

Challenge of voter

- 36.** A person must not be prevented from voting by reason only that—
- (a) a candidate or the candidate’s election or polling agent declares that he or she has reasonable cause to believe that the person has committed an offence of personation, or
 - (b) the person is arrested on the grounds that he or she is suspected of committing or of being about to commit such an offence.

Voting procedure

37.—(1) A ballot paper must be delivered to a voter who applies for one, and immediately before delivery—

- (a) the number and (unless paragraph (2) applies) name of the elector as stated in the copy of the register of electors must be called out,
- (b) the number of the elector must be marked on the list mentioned in rule 28(4)(d) beside the number of the ballot paper to be issued to the elector,
- (c) a mark must be placed in the copy of the register of electors against the number of the elector to note that a ballot paper has been received but without showing the particular ballot paper which has been received, and

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- (d) in the case of a person applying for a ballot paper as proxy, a mark must also be placed against his name in the list of proxies.
- (2) In the case of an elector who has an anonymous entry, the elector (E) must show the presiding officer E's official poll card and only E's number shall be called out in pursuance of paragraph (1)(a).
- (3) In the case of an elector who is added to the register in pursuance of a notice issued under section 13B(3B) or (3D) of the 1983 Act, paragraph (1) is modified as follows
 - (a) in sub-paragraph (a), for "copy of the register of electors" substitute "copy of the notice issued under section 13B(3B) or (3D) of the 1983 Act",
 - (b) in sub-paragraph (c), for "in the register of electors" substitute "on the copy of the notice issued under section 13B(3B) or (3D) of the 1983 Act".
- (4) The voter, on receiving the ballot paper, must forthwith proceed into one of the compartments in the polling station and there secretly mark the paper and fold it up so as to conceal the vote, and must then show to the presiding officer the back of the paper, so as to disclose the number and other unique identifying mark, and put the ballot paper so folded up into the ballot box in the presiding officer's presence.
- (5) The voter must vote without undue delay, and must leave the polling station as soon as the voter's ballot paper has been put into the ballot box.
- (6) The same copy of the register of electors which is used under paragraph (1) for the combined authority mayoral election or, where paragraph (3) applies, the same copy of the notice issued under section 13B(3B) or (3D) in the 1983 Act, may be used for each relevant election or referendum, and—
 - (a) one mark may be placed in that copy of the register or on that notice under paragraph (1)(c) or in the list of proxies under paragraph (1)(d) to denote that a ballot paper has been issued in respect of each election or referendum, but
 - (b) where a ballot paper has not been issued in respect of a relevant election or referendum, a different mark must be placed in the copy of that register or, as the case may be, on that notice or in that list so as to identify each election or referendum in respect of which a ballot paper was issued.
- (7) A voter who at the close of the poll is in the polling station, or in a queue outside the polling station, for the purposes of voting shall (despite the close of the poll) be entitled to apply for a ballot paper under paragraph (1), and these rules apply in relation to such a voter accordingly.

Votes marked by presiding officer

- 38.**—(1) The presiding officer, on the application of a voter—
- (a) who is incapacitated by blindness or other disability from voting in the manner directed by these Rules, or
 - (b) who declares orally that he or she is unable to read,
- must, in the presence of the polling agents, cause the voter's vote to be marked on a ballot paper in the manner directed by the voter, and the ballot paper to be placed in the ballot box.
- (2) The name and number on the register of electors of every voter whose vote is marked in pursuance of this rule, and the reason why it is so marked, must be entered on a list (in these Rules called "the list of votes marked by the presiding officer").
 - (3) In the case of a person voting as proxy for an elector, the number to be entered together with the voter's name shall be the elector's number.
 - (4) In the case of a person in respect of whom a notice has been issued under section 13B(3B) or (3D) of the 1983 Act, paragraph (2) applies as if for "on the register of electors of every voter"

there were substituted “relating to every voter in respect of whom a notice has been issued under section 13B(3B) or (3D) of the 1983 Act”.

(5) The same list may be used for the combined authority mayoral election and each relevant election or referendum and, where it is so used, an entry in that list shall be taken to mean that the ballot papers were so marked in respect of each election or referendum, unless the list identifies the election or referendum at which the ballot paper was so marked.

