

Part B – Action before the poll

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1 Timetable

1.1 The timetable for a local government election in England and Wales is set out in the relevant election rules.¹ The election timetable is calculated by excluding *dies non*, which are Saturdays, Sundays, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Good Friday, any other bank holiday, any day of official mourning or thanksgiving.² Throughout this guidance, references to 'working' days appear where the time period in question is calculated by excluding *dies non*. Any references to 'calendar' days appear where the time period is calculated by counting all days, including weekend days and bank holidays.



The election timetable cannot be amended for any reason.

Table 1: Timetable for a local government election in England and Wales

Proceeding	Number of working days before the poll (deadline if not 12 midnight)
Notice of election to be published	Not later than 25 days
Delivery of nomination papers	During office hours on the days stated on the notice of election
Deadline for delivery of nomination papers	19 days (12 noon) ³
Publish statement as to persons nominated	Not later than 17 days (12 noon)
Deadline for withdrawals of candidature	16 days (12 noon)
Deadline for notice of appointment of election agents	16 days (12 noon)
Last day for applications to be included on the register of electors in order to vote at the election	11 days
Deadline for requests for a new postal vote or to change or cancel an existing postal vote or proxy appointment	11 days (5pm)

¹ Rule 1, LEPAR 2006; Rule 1, Schedule 2, P&C Rules.

² Please note: Maundy Thursday is not a *dies non* (Section 20, EAA).

³ If the election is combined with a European Parliamentary election, the deadline moves to 4pm.

Table 1 (cont.): Timetable for a local government election in England and Wales

Proceeding	Number of working days before the poll (deadline if not 12 midnight)
Deadline for new applications to vote by proxy (not postal proxy), except for medical emergencies	6 days (5pm)
Publish notice of poll	Not later than 6 days
Last day for notice of appointment of polling and counting agents	5 days
First day to issue replacement postal ballot packs in response to requests to replace lost postal ballot papers	4 days
Polling day	0 (7am – 10pm)
Deadline for the issue of replacements for spoilt or lost postal ballot papers	Polling day (5pm)
Deadline for new applications to vote by proxy on grounds of a medical emergency	Polling day (5pm)
Deadline for making alterations to the register to correct a clerical error or to implement a court (registration appeal) decision	Polling day (9pm)
Last day for the receipt of return of election expenses	35 calendar days after declaration of result
Last day for election expenses declaration	7 working days after the submission of election expenses return

1.2 The timetable for any parish or community council elections taking place on the same day as the principal area elections is the same as that outlined above, except for the entries regarding the return of election expenses, which are different for candidates at parish or community council elections.⁴

1.3 At parish or community council elections, the following timetable applies for the return of election expenses.⁵

⁴ Section 90, RPA 1983.

⁵ Schedule 4, RPA 1983.

Table 2: Return of expenses at parish or community council elections

Proceeding	Day
Last day for the receipt of return of election expenses	28 calendar days after declaration of result

2 Register of electors

Legal requirements

2.1 The Electoral Registration Officer will supply the Returning Officer with the register that is required for the different aspects of the election, including the version for use at nominations and the version for polling day. The different versions are explained below.

2.2 The register of electors that is used on polling day is the version as it stands on the fifth working day before the poll. No specific 'election register' is published; rather, the register for use at the election is compiled from the last published version of the register and includes any amendments made to the last published register, with the final amendment being made by the notice of alteration published by the Electoral Registration Officer on the fifth working day before the poll.

2.3 Amendments can be made after this point but only to correct a clerical error or to implement the decision of a court (registration appeal). The latest time that a determination can be made to amend the register for these reasons is 9pm on polling day.

2.4 Individuals may submit applications to register up until the eleventh working day before the poll.⁶ It is important to explain the deadline to candidates and agents during pre-election briefings.

2.5 A person will be entitled to vote at an election if their registration **has taken effect** by or on the fifth working day before polling day. The deadline for individuals to apply to be registered will be 11 working days prior to polling day.



Anonymous registration applications may be added to the register in time for the election if determined by the Electoral Registration Officer before the publication of the notice of alteration to the register on the fifth working day before the poll, as there is no objection process for anonymous registrants.

Guidance on processing anonymous registration applications can be found in Part F, 'Special category electors', of the Electoral Commission's manual *Managing electoral registration in Great Britain: Guidance for Electoral Registration Officers*.

Register to be used for nominations

2.6 Nomination papers must include an indication of support for the candidate from registered electors in the electoral area. At a principal area election, this is fulfilled by no fewer than 10 such registered electors subscribing the nomination by signing the nomination paper.

⁶ Section 13B, RPA 1983, as inserted by Section 15, EAA.



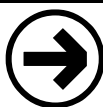
At parish and community elections, there is only a requirement for two such electors to subscribe the nomination paper.⁷

2.7 Each elector may not subscribe more nominations than there are vacancies in the electoral area.⁸ During the election period, subscribers may not subscribe additional nomination papers for candidates standing in any other ward in the principal area.⁹ A person who is shown on the register as being under 18 years old at the time of nomination can only subscribe a nomination paper if they will be 18 years old on or before polling day.¹⁰

2.8 The electoral register is used to check whether those people who subscribe a nomination paper are registered electors, as the rules require that the nomination paper must give the elector number of each person subscribing it.¹¹

2.9 The version of the register that is to be used to check nominations is the one that is in force on the last day for publication of the notice of election.¹²

2.10 It is important that the correct version of the register is used in checking that the subscribers are valid. Both a hard copy of the correct register and the electoral management system should be used to minimise the risk of missing a subscriber who has subscribed a second paper. When using the hard copy of the register, it should be physically marked when nominations are formally submitted.



Full details of dealing with and determining nomination papers are described below in Section 4, 'Nomination process'.

Amending the electoral register – clerical errors



The determination of clerical errors is a decision of the Electoral Registration Officer. Where the Returning Officer is not also the Electoral Registration Officer, they will have to agree with the Electoral Registration Officer a method for communicating clerical error determinations made on polling day.

2.11 The register to be used on polling day may be amended by the Electoral Registration Officer:

- to rectify any clerical error, or
- to implement a court (registration appeal) decision

⁷ Rule 6(1), Schedule 2, P&C Rules 2006.

⁸ Rule 6(5), LEPAR 2006.

⁹ Rule 6(5), LEPAR 2006.

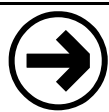
¹⁰ Rule 6(7)(b), LEPAR 2006.

¹¹ Rule 6(3), LEPAR 2006.

¹² Rule 6(7)(a), LEPAR 2006.

where the Electoral Registration Officer has made a determination by 9pm on polling day.¹³

2.12 No other changes may be made to the electoral register for any reason.

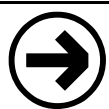


For further consideration of clerical errors, see Part D of this guidance, 'The poll', Section 3, 'The register of electors' and the Commission's guidance *Managing electoral registration in Great Britain: Guidance for Electoral Registration Officers*, Part D, 'Monthly alterations to the register', Section 4, 'Notice of alteration'.

Polling station registers

2.13 Polling station registers can be printed once the election notice of alteration has been published, i.e. five working days before polling day. However, procedures will need to be put in place to cope with any necessary amendments to the polling station registers should either clerical errors be identified or court decisions (registration appeals) notified after the registers have been printed.

