

Media factsheet

Local government elections in England 6 May 2010

1 Media contacts and resources

This factsheet covers the timetable and rules applying to local elections in England, taking place on 6 May 2010. The Commission has also provided a handbook for the UK general election. This is available on the Electoral Commission website or by contacting the press office.

Electoral Commission press office
9am – 6pm: 020 7271 0704
Out of hours contact: 07789 920414
press@electoralcommission.org.uk

The Electoral Commission is an independent body set up by the UK Parliament. We set standards for well-run elections and regulate party and election finance.

- www.electoralcommission.org.uk our corporate website features a dedicated elections area and media centre for journalists.
- www.aboutmyvote.co.uk provides information on how to register and vote.
- www.dopolitics.org.uk is an online resource for democracy practitioners.

Local elections are run by the Returning Officer at the relevant local authority. Please contact the Elections Office at your local authority for details of the local elections taking place in your area.

2 Elections 2010 overview

What elections are taking place?

Scheduled elections are taking place to 166 local authorities across England on Thursday 6 May 2010, all of which will use the first-past-the-post voting system. A full list of English local elections can be found at the end of this factsheet.

Additionally, there will be elections for the directly elected mayors of Hackney, Lewisham, Newham and Watford. The Commission's formal remit does not extend to these elections, but we will produce some guidance for candidates.

Timetable

Event	Date
Publication of notice of election	Not later than Monday 29 March
Nomination period	During office hours on any working day from the date stated on the notice of election
Close of nominations	12 noon on Thursday 8 April
Publish statement as to persons nominated	12 noon on Monday 12 April
Deadline for withdrawal of candidature	12 noon on Tuesday 13 April
Deadline for appointment of election agents	12 noon on Tuesday 13 April
Deadline for applications for new postal votes and for amendments to existing postal and proxy voting arrangements	5pm on Tuesday 20 April
Deadline for final registration applications to be included on the register in order to be able to vote in the election	Tuesday 20 April
Deadline for new applications to vote by proxy (Not postal proxy), except for medical emergencies	5pm on Tuesday 27 April
Publish notice of alteration of register as a result of late registration applications	Wednesday 28 April
Deadline for appointment of counting and polling agents	Wednesday 28 April
First day to re-issue postal ballot papers claimed to have been lost or not received	Thursday 29 April
ELECTION DAY	
Deadline for applying for an emergency proxy vote	5pm on Thursday 6 May
Deadline for replacement of spoilt or lost postal votes	5pm on Thursday 6 May
Deadline for making alterations to the register to correct a clerical error	9pm on Thursday 6 May
Return of election expenses	Thursday 10 June (if result declared before midnight on 6 May) / Friday 11 June (if result declared on 7 May)
Declaration of candidate expenses	7 working days after election expenses are returned

Please note that this timetable is for the English local elections only. Please refer to the UK general election handbook for details of the general election timetable.

3 Who can vote?

Who can register and vote?

A person can vote in English local government elections if they appear on the electoral register and are:

- Aged 18 or over on polling day. A person can register once they are 16 but cannot vote until they are 18.
- A British, Irish or qualifying Commonwealth citizen resident in the UK. To be able to register to vote as a qualifying Commonwealth citizen a person must have leave to remain in the UK.
- Citizens of other European Union (EU) member states who are resident in the UK.

More information, including information on how to register, can be found at www.aboutmyvote.co.uk

4 Registration of political parties and candidates

What is the deadline for registering a new political party to contest the local government elections in May?

The register of political parties was frozen on **Monday 29 March 2010**. Accordingly, no changes will be made to the register in respect of this election. Please refer to our registers page for more information:

<http://registers.electoralcommission.org.uk/regulatory-issues/regpoliticalparties.cfm>

Who can stand as a candidate?

To qualify as a candidate for election to a local authority in England, a person must be at least 18 years old and a British, Irish, qualifying Commonwealth or European Union citizen. To qualify to stand as a Commonwealth candidate a person must have indefinite leave to remain.

They must also meet at least one of the following four qualifications:

- they are registered as a local government elector for the local authority area in which they wish to stand, or
- they have lived in the local authority area during the whole of the last 12 months, or
- they have occupied as owner or tenant any land or premises in that local authority area during the whole of the 12 months before the day they are nominated, or
- their main or only place of work during the last 12 months has been in the local authority area.

Are there any reasons why someone couldn't be a candidate?

There are a range of disqualifications that can prevent a person from standing. These include: working for the local authority for which election is sought; having been sentenced to prison for three months or more in the last five years; or being the subject of a bankruptcy restriction order or interim order.

Can all candidates use a party description on the ballot paper?

Candidates who want to use a description on the ballot paper can only do so if they have the permission of a registered political party. Candidates may only use one of up to 12 possible descriptions registered with the Commission or the registered name of the party.

A candidate not standing on behalf of a registered political party may use the word 'Independent'. All candidates have the option of not using a description at all and leaving that part of the nomination paper, and the ballot paper, blank.

Is a deposit required?

Candidates are not required to pay a deposit for local authority elections.

5 Reportable expenditure

What counts as election spending?

A candidate's election spending is defined as spending on certain items used for the purpose of their election after the date on which they become a candidate. Spending on accommodation, goods, services or facilities counts as election spending if used during the regulated period, regardless of whether the money was spent before or after the start of the regulated period.