Voting by persons with disabilities

39.—(1) If a voter makes an application to the presiding officer to be allowed, on the ground of—

- (a) blindness or other disability, or
- (b) inability to read,

to vote with the assistance of another person by whom the voter is accompanied (in these Rules referred to as “the companion”), the presiding officer must require the voter to declare, orally or in writing, whether the voter is so incapacitated by blindness or other disability, or by inability to read, as to be unable to vote without assistance.

(2) If the presiding officer—

- (a) is satisfied that the voter is so incapacitated, and
- (b) is also satisfied by a written declaration made by the companion (in these Rules referred to as “the declaration made by the companion of a voter with disabilities”) that the companion—
 - (i) is a qualified person within the meaning of this rule, and
 - (ii) has not previously assisted more than one voter with disabilities to vote at the election,

the presiding officer must grant the application, and then anything which is by these Rules required to be done to or by that voter in connection with the giving of the voter’s vote may be done to, or with the assistance of, the companion.

(3) For the purposes of these Rules—

- (a) a person is a voter with disabilities if the voter has made such a declaration as is mentioned in paragraph (1), and
- (b) a person shall be qualified to assist a voter with disabilities to vote if that person is either—
 - (i) a person who is entitled to vote as an elector at the election, or
 - (ii) the father, mother, brother, sister, spouse, civil partner, son or daughter of the voter and has attained the age of 18 years.

(4) Subject to paragraph (5), the name and number in the register of electors of every voter whose vote is given in accordance with this rule and the name and address of the companion must be entered on a list (in these Rules referred to as “the list of voters with disabilities assisted by companions”).

(5) In the case of a person voting as proxy for an elector, the number to be entered together with the voter’s name shall be the elector’s number.

(6) In the case of a person in respect of whom a notice has been issued under section 13B(3B) or (3D) of the 1983 Act, paragraph (4) applies as if for “in the register of electors of every voter” there were substituted “relating to every voter in respect of whom a notice has been issued under section 13B(3B) or (3D) of the 1983 Act”.

(7) The same list may be used for the combined authority mayoral election and each relevant election or referendum and, where it is so used, an entry in that list shall be taken to mean that the votes were so given in respect of each election or referendum, unless the list identifies the election or referendum at which the vote was so given.

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- (8) The declaration made by the companion of a voter with disabilities—
 - (a) must be in the appropriate form in the Appendix or a form to the like effect,
 - (b) must be made before the presiding officer at the time when the voter applies to vote with the assistance of the companion, and
 - (c) must forthwith be given to the presiding officer who must attest and retain it.
- (9) No fee or other payment shall be charged in respect of the declaration.

Tendered ballot papers—circumstances where available

- 40.**—(1) If a person, representing themselves to be—
- (a) a particular elector named on the register and not named in the absent voters list, or
 - (b) a particular person named in the list of proxies as proxy for an elector and not entitled to vote by post as proxy,

applies for a ballot paper after another person has voted in person either as the elector or his proxy, the applicant shall, on satisfactorily answering the questions permitted by law to be asked at the poll, be entitled, subject to the provisions of rule 41, to mark a ballot paper (in these Rules referred to as “a tendered ballot paper”) in the same manner as any other voter.

- (2) Paragraph (4) applies if—
- (a) a person (P) applies for a ballot paper representing themselves to be a particular elector named on the register,
 - (b) P is also named in the postal voters list, and
 - (c) P claims that P did not make an application to vote by post at the election.

- (3) Paragraph (4) also applies if—
- (a) a person (P) applies for a ballot paper representing themselves to be a particular person named as a proxy in the list of proxies,
 - (b) P is also named in the proxy postal voters list, and
 - (c) P claims that they did not make an application to vote by post as proxy.

(4) P shall, on satisfactorily answering the questions permitted by law to be asked at the poll, be entitled, subject to the provisions of rule 41, to mark a ballot paper (in these Rules referred to as a “tendered ballot paper”) in the same manner as any other voter.

- (5) Paragraph (6) applies if, before the close of the poll but after the last time at which a person may apply for a replacement postal ballot paper, a person represents themselves to be—
- (a) a particular elector named on the register who is also named in the postal voters list, or
 - (b) a particular person named as a proxy in the list of proxies and who is also named in the proxy postal voters list,

and claims to have lost or not received the postal ballot paper.