2.14 Whether such determinations are made before polling day or on polling day itself, the Returning Officer should agree with the Electoral Registration Officer a method for communicating the relevant information to Presiding Officers.



Further details on communicating amendments made to the register on polling day can be found in Part D, 'The poll', Section 3, 'The register of electors'.

2.15 To assist with the amendment of registers, the Returning Officer should attach an additional sheet to the polling station registers to record any amendments. Either the Returning Officer or the Presiding Officer can then add to this sheet all register amendments made and notified by the Electoral Registration Officer after the fifth day before polling day as a result of clerical errors and court decisions on registration appeals. Electoral Registration Officers should liaise with their suppliers to check whether their software systems can produce registers with such a back page appended, or they should produce one themselves.

2.16 A revised register should not be published as standard practice in advance of an election. The Electoral Registration Officer will send the Returning Officer a copy of the register as amended by any notice of alteration published since the last revised register, including the last notice published on the fifth working day before the poll.

2.17 Each Presiding Officer should be provided with the appropriate register of electors for their polling station. They should also be made aware of the various categories of elector shown on the register. The Returning Officer should ensure that polling station staff are adequately trained as to which

¹³ Section 13B, RPA 1983 and Regulation 36, RPR 2001.

electors are entitled to vote at a local government election in England and Wales. The Commission's *Handbook for polling station staff* provides a guide to all the register markers. The categories and associated markers are also included in the Commission's *A quick guide for polling station staff*.

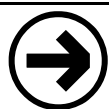


Combination

Where the poll at a local government election in England and Wales is combined with the poll at a UK Parliamentary general or by-election or with the poll at a European Parliamentary election, the franchise for the two polls will be different. It is essential that polling station staff are instructed to pay particular attention to the identifying letters printed next to electors' names. The Commission's guidance *Managing electoral registration in Great Britain: Guidance for Electoral Registration Officers*, Part B, 'Entitlement to register' provides further information on who is entitled to vote at particular elections. All the Commission's polling station handbooks and quick guides also contain a guide to the register markers.

Access and supply

2.18 Certain persons are entitled to be supplied with the full electoral register free of charge and in electronic format, unless a request is received in advance of supply for the register to be provided as a printed copy. Details are set out below.¹⁴



Detailed information on access and supply of the electoral register to candidates and others can be found in Part H, 'Access and supply', of the Commission's guidance, *Managing electoral registration in Great Britain: Guidance for Electoral Registration Officers*.

Supply of the register to candidates

2.19 A candidate at a local government election in England and Wales can request a copy of the full register for the ward in which they are standing.¹⁵



The meaning of the term **candidate** is given in **Section 118A(3)(a) and (b), RPA 1983**. At a local government election, a person will become a candidate either:

- on the last day for publication of notice of election if, on or before that day, they or others have declared themselves to be a candidate at the election
- otherwise, on the day that they, or others, declare themselves to be a candidate or on the day on which they submit their nomination papers (whichever is the earlier)

2.20 Candidates must make a written request for the register.¹⁶ The Electoral Registration Officer should produce a form for candidates to sign in order for

¹⁴ Regulation 102, RPR 2001.

¹⁵ Regulation 108, RPR 2001.

¹⁶ Regulation 102(2), RPR 2001.

them to obtain the register. This form should provide information regarding the correct use of the data and should also allow the candidate the option of requesting either a paper or electronic data copy of the register.

2.21 As soon as the written request is received and that person has become a candidate as defined above, they must be supplied with a copy of the register as soon as is practicable so that they can use the register to assist them with completing their nomination paper, as well as for campaigning.

2.22 The Returning Officer must not withhold the register until a candidate submits a nomination paper. No deposit or payment can be required in order for a register to be supplied.

2.23 Please note that agents cannot apply for a copy of the register, although they may use it on the candidate's behalf.

Supply of the register to registered political parties

2.24 A registered political party can request a copy of the full register at any time throughout the year.¹⁷ Their right to receive a copy of the register is not dependent on when elections occur or where they have a history of standing.

Inspection of the register

2.25 A copy of the full register must be made available for inspection, under supervision, at the office of the Electoral Registration Officer and any other place, if any, suitable for inspection in the registration area.¹⁸ Any person who inspects the register may only make handwritten notes to record any part of it and these notes must not be used for marketing purposes. The handwritten notes can be used for electoral purposes. All those inspecting the register should be made aware of the restrictions before being given access to the register.

¹⁷ Regulation 106, RPR 2001.

¹⁸ Regulation 43, RPR 2001.

3 Guidance for candidates and agents

Briefings

3.1 The Returning Officer should hold briefings for candidates and their agents, if known, in advance of the election period in order to provide information about matters including the nomination process, the election timetable, the polling, postal voting and counting arrangements and any specific local issues. Briefings could be provided on an individual basis to all interested persons, or could be provided to a group or groups of candidates and agents. The Returning Officer may choose to hold a further briefing session once the list of candidates has been confirmed after the close of nominations in order to cover in more detail matters such as the arrangements for the opening of postal votes and the count.

3.2 It is important that the Returning Officer provides briefings to all who have expressed an interest in standing for election, and the briefings should allow for the fact that there may be people who have little or no knowledge of election rules and procedures or who have not involved themselves in elections for some time.

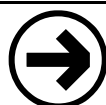


In order to meet performance standard 7: Communication of information to candidates and agents, the Returning Officer will need to be able to demonstrate that they have provided information to candidates and agents through briefing sessions and written guidance on the nomination process, as well as on the postal vote opening and count processes.

3.3 All briefing sessions should highlight the importance of following the election rules. In particular, the Returning Officer should provide a briefing on the nomination process including deadlines, submission rules, use of common names, and the use of party names and registered descriptions. The Returning Officer should also outline any security arrangements that have been put in place in consultation with the police.

3.4 The Returning Officer should cover the fact that rules on candidate campaigning, including the maximum spending limit and the requirement to add an imprint to certain material, must be followed. Candidates should be advised to read the Electoral Commission's guidance on the issues.

3.5 The Commission has produced a guide for candidates and agents at a local government election in England and Wales, and this should be supplied to all candidates and interested persons and parties.



The Commission's *Guidance for candidates and agents* can be found on the Commission's website at www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance/resources-for-electoral-administrators/local-elections.

There is a Code of conduct for political parties, candidates and canvassers on the handling of postal vote applications and postal ballot papers. This is available in the Commission's *Guidance for candidates and agents* and online from the Commission's website at

www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance/resources-for-electoral-administrators/integrity-guidance/electoral-events, and should be drawn to the candidates' attention.

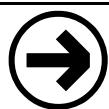
3.6 Arrangements for the opening of postal votes and the count could be covered at a further briefing session after the close of nominations when all the candidates are known, especially if there are candidates or agents who did not attend pre-nomination briefings.

Nomination pack

3.7 The Returning Officer should prepare a nomination pack for any person who expresses an interest in standing for election and should also make this available to any person who attends at the address for the delivery of nominations and asks for one.