The agent must also report in the candidate's spending return details of any cash or non-cash donations of more than £50 made to the candidate or agent for the purpose of meeting election spending incurred by or on behalf of the candidate.

The regulated period for party spending is as per the UK general election handbook.

What is the regulated period?

The regulated period is the period during which the spending limits apply and begins on the date a person becomes a candidate and ends on polling day on 6 May 2010.

For the English local government elections, the earliest date for becoming a candidate is Monday 29 March 2010.

Does spending before the regulated period count?

Money that was spent before the start of the regulated period must be included if the goods or services purchased are used during the regulated period.

What are the spending limits?

The amount candidates at a local authority election are allowed to spend is calculated using the following formula:

$\text{£600} + 5\text{p per entry on the register of electors for the ward or division in which the candidate is standing}$

This limit covers both direct spending by the election agent and gifts in kind provided to the candidate or agent. Election spending may only be incurred by the candidate, his election agent or persons authorised in writing. The requirement to declare expenses does not mean they are reimbursed.

Who should the candidate report their spending to?

An election spending return detailing all money spent on the campaign must be returned to the Returning Officer within 35 days after the day the result of the election is declared and are available for public inspection for two years after the election at council offices.

What has to be reported to the Electoral Commission?

Candidates at local government elections are not required to report donations to the Electoral Commission during the regulated period. Any donations received should be

reported in the candidate's election expenses return which is provided to the local returning officer.

Some candidates may receive donations for political activities other than their candidacy. They must report these donations in their capacity as a regulated donee to the Electoral Commission if they are over £1500.

Appendix A: List of English local government elections on 6 May 2010

All local government elections are scheduled for 6 May 2010.

Most elections are by thirds. Those that are halves are marked with an H and those that are whole council are marked with a W.

	Authority Name	39	Dudley
1	Amber Valley	40	Ealing W
2	Adur	41	Eastleigh
3	Barking & Dagenham W	42	Elmbridge
4	Barnet W	43	Enfield W
5	Barnsley	44	Epping Forest
6	Barrow-in Furness	46	Fareham
7	Basildon	47	Gateshead
8	Basingstoke & Deane	48	Gloucester City
9	Bassetlaw	49	Gosport
10	Bexley W	50	Great Yarmouth
11	Birmingham	51	Greenwich W
12	Blackburn with Darwen	52	Hackney W + Elected Mayor
13	Bolton	53	Halton
14	Bradford	54	Hammersmith & Fulham W
15	Brent W	55	Haringey W
16	Brentwood	56	Harlow
17	Bristol City	57	Harrogate
18	Bromley	58	Harrow W
19	Broxbourne	59	Hart
20	Burnley	60	Hartlepool
21	Bury	61	Hastings
22	Calderdale	62	Havant
23	Cambridge City	63	Havering W
24	Camden W	64	Hertsmere
25	Cannock Chase	65	Hillingdon
26	Carlisle City	66	Hounslow W
27	Castle Point	67	Huntingdonshire
28	Cheltenham H	68	Hyndburn
29	Cherwell	69	Ipswich
30	Chorley	70	Islington W
31	Colchester	71	Kensington & Chelsea W
32	Coventry	72	Kingston upon Hull City
33	Craven	73	Kingston upon Thames W
34	Crawley	74	Kirklees
35	Croydon W	75	Knowsley
36	Daventry	76	Lambeth W
37	Derby	77	Leeds
38	Doncaster	78	Lewisham W + Elected Mayor

79	Lincoln City	124	Southend
80	Liverpool	125	Southwark W
81	Maidstone	126	St Albans City
82	Manchester	127	St Helens
83	Merton W	128	Stevenage
84	Milton Keynes	129	Stockport
85	Mole Valley	130	Stoke on Trent City
86	Newcastle under Lyme	131	Stratford on Avon
87	Newcastle-upon-Tyne	132	Stroud
88	Newham W + Elected Mayor	133	Sunderland
89	North East Lincolnshire	134	Sutton W
90	North Hertfordshire	135	Swale
91	North Tyneside	136	Swindon
93	Nuneaton & Bedworth H	137	Tameside
94	Oldham	138	Tamworth
95	Oxford City	139	Tandridge
96	Pendle	140	Three Rivers
97	Peterborough City	141	Thurrock
98	Plymouth City	142	Tower Hamlets W
99	Portsmouth City	143	Trafford
100	Preston	144	Tunbridge Wells
101	Purbeck	145	Wakefield
102	Reading	146	Walsall
103	Redbridge W	147	Waltham Forest W
104	Redditch	148	Wandsworth W
105	Reigate & Banstead	149	Warrington
106	Richmond upon Thames W	150	Watford
107	Rochdale	151	Waveney
108	Rochford	152	Welwyn Hatfield
109	Rossendale	153	West Lancashire
110	Rotherham	154	West Lindsey
111	Rugby	155	West Oxfordshire
112	Runnymede	156	Westminster W
113	Rushmoor	157	Weymouth and Portland
114	Salford	158	Wigan
115	Sandwell	159	Winchester City
116	Sefton	160	Wirral
117	Sheffield	161	Woking
118	Slough	162	Wokingham
119	Solihull	163	Wolverhampton
120	South Cambridgeshire	164	Worcester City
121	South Lakeland	165	Worthing
122	South Tyneside	166	Wyre Forest
123	Southampton City		