(6) The person shall, on satisfactorily answering the questions permitted by law to be asked at the poll, be entitled, subject to the provisions of rule 41, to mark a ballot paper (in these Rules referred to as a “tendered ballot paper”) in the same manner as any other voter.

Tendered ballot papers—general provisions

- 41.**—(1) A tendered ballot paper must—
- (a) be of a colour differing from that of the other ballot papers,

- (b) instead of being put into the ballot box, be given to the presiding officer and endorsed by the presiding officer with the name of the voter and the voter's number in the register of electors, and set aside in a separate packet.
- (2) The name of the voter and the voter's number in the register of electors must be entered on a list (in these Rules referred to as the "tendered votes list").
- (3) The same list may be used for the combined authority mayoral election and each relevant election or referendum and, where it so used, an entry in that list shall be taken to mean that tendered ballot papers were marked in respect of each election or referendum, unless the list identifies the election or referendum at which a tendered ballot paper was marked.
- (4) In the case of a person voting as proxy for an elector, the number to be endorsed or entered together with the voter's name shall be the number of that elector.
- (5) In the case of an elector who has an anonymous entry, this rule and rule 40 apply subject to the following modifications—
 - (a) in paragraphs (1)(b) and (2) above, the references to the name of the voter shall be ignored,
 - (b) otherwise, a reference to a person named on a register or list shall be construed as a reference to a person whose number appears in the register or list (as the case may be).
- (6) In the case of a person in respect of whom a notice has been issued under section 13B(3B) or (3D) of the 1983 Act, this rule and rule 40 shall apply as if—
 - (a) in rule 40(1)(a), (2)(a) and (5)(a), for "named on the register" there were substituted "in respect of whom a notice under section 13B(3B) or (3D) of the 1983 Act has been issued",
 - (b) in paragraph (1)(b) of this rule for "the voter's number in the register of electors" there were substituted "the number relating to the voter on a notice issued under section 13B(3B) or (3D) of the 1983 Act",
 - (c) in paragraph (2) of this rule, for "the voter's number in the register of electors" there were substituted "the number relating to the voter on a notice issued under section 13B(3B) or (3D) of the 1983 Act".

Spoilt ballot papers

42. A voter who has inadvertently dealt with the ballot paper in such manner that it cannot be conveniently used as a ballot paper may, on delivering it to the presiding officer and proving to the officer's satisfaction the fact of the inadvertence, obtain another ballot paper in the place of the ballot paper so delivered (in these Rules referred to as "a spoilt ballot paper"), and the spoilt ballot paper must be immediately cancelled.

Correction of errors on day of poll

43.—(1) The presiding officer must keep a list of persons to whom ballot papers are delivered in consequence of an alteration to the register made by virtue of section 13B(3B) or (3D) of the 1983 Act which takes effect on the day of the poll.

(2) The same list may be used for each relevant election or referendum and, where it so used, an entry in that list shall be taken to mean that ballot papers were issued in respect of each election or referendum, unless the list identifies the election or referendum for which a ballot paper was issued.

Adjournment of poll in case of riot

44.—(1) Where the proceedings at any polling station are interrupted or obstructed by riot or open violence, the presiding officer must adjourn the proceedings till the following day and must forthwith give notice to the returning officer.

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- (2) Where the poll is adjourned at any polling station—
 - (a) the hours of polling on the day to which it is adjourned must be the same as for the original day, and
 - (b) references in these Rules to the close of the poll shall be construed accordingly.

Procedure on close of poll

45.—(1) As soon as practicable after the close of the poll, the presiding officer must, in the presence of the polling agents, make up into separate packets, sealed with the presiding officer’s own seal and the seals of such polling agents as desire to affix their seals—

- (a) each ballot box in use at the station, sealed so as to prevent the introduction of additional ballot papers and unopened, but with the key, if any, attached,
- (b) the unused and spoiled ballot papers placed together,
- (c) the tendered ballot papers,
- (d) the marked copies of the register of electors (including any marked copy notices issued under section 13B(3B) or (3D) of the 1983 Act) and of the list of proxies,
- (e) the lists prepared under rule 19 including the parts which were completed in accordance with rule 37(1)(b) (together referred to in these Rules as “the completed corresponding number lists”),
- (f) the certificates as to employment on duty on the day of the poll,
- (g) the tendered votes list, the list of voters with disabilities assisted by companions, the list of votes marked by the presiding officer, a statement of the number of voters whose votes are so marked by the presiding officer under the heads “disability” and “unable to read”, the list maintained under rule 43 (correction of errors on day of poll), and the declarations made by the companions of voters with disabilities,

and must deliver the packets or cause them to be delivered to the returning officer to be taken charge of by the returning officer; but if the packets are not delivered by the presiding officer personally to the returning officer, the arrangements for their delivery shall require the returning officer’s approval.