3.8 The nomination pack should contain:

- a nomination paper
- a consent to nomination
- a form for candidates to give notice of appointment of an agent
- a certificate of authorisation for an eligible person to allow the candidate to stand on behalf of a registered political party
- a form for the candidate of a political party to request an emblem
- a copy of the Commission's *Guidance for candidates and agents*
- details of how to obtain the electoral register, the list of overseas electors, and the absent voters lists, including contact details of the Electoral Registration Officer
- any other relevant information



The Commission's guidance for candidates and agents and on election spending can be found at www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance/those-we-regulate/candidates-and-agents.

The Commission has produced template nomination papers which are available at www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance/resources-for-electoral-administrators/local-elections.

Access needs for candidates

3.9 The Returning Officer should bear in mind that candidates and agents may have specific access needs for the election, and so may need any guidance produced in a large-print or other format, such as Braille or audio, or


in a language other than English. Nomination papers can only be produced in English or, in Wales, in English or Welsh.

4 Nomination process

Publication of the notice of election

4.1 The publication of the notice of election triggers the start of the nomination period. For a local government election, the notice of election has to be published by not later than the twenty-fifth working day before the poll.¹⁹ However, the Returning Officer may publish the notice earlier, thus giving a longer period for the receipt of nominations. It is a matter for the Returning Officer to consider whether they wish to publish the notice of election before the final deadline.

4.2 A separate notice can be produced for each ward, or a combined notice can be produced including all of the wards where elections are taking place. The notice should also show the number of councillors to be elected in each ward.

<p> Definition of ‘publish’</p> <p>Publish means, as a minimum, posting in a conspicuous place within the local government area (e.g. at local authority offices, on noticeboards, in libraries and other public buildings). The Returning Officer should also use other means, including the local authority’s website, to facilitate easier access to the notices for any interested persons, including disabled people. A link should also be made from the front page of the local authority’s website to those pages containing information on the election process.</p> <p>This definition of publish applies to all the notices that are produced at the election, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the notice of election• the statement of persons nominated• the notice of poll and situation of polling stations• the notice of agents• the notice of the result <p>All notices published by the Returning Officer should contain an imprint.</p>
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4.3 The notice of election is a statutory notice and while there is no prescribed format it must include the following information:²⁰

- the place and times at which nomination papers can be delivered, and nomination papers may be obtained
- the date of the poll if the election is contested
- the date by which applications for absent votes (including emergency proxies) must reach the Electoral Registration Officer in order to be effective for the election

¹⁹ Rule 1, LEPAR 2006.

²⁰ Rule 3, LEPAR 2006.

4.4 The Returning Officer should give particular attention to the publicising of elections which fall outside the normal electoral cycle. Where a casual vacancy arises and a by-election is to be held, the Returning Officer should publicise this widely locally, so that all those who would be interested in standing for election are given an opportunity to do so. Public notice should be given across the local authority area using all relevant media, such as the local authority's website, newsletter/magazine, local newspapers, TV and radio.

4.5 The decision as to when to accept nominations following the publication of the notice of election rests solely with the Returning Officer. The Returning Officer is entitled to commence the receipt of nominations process on the same day that the notice of election is published, allowing candidates more time to complete their nomination papers. However, to maintain consistency with the timetable at UK Parliamentary general elections, the commencement of the nomination period could be deferred until the day following the publication of the notice of election. Whichever time is chosen, it must be clearly stated on the notice itself.

4.6 Should the Returning Officer decide to publish the notice of election early, they will need to be aware that candidates will not be entitled to a copy of the full register until the last day for the publication of the notice of election at the earliest. Also, a nomination could potentially be submitted early bearing a registered party description, which may change before the close of nominations (see 'The register of political parties' below for further details).

4.7 When giving an address for the delivery of nomination papers, an exact address, including any room number, should be given. This will avoid any doubt when nominations are brought in close to the deadline.

The register of political parties



For up-to-date information about political parties, registered descriptions and registered emblems, the Returning Officer should check the register of political parties on the Electoral Commission's website at <http://registers.electoralcommission.org.uk/regulatory-issues/regpoliticalparties.cfm>.

If the Returning Officer has any queries about the registration of political parties, they should contact the Commission's office in Wales or the Commission's English regional office for their area.

4.8 Even if the registered party is well known, it is vital to check the register for the exact party name, emblems and descriptions registered with the Commission by that party for this particular election.

Amendment or deletion of registered descriptions

4.9 Under PPERA, the deletion or amendment of any registered descriptions may take effect up to and including the day before the date of publication of the notice of election (note: this is **not** the last day that the publication of the

notice of election is possible but the **actual** day of publication) for any particular election.²¹ After that point, any changes or deletions to any of the party descriptions do not apply for that election.

4.10 Political parties may alter their other registered details, including the party name and emblems, and add any new description if they previously had registered fewer than 12 at any time until the close of nominations.



How descriptions and party names are used

When a candidate is standing on behalf of a registered political party they can use either the party name or one of the party's registered descriptions.

A certificate of authorisation from the party must allow the candidate to use either a specific description or the party name, or can allow the candidate to choose a registered description or the party name.

The Returning Officer must check that the description or the party name on the nomination paper is registered by taking reference of the Commission's register of political parties contained on our website.

The chosen party name or description must be stated on the statement of persons nominated and must be printed on the ballot papers.

Full details of when descriptions and party names can be used and how they are applied are given from paragraph 4.70.

Addition of registered descriptions

4.11 Political parties may register up to 12 descriptions with the Commission. Where a party has not registered its full quota, it may register new descriptions up until the close of nominations. The Returning Officer should check the register of political parties on the Commission's website when adjudicating a nomination submitted by someone standing on behalf of a registered political party. The Returning Officer should accept as valid any nomination which gives either one of the registered descriptions or the registered name of the party.

4.12 Where a candidate attempts to submit a nomination paper bearing a description that has yet to be registered, the candidate should be advised not to formally submit the paper, but to take it back and to submit it once the description has been successfully registered.

4.13 If a situation arose whereby a candidate formally submitted their nomination paper with a description not yet registered, the Returning Officer should invalidate the nomination paper on the basis that, when the determination is made, the description provided does not match any registered with the Commission under Section 28A of PPERA. However, the

²¹ Section 30(6A), PPERA.

decision as to when it is practicable to determine the validity of a nomination paper rests with the Returning Officer.

Qualifications for candidature

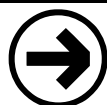
4.14 Candidates may approach the Returning Officer to seek advice about their eligibility to stand for election or to enquire about any possible disqualifications which may affect their candidature.

4.15 Matters of eligibility or disqualification are for the candidate only and not for the Returning Officer. The candidate should be directed to the Commission's *Guidance for candidates and agents*. Should they have any further concerns, the candidate or agent should be advised to seek independent legal advice.

Forms that may be used for nomination

4.16 Candidates may use whatever set of forms they wish for their nomination as long as the papers used contain all the required information and the signatures required by law.

4.17 Candidates do not have to use a nomination paper or consent to nomination form that has been provided by the Returning Officer.



The Commission has produced a set of forms that Returning Officers can use. These can be found at www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance/resources-for-electoral-administrators/uk-parliamentary-elections.

Delivery of nomination papers

4.18 Nomination papers must be delivered to the location specified and at the times and dates specified on the notice of election.

4.19 There should be clear signage from the entrance of the building to the room set aside for delivery. This route, or an appropriately signposted alternative, should be fully accessible.

4.20 The Returning Officer or an appointed deputy must be present throughout the period for nominations. Only the Returning Officer and their staff should deal with nominations. Local authority staff, such as reception staff, should be given details of what to do if a person tries to deliver a nomination paper to them, for example making it clear that they should not handle nomination papers and should not offer to deliver them but should direct the person to the Returning Officer.

Times when nomination papers may be delivered

4.21 Nomination papers must be delivered at the times stated on the notice of election, up to 12 noon on the nineteenth working day before the election. This deadline cannot be extended for any reason whatsoever.

4.22 Delivery is determined as having taken place when the nomination papers are physically handed to the Returning Officer or an appointed deputy at the place mentioned on the notice of election.

4.23 No appointment is required to deliver a nomination paper, but the Returning Officer may consider establishing an appointment system in order to be able to offer 'informal checks' of nomination papers prior to them being formally submitted. Further consideration is given to the issue of informal checks under 'Informal checks' below.

4.24 On receipt, the Returning Officer or their staff should endorse the documents with the date and time of delivery.

4.25 A candidate is deemed to be validly nominated only if the Returning Officer has, before 12 noon on the last day for delivery of nomination papers, received the following completed forms:

- a nomination paper
- a consent to nomination
- a certificate of authorisation from a party if the candidate is standing on behalf of a political party

4.26 The candidate will remain validly nominated unless and until the Returning Officer determines that their nomination is invalid or if they withdraw by the deadline for withdrawals.

4.27 Once a nomination paper has been formally delivered, no changes can be subsequently made to it by the candidate. If a candidate later decides that they want to make changes, for example to the description, the only way that this can be done is by withdrawing their candidature and then submitting a new nomination paper within the statutory timeframe. Similarly, there is no provision to allow a subscriber to withdraw their signature from a nomination paper once it has been accepted.

Who may deliver the nomination papers?

4.28 At local government elections there are no restrictions on who can deliver a nomination paper.

4.29 There is no provision allowing nominations to be submitted by fax or electronically, and so any received in this way should not be accepted.

Inspection of nomination papers

4.30 During ordinary office hours on any working day after the latest time for delivery of nomination papers but before polling day, any person may inspect and take copies of, or extracts from, nomination papers and consents to nomination. After this time, there is no provision for further inspection by anyone.²²

²² Rule 11, LEPAR 2006.

4.31 It is important to note that there is no right of objection to a nomination at a local government election.

Preparing a form for signature

4.32 The Returning Officer is required to prepare a nomination paper for signature if an elector requests it.²³

Informal checks

4.33 The Returning Officer should offer all candidates and agents the facility of informally checking their nomination papers before they are formally submitted. This may help to uncover any errors in completing the nomination papers. There is no requirement to provide an informal check, but all candidates and agents should be given an equal opportunity to book an informal check where this service is provided. Informal checks are designed to assist the candidate and agent to participate in the electoral process so that, if possible, errors made by candidates and agents do not deny electors the opportunity to vote for that candidate.

4.34 It should be noted that informal checks are a requirement for meeting performance standard 7: Communication of information to candidates and agents.

4.35 When conducting an informal check it should be made clear that the nomination papers are being looked at informally.

4.36 The Returning Officer should make it clear that they cannot be held responsible if they fail to identify an error or omission during the informal check – the correct completion of the nomination papers remains the responsibility of the candidates and agents.

4.37 It should be clear when the nomination papers are being submitted formally. At this point the Returning Officer should endorse the paper with the date and time of delivery and after this point there must be no alteration, deletion or addition to the paperwork other than by the Returning Officer in the exercising of their power to correct minor errors.

4.38 When conducting informal checks, the Returning Officer should:

- check to see that every item that is required to be completed has been completed
- check that the description for a candidate (one that is not 'Independent' or 'Annibynnol') matches the name or registered description on the Commission's website and that it is authorised by the certificate of authorisation
- check to see that the subscribers listed have not subscribed more nomination papers than there are vacancies in the ward – if they have,

²³ Rule 6(4)(b), LEPAR 2006.

the Returning Officer should advise that the nomination paper would be invalid if formally delivered

- where more than one nomination paper is being delivered, ask which one will be the selected nomination paper
- remind the person delivering the paper that it would be a criminal offence for a false statement to be made in the nomination papers²⁴

4.39 Once the nomination papers are formally delivered, the Returning Officer should endorse them with the time and date of delivery.

4.40 The Returning Officer should explain that they will send a notice to the candidate's home address informing them of their decision on the validity of their nomination.

Nomination paper

4.41 Each candidate must be nominated on a separate nomination paper in the form prescribed in the appendix to the election rules or on a form to the same effect.²⁵ The Commission has produced a set of nomination papers and Returning Officers may use the forms as a template for their own forms.



The Commission's set of nomination papers can be found at www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance/resources-for-electoral-administrators/local-elections.

Details on the nomination paper

Candidate's names

4.42 The candidate's full names must be listed, with their surname given first followed by all of their other names in full. In addition, where a candidate commonly uses a different surname or forename, they may request that instead of their full names, their commonly used name(s) are used on the statement of persons nominated, the notice of poll and the ballot paper.²⁶

4.43 The Commission's *Guidance for candidates and agents* advises candidates on how to fill in the nomination paper and explains how the different combinations of commonly used name boxes completed or left blank would affect how their name appears on the ballot paper.

4.44 A number of worked examples of various combinations, while not comprehensive, are set out in Table 3 below.

²⁴ Section 65A, RPA 1983.

²⁵ Rule 4(1), LEPAR 2006.

²⁶ Rules 4(3), 9(3), 16(2) and 21(1)(c), LEPAR 2006.

Table 3: Candidate's names options

Candidate's actual surname	Candidate's other names in full	Commonly used forenames	Commonly used surname	Name to go on statement of persons nominated and notice of poll	Name to go on ballot papers
Elector	Ann	Elsie	Voter	Voter, Elsie	VOTER Elsie Voter
Elector	Ann	[Blank]	Voter	Voter, Ann	VOTER Ann Voter
Elector	Ann	Elsie	[Blank]	Elector, Elsie	ELECTOR Elsie Elector
Elector	Ann	None to be used	Superstar	Superstar	SUPERSTAR

4.45 Should a candidate require a single name only (e.g. Superstar) then this should be clearly indicated on the form – with either the commonly used surname/forenames box(es) marked 'None to be used' as above, or crossed through. If either the commonly used forenames or surname box is left blank, then the candidate's actual forenames or surname, depending on which commonly used name box has been left blank, will go on the statement of persons nominated, the notice of poll and, ultimately, on the ballot paper.

4.46 Where the Returning Officer thinks that the use of any commonly used name may be likely to mislead or confuse electors, or is obscene or offensive, they are not required to show that name on the statement of persons nominated. In such a case, the candidate's full names must be used on the statement of persons nominated, the notice of poll and the ballot paper, and the Returning Officer must write to the candidate setting out the reasons for refusing to allow the use of the commonly used name.

4.47 Any decision to refuse the use of the commonly used name does not invalidate the nomination; the effect is that the candidate's full name will appear on the statement of persons nominated, the notice of poll and the ballot paper. This fact should be made clear to candidates and agents, particularly if a commonly used name is actually rejected.