(2) The contents of the packets referred to in sub-paragraphs (b), (c) and (f) of paragraph (1) above must not be combined with the contents of the packets made under the corresponding rule that applies at any relevant election or referendum; nor shall the statement prepared under paragraph (5) below be so combined.

(3) References to the returning officer in paragraph (1) above are references to the returning officer who discharges the functions specified in regulation 5 of the Combination of Polls Regulations.

(4) The marked copies of the register of electors and of the list of proxies must be in one packet but must not be in the same packet as the completed corresponding number lists or the certificates as to employment on duty on the day of the poll.

(5) The packets must be accompanied by a statement (in these Rules referred to as “the ballot paper account”) made by the presiding officer showing the number of ballot papers entrusted to the presiding officer, and accounting for them under the heads—

- (a) ballot papers issued and not otherwise accounted for,
- (b) unused ballot papers,
- (c) spoiled ballot papers and
- (d) tendered ballot papers.

Attendance at verification

46.—(1) This rule and rules 47 and 48 apply where the returning officer at the combined authority mayoral election discharges the functions specified in regulation 5 of the Combination of Polls Regulations.

(2) The returning officer must—

- (a) make arrangements for the verification of the ballot paper accounts in the presence of the counting agents appointed for the purposes of the combined authority mayoral election and those appointed for the purpose of each relevant election or referendum as soon as practicable after the close of the poll, and
- (b) give to the counting agents appointed for the purposes of the combined authority mayoral election and those appointed for the purpose of each relevant election or referendum notice in writing of the time and place at which the verification of the ballot paper accounts will begin.

(3) No person other than—

- (a) the returning officer and the returning officer's clerks,
- (b) the candidates and one other person chosen by each of them,
- (c) the election agents,
- (d) the counting agents,
- (e) persons who are entitled to attend by virtue of any of sections 6A to 6D of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000,
- (f) the combined authority returning officer and the combined authority returning officer's clerks,

may be present at the verification of the ballot papers, unless permitted by the returning officer to attend.

(4) A person not entitled to attend at the verification of the ballot papers shall not be permitted to do so by the returning officer unless the returning officer—

- (a) is satisfied that the efficient counting of the votes will not be impeded, and
- (b) has either consulted the election agents or thought it impracticable to do so.

(5) The returning officer must give the counting agents all such reasonable facilities for overseeing the proceedings, and all such information with respect to them, as the returning officer can give them consistently with the orderly conduct of the proceedings and the discharge of the returning officer's duties in connection with them.

Procedure at verification of ballot paper accounts

47.—(1) The returning officer must—

- (a) in the presence of the counting agents appointed for the purposes of the combined authority mayoral election and each relevant election or referendum open each ballot box and count and record separately the number of ballot papers used in each election,
- (b) in the presence of the election agents appointed for the purposes of the combined authority mayoral election and each relevant election or referendum verify each ballot paper account,
- (c) count such of the postal ballot papers as have been duly returned and record separately the number counted at the combined authority mayoral election and each relevant election or referendum,