4.48 The nomination paper contains no space for prefixes or suffixes. Therefore, while inclusion of any prefix or suffix as part of the actual name would not invalidate the nomination paper, they should not be transferred to the statement of persons nominated. The Returning Officer should act as if the prefixes or suffixes were not on the nomination paper and not add them to the statement of persons nominated when that is being produced.

4.49 The Returning Officer should send a note to the candidate and agent in such cases and explain that these prefixes or suffixes will not appear on the

statement of persons nominated, the notice of poll or the ballot paper but that their nomination as a candidate has not been affected.

4.50 However, this does not apply if a potential candidate has included a prefix, such as Dr or Sir, in the commonly used forenames box. In this case, the prefix should be carried forward to the statement of persons nominated, the notice of poll and the ballot paper. A commonly used name that includes a prefix may only be rejected if the Returning Officer thinks that it is likely to mislead or confuse electors, or is obscene or offensive.

4.51 A person who is known by their title may use this instead of their surname. For example, a candidate who has the actual name of Jo Smith but who has the hereditary title of Baroness Purple may use the name Jo Purple as if it were their actual name.²⁷ In this case the name Jo Purple may be used by the candidate as their actual name without the need to fill in the commonly used names boxes.

4.52 Occasionally, a potential candidate may submit a nomination paper with a frivolous or unlikely sounding name that they claim to be their full name. The Returning Officer should take any such nomination paper at face value, as, however unusual the name, it may well be the candidate's actual name. Even if a Returning Officer has personal knowledge that the name on the nomination paper is not the candidate's real name, they have no powers to reject it on this basis.

4.53 The determination as to the suitability of commonly used names does not take place until after the close of nominations. Therefore no indication should be given as to the likelihood of a commonly used name being accepted before that time.

4.54 The use of commonly used names applies only to the statement of persons nominated, the notice of poll and the ballot papers. The candidate's actual name must appear on any documents that are required to show the candidate's name, such as the imprint and candidate's expense returns, and the actual name should be used at the declaration of result. If, however, a candidate made use of the commonly used name rule, their commonly used name should be used alongside their actual name at the declaration of result.

Candidate's home address

4.55 The candidate's full home address must be included on the nomination paper.²⁸ If, however, any detail is wrong or omitted, the nomination is not automatically invalid if the description of the place is such as to be commonly understood.²⁹ Also, the Returning Officer has a power to correct minor errors in nomination papers, the use of which is considered below under 'Correction of minor errors'.

²⁷ Note 2, Form of nomination paper, Appendix of Forms, LEPAR 2006.

²⁸ Rule 4(2)(b), LEPAR 2006.

²⁹ Section 50, RPA 1983.

Subscribers

4.56 Each candidate standing at an election must be proposed and seconded by electors from the ward; in addition, at principal area elections, eight other electors from the ward must assent to the nomination.

4.57 The people who can subscribe a nomination paper are those who are local government electors who are on the electoral register on the last day for publication of the notice of election and who will be 18 years of age or over (i.e. of voting age) on polling day.³⁰ That register is definitive for the nomination process. If an elector is later removed from the register before the election (or indeed even before the nomination is delivered) or dies before the election, their signature remains valid and the nomination is not affected.

4.58 Each subscriber must sign the nomination paper in the appropriate place. Their name must be printed and their elector number must be included in the spaces provided alongside their signature,³¹ as well as the polling district's identifying letters.

4.59 A person must not subscribe more nomination papers than there are vacancies; nor subscribe a nomination in respect of another election in a different ward in the local government area.³² If they do, their signature will only be valid on the first papers delivered to the Returning Officer (up to the permitted number).³³ The Returning Officer should have a robust system of ensuring that no elector subscribes more nomination papers than they are entitled to. Such methods include the marking of a copy of the register or using the electoral management software system.

4.60 If a candidate dies or withdraws their nomination paper, the subscribers may subscribe another nomination paper.

4.61 The Returning Officer should accept that the signature made on the nomination paper is that of the person listed on the register under the relevant elector number, even if the signature suggests another name. The Returning Officer may draw the attention of the person delivering the paper to the issue if they are concerned, but must take the elector number and the fact that it is signed at face value.

4.62 At a principal area election, only the first 10 subscribers on any nomination paper can be considered. At a parish or community council election, only the first two subscribers can be considered. If more subscribers are included, any subsequent names must not be considered at all. If one of the first 10 subscribers (or two in the case of parishes or communities) is invalid, irrespective of whether more subscribers have been added to the ballot paper, the nomination paper must be held invalid.

4.63 Occasionally a mistake is made with the subscribers on a nomination paper, and one or more of the names are crossed out on the form. If the

³⁰ Rule 6, LEPAR 2006.

³¹ Rule 6(3) and Appendix of Forms, LEPAR 2006.

³² Rule 6(5), LEPAR 2006.

³³ Rule 6(6), LEPAR 2006.

signature, printed name and elector number for a subscriber are clearly crossed out, then they should be ignored by the Returning Officer and treated as if they did not appear at all. Such crossings out should not be done by the Returning Officer. Any crossings out should be clear and, ideally, initialled. A new name, signature and elector number must be added to replace the entry that has been crossed out. If the person was a proposer or seconder, then the new proposer or seconder must be indicated.



Signatures on nomination papers, once given, cannot be withdrawn by subscribers. If a subscriber writes to or otherwise contacts the Returning Officer to say that they wish to withdraw their subscription, the Returning Officer must refuse the request and the subscription remains valid.

Candidate's description

4.64 The legislation is very precise about candidates' descriptions.³⁴ A candidate can choose not to have a description, or any candidate can be described as 'Independent' if they wish. In Wales, the candidate can use either 'Independent' or 'Annibynnol', or both words. However, if a candidate wishes to use any other description, the one included on the nomination paper must comply with the rules set out below.

4.65 If a candidate wishes to have a description other than 'Independent', or 'Annibynnol' in Wales, that description must be authorised by a registered political party.³⁵ When submitting their nomination paper, they must also submit a certificate of authorisation from that party's Nominating Officer (or a person authorised by them to act on their behalf). The certificate must have been delivered before the deadline for the delivery of nomination papers.



For parish and community council elections, any candidate can choose to use a description. Any description used must not exceed six words in length.³⁶ Descriptions used at parish and community council elections do not have to be registered with the Commission but they must still avoid any association with a registered political party unless the description has been duly authorised and registered by that party.³⁷

4.66 Registered political parties may register up to 12 descriptions with the Commission.³⁸ Where they do, any description provided on a nomination paper must either match exactly one of the descriptions registered with the Commission or be the exact name of the registered political party. Where a registered political party has chosen not to register any descriptions, only the exact party name as registered with the Commission can be used.

4.67 The Returning Officer should check who the Nominating Officer is by referring to the Commission's register of political parties. However, as long as the person who has signed the certificate claims that they have the

³⁴ Rule 4(4), LEPAR 2006.

³⁵ Rule 5, LEPAR 2006.

³⁶ Rule 4(4), Schedule 2, P&C Rules 2006.

³⁷ Rule 5(1), Schedule 2, P&C Rules 2006.

³⁸ Section 28A, PPERA.

authorisation of the registered Nominating Officer, the certificate should be taken at face value.

4.68 The certificate authorising the candidate must also describe the description that can be used by the candidate. The certificate can either state that the candidate may use a particular registered description or the registered party name, or state that the candidate may use any description registered by the party or the party name. If a particular description or the registered party name is given as the only option on the certificate of authorisation, that must match the description on the nomination paper or the whole nomination paper is invalid.

4.69 If the description on the certificate of authorisation matches the description on the nomination paper, or the certificate allows the candidate to choose the description, the Returning Officer should consult the Commission's register of political parties and any descriptions registered under Section 28A of PPERA, which can be found on the Commission's website. The description given on the nomination paper must exactly match that given on the register of political parties as either the name of the party or one of that party's registered descriptions. If it does not match, the whole nomination paper is invalid.

4.70 In Wales, a candidate may use either the English version, Welsh version or both versions of either the party name or a description as long as they are registered with the Commission. Translations of the party name are listed on the website under 'other name' and translations of descriptions are listed to the right of the description under 'translation(s)'. If the party has not registered the translation so that it appears on the Commission's website, then a translation of any party name or description cannot be used.

4.71 If a candidate stands as representing two parties, e.g. the Labour Party and the Co-operative Party, an authorising certificate setting out the joint description is required from the Nominating Officer of **both** parties. In this example, both the Labour Party and the Co-operative Party must issue certificates that state, for example, a description of 'Labour and Co-operative Party Candidate', and that joint description must be registered with the Commission. Joint descriptions are listed on a separate part of the register, at the bottom of the registration page for the relevant party, and the Returning Officer should refer to this when checking nominations.³⁹



A description for the nomination paper may be **either** the party name **or** one of the registered descriptions, as long as the rules for the description, as stated in this section, are followed.

³⁹ Section 28B, PPERA, inserted by Section 49, EAA.

Example

If 'The Purple Party', a registered party, has registered only one description, 'The Purple Party Candidate', the party and candidate have the following options:

- The Nominating Officer of the party, or someone authorised by them to act on their behalf, must sign a certificate of authorisation that allows the candidate to stand on behalf of The Purple Party.
- The Returning Officer should check who the Nominating Officer is by reference to the Commission's register of political parties. However, as long as the person who has signed the certificate claims that they have the authorisation of the registered Nominating Officer, the certificate should be taken on face value.

The certificate of authorisation must state that the candidate can:

- use the Purple Party
- use the Purple Party Candidate
- choose the party name or any description registered with the Commission

4.72 The Commission's website often displays the registered party name in a search-friendly manner, e.g. 'Electoral Commission Party [The]'. The actual party name in such cases is 'The Electoral Commission Party'.

4.73 If during an informal check it appears that the nomination paper bears the description in the form shown on the website, e.g. 'Electoral Commission Party [The]', then the candidate/agent should be advised to amend the description of the party to the correct form, in this case 'The Electoral Commission Party', before the papers are formally lodged with the Returning Officer.

4.74 If the certificate of authorisation accompanying the nomination paper also follows the format shown on the website, e.g. 'Electoral Commission Party [The]', the Returning Officer need not amend it, but should read it as 'The Electoral Commission Party'.

4.75 Alternatively, the Returning Officer may consider using the power to correct minor errors⁴⁰ to amend the nomination paper so that it matches the registered party description or name. Again, there would be no need to amend the accompanying certificate. The Returning Officer should exercise care in using this power. Further information on the Returning Officer's power to correct minor errors is provided below.



The decisions the Returning Officer has to make with regard to a candidate using a description other than 'Independent' and/or 'Annibynnol' are as follows:

⁴⁰ Rule 10, LEPAR 2006.

- Is the candidate certified to stand for a registered political party by a certificate signed by the Nominating Officer or someone authorised by the Nominating Officer to sign the certificate?
- Is the proposed description or party name on the nomination paper authorised by the certificate of authorisation or does the certificate allow the candidate to choose any description and/or the party name registered by the party with the Commission?
- Is the description on the nomination paper exactly the same as that registered with the Commission or exactly the same as the party name registered with the Commission, as found on the Commission's website (<http://registers.electoralcommission.org.uk/regulatory-issues/regpoliticalparties.cfm>)?

4.76 A Nominating Officer may stand as a candidate. If this happens, the candidate, as Nominating Officer, may authorise their own description. A person authorised by the Nominating Officer to sign a certificate of authorisation may also be a candidate and sign a certificate for their own nomination.

Request for a party emblem

4.77 If requested, the candidate of a registered party can choose to have a registered emblem of the party they are representing displayed on the ballot paper.⁴¹ To qualify, a candidate must have used a party name or description other than 'Independent' and/or 'Annibynnol'. The candidate, not the election agent or the Nominating Officer, must make the request in writing not later than the deadline for nominations. If the party has more than one registered emblem, the request must specify which one they want to use. If the candidate fails to specify one, or the registered party changes the emblem after the nomination papers have been submitted but before the close of nominations, the Returning Officer must choose one of that party's registered emblems.

4.78 There is no provision for joint emblems to be registered with the Commission.

4.79 The candidate may provide a high-resolution copy of the emblem for use in the printing of ballot papers, or may request that the Returning Officer downloads the emblem from the Commission's website. The Returning Officer should ensure that whatever copy is used is in the same form as the registered emblem.

Multiple nomination papers

4.80 There is no limit to the number of nomination papers that may be delivered for the same candidate. If a candidate is validly nominated by more than one paper, the candidate should choose which one of the valid nomination papers (the 'selected' nomination paper) should be used for the details to be added to the statement of persons nominated and the ballot

⁴¹ Rule 16(3) and (4), LEPAR 2006.

papers. If the candidate cannot or does not do this, then the Returning Officer must choose one of them.⁴²

4.81 If more than one nomination paper is delivered and one of the nomination papers is invalid, that paper is excluded from the papers that can be chosen by the candidate or the Returning Officer. As long as at least one nomination paper is valid, the candidate can be validly nominated.

4.82 When an elector subscribes any delivered nomination paper, even if it is not the selected nomination paper, it will count towards the maximum number that they may subscribe.

Nominations in other languages

4.83 In England, nominations may be submitted only in English. In Wales, nominations may be submitted in English or Welsh.

4.84 Although other election documentation may be translated into other formats, including languages other than English (and, in Wales, Welsh), nomination papers and ballot papers may only be produced in English and, in Wales, Welsh.⁴³

Candidate's consent to nomination

4.85 A candidate is not validly nominated unless their consent form is also submitted by the time of the close of nominations.⁴⁴ The consent must be given in writing on the prescribed form, or a form to like effect, and include a copy of sections 80 and 81 of the Local Government Act 1972 and section 79 of the Local Government Act 2000.⁴⁵ The Commission has produced a form for candidates to use for this purpose, which can be downloaded from www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance/resources-for-electoral-administrators/local-elections.

4.86 The consent form must be signed and dated by the candidate and the date must be on or within one month before the last day for delivery of nomination papers.

4.87 The consent has to be witnessed by another person. The witness must witness the candidate signing the consent form and then sign it as a witness. They must also provide their name and address on the consent form.⁴⁶

4.88 The consent must be delivered at the place and within the time for the delivery of nomination papers.⁴⁷

4.89 A candidate is guilty of a corrupt practice if they make a false statement in their consent to nomination as to their date of birth or their qualification and

⁴² Rule 9(7), LEPAR 2006.