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- (d) separate the ballot papers relating to the combined authority mayoral election from the ballot papers relating to each relevant election or referendum,
 - (e) make up into packets the ballot papers for each relevant election or referendum and seal them up into separate containers endorsing on each a description of the area to which the ballot papers relate,
 - (f) deliver or cause to be delivered to the returning officer for the relevant election or referendum to which the ballot papers relate—
 - (i) those containers, together with a list of them and of the contents of each, and
 - (ii) the ballot paper accounts together with a copy of the statement as to the result of their verification in respect of that election, and
 - (g) at the same time deliver or cause to be delivered to that officer packets that so relate containing—
 - (i) the unused and spoilt ballot papers,
 - (ii) the tendered ballot papers.
 - (iii) the certificates as to employment on duty on the day of the poll.
- (2) A postal ballot paper must not be taken to be duly returned unless—
- (a) it is returned in the manner set out in paragraph (3) and reaches the returning officer or any polling station in the local authority area for which the returning officer acts before the close of the poll, and
 - (b) the postal voting statement, duly signed, is also returned in the manner set out in paragraph (3) and reaches the returning officer or such a polling station before that time,
 - (c) the postal voting statement also states the date of birth of the elector or proxy (as the case may be), and
 - (d) in a case where steps for verifying the date of birth and signature of an elector or proxy have been prescribed by regulations made under the 1983 Act, the returning officer (having taken such steps) verifies the date of birth and signature of the elector or proxy (as the case may be).
- (3) The manner in which any postal ballot paper or postal voting statement may be returned—
- (a) to the returning officer, is by hand or by post,
 - (b) to a polling station, is by hand.
- (4) A postal ballot paper or postal voting statement that reaches the returning officer or a polling station on or after the close of the poll is treated for the purposes of this rule as reaching that officer or polling station before the close of the poll if it is delivered by a person who, at the close of the poll, is in the polling station, or in a queue outside the polling station, for the purpose of returning it.
- (5) Where separate ballot boxes are used, no vote for any candidate shall be rendered invalid by the ballot paper being placed in the ballot box intended for use at any relevant election or referendum.
- (6) The returning officer, while counting and recording the number of ballot papers, must keep the ballot papers with their faces upwards and take all proper precautions for preventing any person from seeing the numbers or other unique identifying marks printed on the back of the papers.
- (7) Unless otherwise directed by the combined authority returning officer, the returning officer must determine the hours during which the procedure under this rule is to be carried out and must take proper precautions for the security of the ballot papers and documents.
- (8) The returning officer (R) must verify each ballot paper account by comparing it with the number of ballot papers recorded by R, and the unused and spoilt ballot papers in R's possession and the tendered votes list (opening and resealing the packets containing the unused and spoilt ballot

papers and the tendered votes list) and must draw up a provisional statement as to the result of the verification, which any election agent may copy.

(9) As soon as practicable after the returning officer has drawn up the statement as to the result of the verification, the returning officer must inform the combined authority returning officer of its contents.

Additional steps: verification and count carried out at different places

48.—(1) This rule applies where the votes at an election are to be counted at a place other than that at which the procedures for the verification of the ballot paper accounts are carried out.

(2) The returning officer must on completing the procedure under rule 47—

- (a) make up into packets the ballot papers and the postal ballot papers for the election and seal them up into containers endorsing on each the description of the voting area to which those ballot papers relate; and
- (b) deliver or cause to be delivered to the place at which the counting of the votes is to be carried out—
 - (i) those containers together with a list of them and of the contents of each, and
 - (ii) the ballot paper accounts together with a copy of the statement as to the result of their verification.

(3) If the packets are not delivered by the returning officer personally, their delivery must be in accordance with arrangements approved by the combined authority returning officer.

(4) The combined authority returning officer may give a returning officer directions which, once the packets have been delivered to the place where the votes at the election are to be counted, require the returning officer to take specified steps for the carrying out of further specified verification procedures in relation to the ballot papers and other documents relating to the election.

(5) In paragraph (4), “specified” means specified by the combined authority area returning officer in directions given under that paragraph.

Attendance at the count

49.—(1) Where the returning officer at the combined authority mayoral election discharges the functions specified in regulation 5 of the Combination of Polls Regulations, the returning officer must—

- (a) make arrangements for counting the votes at the election as soon as practicable after the close of the poll in the presence of the counting agents appointed for the purposes of that election; and
- (b) give the counting agents notice in writing of the time and place at which the counting of votes will begin.

(2) Where the returning officer at the combined authority mayoral election does not discharge the functions specified in regulation 5 of the Combination of Polls Regulations, the returning officer must—

- (a) make arrangements for counting the votes in the presence of the counting agents as soon as practicable after the delivery of the ballot papers to the returning officer by the person who does discharge those functions, and
- (b) give to the counting agents notice in writing of the time, if by then the returning officer has received the ballot papers, and of the place at which the returning officer will begin to count the votes.

(3) No person other than—

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- (a) the returning officer and the returning officer's clerks,
- (b) the candidates and one other person chosen by each of them,
- (c) the election agents,
- (d) the counting agents,
- (e) persons who are entitled to attend by virtue of any of sections 6A to 6D of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000,
- (f) the combined authority returning officer and the combined authority returning officer's clerks,

may be present at the counting of the votes under rule 50, unless permitted by the returning officer to attend.

(4) A person not entitled to attend at the counting of the votes shall not be permitted to do so by the returning officer unless the returning officer—

- (a) is satisfied that the efficient separation of the ballot papers or, as the case may be, the efficient counting of the votes will not be impeded, and
- (b) has either consulted the election agents or thought it impracticable to do so.

(5) The returning officer must give the counting agents all such reasonable facilities for overseeing the proceedings, and all such information with respect to them, as the returning officer can give them consistently with the orderly conduct of the proceedings and the discharge of the returning officer's duties in connection with them.

(6) In particular, where the votes are counted by sorting the ballot papers according to the candidate for whom the vote is given and then counting the number of ballot papers for each candidate, the counting agents shall be entitled to satisfy themselves that the ballot papers are correctly sorted.

The first count

50.—(1) Where the returning officer at the combined authority mayoral election discharges the functions specified in regulation 5 of the Combination of Polls Regulations, the returning officer must, after completion of the proceedings under rule 47, mix together all of the ballot papers used at the combined authority mayoral election and count the votes given on them.

(2) Where the returning officer at the combined authority mayoral election does not discharge the functions specified in regulation 5 of the Combination of Polls Regulations, the returning officer must—

- (a) on receipt of containers containing the ballot papers from the returning officer who does discharge those functions, and after the time specified in the notice given under rule 49(2), in the presence of the counting agents, open each container,
- (b) where the proceedings on the issue and receipt of postal ballot papers are not taken together with those proceedings at a relevant election or referendum under regulation 65 of the Elections Regulations, or under that regulation as applied by this Order or regulations made under sections 9MG and 105 of the Local Government Act 2000⁽⁶⁾ or sections 52ZQ and 113 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992⁽⁷⁾, count such of the postal ballot papers as have been duly returned and record the number counted; and
- (c) mix together the postal ballot papers and the ballot papers from all of the containers and count the votes given on them.

(3) Paragraph (10) does not apply to proceedings under paragraph (2).

⁽⁶⁾ Section 9MG was inserted by the Localism Act 2011 (c. 20), section 21 and Schedule 2.

⁽⁷⁾ Section 52ZQ was inserted by the Localism Act 2011, section 72 and Schedule 5.

- (4) The returning officer must then—
 - (a) where the election is contested by three or more candidates, count the first preference votes given on them,
 - (b) where the election is contested by only two candidates, count the votes given on them
- (5) A postal ballot paper must not be taken to be duly returned unless—
 - (a) it is returned in the manner set out in paragraph (6) and reaches the returning officer or any polling station in the appropriate electoral area before the close of the poll,
 - (b) the postal voting statement, duly signed, is also returned in the manner set out in paragraph (6) and reaches the returning officer or such a polling station before that time,
 - (c) the postal voting statement also states the date of birth of the elector or proxy (as the case may be), and
 - (d) in a case where steps for verifying the date of birth and signature of an elector or proxy have been prescribed by regulations made under the 1983 Act, the returning officer (having taken such steps) verifies the date of birth and signature of the elector or proxy.
- (6) The manner in which any postal ballot paper or postal voting statement may be returned—
 - (a) to the returning officer, is by hand or by post,
 - (b) to a polling station, is by hand.
- (7) A postal ballot paper or postal voting statement that reaches the returning officer or a polling station on or after the close of the poll is treated for the purposes of this rule as reaching that officer or polling station before the close of the poll if it is delivered by a person who, at the close of the poll, is in the polling station, or in a queue outside the polling station, for the purpose of returning it.
- (8) The appropriate electoral area in respect of any voter shall be—
 - (a) the area which is common to the parliamentary constituency, electoral area, local counting area, local authority area or voting area (as the case may be) in which the polls at the combined authority mayoral election and any relevant election or referendum are being taken together, and
 - (b) in respect of which polls the voter has been issued with a postal ballot paper,and in subparagraph (a) “electoral area” means the local authority area for which the returning officer acts.
- (9) The returning officer must not count any tendered ballot papers.
- (10) While counting and recording the number of postal ballot papers and counting the votes, the returning officer must keep the ballot papers with their faces upwards and take all proper precautions for preventing any person from seeing the numbers or other unique identifying marks printed on the back of the papers.
- (11) The returning officer must so far as practicable proceed continuously with counting the votes, allowing only time for refreshment, except that the returning officer may exclude the hours between 7 in the evening and 9 on the following morning.
- (12) During the time so excluded the returning officer must—
 - (a) place the ballot papers and other documents relating to the election under the returning officer’s own seal and the seals of such of the counting agents as desire to affix their seals, and
 - (b) otherwise take proper precautions for the security of the papers and documents.