⁴³ Section 199B(3), RPA 1983.

⁴⁴ Rule 7, LEPAR 2006.

⁴⁵ Rule 7(b), LEPAR 2006.

⁴⁶ Rule 7(c), LEPAR 2006.

⁴⁷ Rule 7(d), LEPAR 2006.

lack of disqualification for being elected.⁴⁸ For further information, see 'False statements in nomination papers' below.

False statements in nomination papers

4.90 It is an offence for any person to knowingly include false information in a nomination paper.⁴⁹ A Returning Officer cannot investigate any statement given in a nomination paper, consent to nomination or certificate of authorisation. They should, however, highlight the need for accurate statements to be given and the consequences of a breach of those provisions.

4.91 The maximum penalty for a false statement on a nomination paper is a fine or one year's imprisonment.

Correction of minor errors

4.92 The Returning Officer is permitted to correct minor errors made on nomination papers. Returning Officers may correct errors in relation to a person's elector number and obvious errors of spelling of a candidate's details, at any time before publication of the statement of persons nominated.⁵⁰

4.93 For example, where an elector number has been entered incorrectly, the Returning Officer may amend it if they are satisfied that an error has been made. However, where the elector number has been omitted altogether, this does not amount to an error, and the nomination paper should be rejected on the basis that the number has simply not been supplied and the particulars are not as required by law. Dealing with the 'obvious' errors of spelling may be more difficult, as what is obvious to one person may not be so to another. Care should be taken in exercising this power.



While the Returning Officer should accept nominations at face value, it should be noted that, where a home address is not absolutely correct, the nomination would not be open to successful challenge as long as the address can be commonly understood.⁵¹

Decision as to the validity of nomination papers

4.94 When making a decision as to the validity of a nomination paper, the Returning Officer should disregard any personal knowledge they may have of any candidate and should not undertake any investigation or research into any candidate. The Returning Officer should adjudicate the nomination on the basis of the information provided on the nomination paper.

4.95 There is case law that states that the Returning Officer's duty does not go beyond seeing that the form is 'correct on its face'.⁵² The Returning Officer

⁴⁸ Section 65A, RPA 1983.

⁴⁹ Section 65A, RPA 1983.

⁵⁰ Rule 10, LEPAR 2006.

⁵¹ Section 50, RPA 1983.

⁵² *Pritchard v. Mayor of Bangor*, 13 App Cases at pp 252, 257.

cannot be expected to embark on an enquiry as to where every candidate lives⁵³ or to be in a position to know whether the name given by a candidate is their real name or the name by which they are commonly known.

4.96 If the consent form and the nomination paper are not delivered by the deadline, then the nomination has not been made and so cannot be ruled to be valid or invalid. If the deadline for delivery passes without, for example, a valid consent form being delivered, there is no need to rule the nomination to be invalid as in this instance the nomination is deemed not to have been delivered at all. Only when both the consent form and the nomination paper have been delivered by the deadline can the Returning Officer rule the nomination valid or invalid.⁵⁴

4.97 Once a nomination paper has been accepted, no changes can be made to it by the candidate. If a candidate later decides that they want to make changes, for example to the description, the only way that this can be done is by withdrawing their candidature (see 'Withdrawal of a candidate' below) and then submitting a new nomination paper within the statutory deadlines.

Making the decision

4.98 Once a nomination paper has been formally delivered, the Returning Officer must make a decision on the validity of it as soon as practicable.⁵⁵

4.99 The only grounds the Returning Officer has for adjudicating a nomination paper to be invalid are:⁵⁶

- that the particulars of the candidate or the persons subscribing the paper are not as required by law, or
- that the paper is not subscribed as so required, or
- in principal area elections, that the description used does not meet the requirements of Rule 5(1) or (3) of LEPAR 2006⁵⁷

4.100 The Returning Officer should carefully check the details of all subscribers, both to identify minor errors that they can amend in accordance with their power, and to discover if any subscriber has already subscribed a nomination paper (whether adjudicated valid or invalid). An elector can subscribe as many nomination papers as there are vacancies in that particular electoral area. For example, in a ward with one vacancy, an elector can subscribe only one nomination paper, but in a ward with two vacancies, an elector could subscribe two nomination papers. Once an elector has subscribed the permitted number of nomination papers (whether adjudicated valid or invalid), any more received bearing their signature should be rejected as invalid. However, the subscriber may subscribe another paper if the candidate nominated by the first paper with their signature has died or if the paper has been officially withdrawn by the candidate

⁵³ *R v. Election court, ex p Sheppard* [1975] 2 All ER 723.

⁵⁴ Rule 8(1), LEPAR 2006.

⁵⁵ Rule 8(3), LEPAR 2006.

⁵⁶ Rule 8, LEPAR 2006.

⁵⁷ *R v. Balabanoff* [2002] EWHC 670 (Admin).

4.101 Where a nomination paper has been subscribed by more than the required number of subscribers, the signatures up to the required number (proposer, seconder and, in a principal area election, eight assentors) should be the ones taken into account, i.e. the proposer, the seconder and, in a principal area election, the first eight assentors. Any additional signatures should be disregarded, even if a subscriber appearing within the required number is found not to be eligible.⁵⁸ In such cases, the nomination paper must be rejected and the candidate would have to submit a new nomination paper with new subscribers within the deadline.

4.102 The Returning Officer should print a copy of the Commission's webpage showing the descriptions and party name at the time of the determination of the nomination of any candidate standing on behalf of a political party. To check that the nomination paper contains a valid party name or description, visit <http://registers.electoralcommission.org.uk/regulatory-issues/regpoliticalparties.cfm>.

4.103 Where a candidate wishes to use a commonly used name, the Returning Officer is not required to publish that name on the statement of persons nominated, the notice of poll and the ballot paper if they consider that its use may be likely to mislead or confuse electors, or it is considered obscene or offensive.⁵⁹ In such instances, only the use of the commonly used name is invalidated, not the nomination paper.

4.104 Once the Returning Officer has made a decision that a nomination paper is valid, it cannot be challenged during the election, although it may be challenged after the election by way of an election petition.⁶⁰

4.105 If a nomination paper is adjudicated as invalid, the Returning Officer must state that fact on the nomination paper, write the reasons for rejection and sign it.⁶¹ If a nomination is ruled invalid, it is important to contact the candidate and agent as soon as possible so that they may have the opportunity to submit another set of nomination papers before the close of nominations.

4.106 Although the Returning Officer is limited in their authority to invalidate a nomination paper because of false information, it is an offence for any person to knowingly include false name or address details for the candidate or false subscribers' signatures.⁶²

4.107 The Returning Officer must send notice of their decision that a nomination paper is valid or invalid to a candidate at their home address as given on the nomination paper.⁶³ This should be done as soon as practicable after the decision has been made.

⁵⁸ Rule 6(2), LEPAR 2006.

⁵⁹ Rule 9(4), LEPAR 2006.

⁶⁰ Rules 8(7) and (8), LEPAR 2006.

⁶¹ Rule 8(5), LEPAR 2006.

⁶² Section 65A, RPA 1983.

⁶³ Rule 8(6), LEPAR 2006.