Rejected ballot papers

51.—(1) Any ballot paper—

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(a) which does not bear the official mark, or
(b) on which more than one first preference vote is given, or
(c) on which anything is written or marked by which the voter can be identified except the printed number and other unique identifying mark on the back, or
(d) which is unmarked or void for uncertainty as to the first preference vote,
shall, subject to paragraph (2), be void and not counted.

(2) A ballot paper on which the vote is marked—

- (a) elsewhere than in the proper place, or
- (b) otherwise than by means of a cross, or
- (c) by more than one mark,

shall not for such reason be deemed to be void if—

- (i) at an election at which three or more candidates remain validly nominated, an intention that a vote shall be given, by way of a first preference vote, for not more than one of the candidates clearly appears, or
- (ii) at any other election, an intention that a vote shall be for one only of the candidates clearly appears,

and (in either case) the way the paper is marked does not itself identify the voter and it is not shown that he can be identified by it.

(3) A ballot paper which is not otherwise void and on which not more than one first preference vote is marked (whether or not a second preference vote is marked) shall be valid as respects that vote, and counted accordingly.

(4) The returning officer must endorse the word “rejected” on any ballot paper which under this rule is not to be counted, and shall add to the endorsement the words “rejection objected to” if any objection is made to the returning officer’s decision by a counting agent.

(5) The returning officer must draw up a provisional statement showing the number of ballot papers rejected, under the several heads of—

- (a) want of official mark,
- (b) voting for more than one candidate as to the first preference vote,
- (c) writing or mark by which the voter could be identified, and
- (d) unmarked or void for uncertainty as to the first preference vote.

(6) As soon as practicable after the completion of that statement, the returning officer must inform the combined authority returning officer of its contents.

(7) In the case of an election where only two candidates remain validly nominated, this rule is to apply as if—

- (a) in paragraph (1)(b), for “first preference vote” there were substituted “vote”,
- (b) in paragraphs (1)(d), (5)(b) and (d), the words “as to the first preference vote” were omitted,
- (c) paragraph (3) were omitted.

Decisions on ballot papers

52. The decision of the returning officer on any question arising in respect of a ballot paper shall be final, but shall be subject to review on an election petition.

Re-count

53.—(1) A candidate, the candidate’s election agent or the counting agent designated under rule 29(3) may, if present when the counting or any re-count of the votes or, as the case may be, the first preference votes, is completed, require the returning officer to have the votes re-counted or again re-counted but the returning officer may refuse to do so if in the returning officer’s opinion the request is unreasonable.

(2) No step shall be taken on the completion of the counting or any re-count of votes, or as the case may be, the first preference votes, until the candidates and election agents present at its completion have been given a reasonable opportunity to exercise the right conferred by this rule.

Procedure at conclusion of first count

54.—(1) As soon as practicable after the conclusion of the first count (including any re-count), the returning officer must draw up a provisional statement showing—

- (a) the total number of ballot papers used,
- (b) the total number of rejected ballot papers,
- (c) at an election contested by three or more candidates—
 - (i) the number of first preference votes given for each candidate, and
 - (ii) the total number of first preference votes given, and
- (d) at an election contested by only two candidates, the number of votes given for each candidate.

(2) As soon as practicable after completion of the statement, the returning officer must—

- (a) inform such of the candidates and their election agents as are then present of the contents of the statements prepared in accordance with rule 51(5) and paragraph (1) of this rule, and
- (b) inform the combined authority reporting officer of the contents of those statements.