Withdrawal of a candidate

4.108 It is possible for a validly nominated candidate to withdraw their candidature. For this to be effective, the candidate must deliver to the Returning Officer a signed notice, attested by one witness,⁶⁴ by the last time for withdrawals, which is noon, 16 sixteen working days before the poll..⁶⁵

4.109 If the candidate is not in the UK, a withdrawal will be effective if a notice of withdrawal, signed by the proposer and accompanied by a written declaration that the candidate is abroad, is delivered to the Returning Officer by the last time for withdrawals.⁶⁶ If the candidate was nominated by more than one nomination paper, each proposer must give the notice. If any of the proposers are outside the UK they do not need to sign the notice, but the notice must include a statement that they are outside the UK.⁶⁷

4.110 If a candidate has not withdrawn by the deadline, their name must go forward onto the statement of persons nominated and the ballot paper even if they subsequently change their mind and wish to withdraw.

Nomination in more than one electoral area

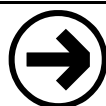
4.111 If a candidate is validly nominated for more than one ward of the same electoral area, then they must withdraw from all of those wards except one. If the candidate does not do this, then they are deemed to have withdrawn from all the wards and are no longer a candidate for election to that particular council.⁶⁸

4.112 However, a candidate may stand and be elected to both a parish or community council and a principal area council for the same or a different area.

Storage of nomination papers

4.113 The Returning Officer must keep the nomination papers securely and allow public inspection from the close of nominations to the day before polling day.⁶⁹

4.114 After that point, the nomination papers should remain securely stored by the Returning Officer for one year after the election.



For further guidance on the storage of all election documents and who may access them after the election, see Part F, 'After the declaration of result', Section 1 'Retention, storage and inspection of election documents'.

⁶⁴ Rule 13(1), LEPAR 2006.

⁶⁵ Rule 1, LEPAR 2006.

⁶⁶ Rule 13(2), LEPAR 2006.

⁶⁷ Rule 13(2), LEPAR 2006.

⁶⁸ Rule 12, LEPAR 2006.

⁶⁹ Rule 11, LEPAR 2006.

Statement of persons nominated

4.115 The Returning Officer must publish a statement of persons nominated for each ward by no later than 12 noon, 17 working days before the poll.⁷⁰

4.116 The statement of persons nominated must include the name, address and description (if any) of all candidates⁷¹ who have been validly nominated and those who no longer stand nominated (i.e. invalid and withdrawn candidates, if any), including the reason why they no longer stand nominated.

4.117 The names of the candidates on the statement must be listed in alphabetical order of their surname; this is how they will appear on the ballot paper.⁷² Where there are two or more candidates with the same surname, the alphabetical order of the other names will decide which candidate is listed first. If a person has requested the use of a commonly used name on their nomination paper, then the commonly used name must be shown on the statement instead of the actual name.⁷³ It is important to note that, where a commonly used surname is accepted, a candidate's alphabetical position on the statement of persons nominated and on the ballot paper must be made by reference to their commonly used surname.

4.118 If the Returning Officer has rejected the use of any commonly used name as they think it is likely to mislead or confuse electors, or is obscene or offensive, the actual name should be published on the statement of persons nominated instead of the commonly used name.



Guidance on the method of publication of the statement of persons nominated is given in 'Publication of the notice of election' above.

Uncontested elections

4.119 If the election in any electoral area is uncontested, the Returning Officer shall, as soon as practicable after the latest time for the delivery of notices of withdrawals of candidature, declare the remaining validly nominated candidate(s) elected. The Returning Officer shall then give the names of these people to the Proper Officer of the council for which the election is held, and give public notice of the name of each such person.⁷⁴ No poll is necessary.



At a parish or community council election, the Returning Officer is also required to give the names of elected candidates to the Proper Officer of the council of the district in which the parish is situated or, in Wales, the county or county borough in which the community is situated.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ Rule 1, LEPAR 2006.

⁷¹ Rule 9, LEPAR 2006.

⁷² Rule 9, LEPAR 2006.

⁷³ Rule 9(3), LEPAR 2006.

⁷⁴ Rules 14(2) and 50(2), LEPAR 2006.

⁷⁵ Rules 14(2) and 50(2), Schedule 2, P&C Rules 2006.

5 Appointment of election, polling and counting agents

Appointment of election agents

5.1 Each candidate must have an election agent, and notice of the appointment must be delivered to the Returning Officer by the latest time for delivery of notices of withdrawals.⁷⁶ It is possible for a candidate to appoint themselves as the election agent,⁷⁷ and, if no agent is formally appointed by the above time, the candidate is deemed to be their own election agent.⁷⁸ This is also the case if a candidate revokes their agent's appointment, or the agent dies, and a replacement is not appointed. If a candidate is acting as their own election agent, irrespective of whether they became an agent by default by not appointing one or because they had given written notice of their own appointment to the Returning Officer, they can also revoke their own appointment and appoint a new agent. The Returning Officer must be notified in writing of any such changes.⁷⁹



Election agents are not required at parish or community council elections.⁸⁰

5.2 The role of the election agent is important because it is only the election agent who can authorise expenditure on behalf of the candidate. Additionally, they have, along with the candidate, a duty to ensure that the candidate's election campaign is undertaken in accordance with the law; if they suspect that supporters of the candidate, over whom they have some measure of control, are committing unlawful or illegal practices, they must take active steps to stop them from happening.

5.3 The election agent must have an office, and the notice of appointment must set out the office address to which, in the words of the legislation, 'all claims, notices (legal process and other) documents may be sent'.⁸¹ This office has to be:

- within the local government area, or
- in the constituency or one of the constituencies of which the area is comprised, or
- in an adjoining Welsh county or county borough, or
- in an adjoining London borough, or
- in an adjoining district

⁷⁶ Section 67(1), RPA 1983.

⁷⁷ Section 67(2), RPA 1983.

⁷⁸ Section 70, RPA 1983.

⁷⁹ Section 67(3) and (4), RPA 1983.

⁸⁰ Section 71, RPA 1983.

⁸¹ Section 69(1) and (2), RPA 1983.

5.4 The election agent's office address will often be the same as their home address, but it might also be that of the local political party office or an office especially set up for the election.

5.5 Where a candidate acts as their own election agent by virtue of not having appointed anybody else, the office address is deemed to be the address given on the statement of persons nominated, i.e. the one provided on the nomination paper. If that address is outside the relevant qualifying area (see bullet points above), the office address is deemed to be the address of the person named in the statement as proposer.⁸²

5.6 If the candidate gives written notification of their appointment as their own election agent to the Returning Officer, they must give an office address within the qualifying area (see bullet points above).⁸³

5.7 Upon notification of an election agent's name and address, the Returning Officer has to publish a notice setting out those details as soon as possible.⁸⁴ The notice should be updated if any agent's appointment is revoked, or the agent dies, and the new agent's details published on the revised version.

Appointment of polling and counting agents

5.8 Candidates may appoint polling agents to attend at polling stations for the purpose of detecting personation, and counting agents to attend the counting of votes.⁸⁵

5.9 Candidates can appoint up to four polling agents, or such greater number as are prescribed by the Returning Officer, to attend at a particular polling station,⁸⁶ although only one polling agent can be present in the polling station at any given time.⁸⁷

5.10 The number of counting agents that a candidate may appoint is subject to a limit set by the Returning Officer. However, the number set must be the same in the case of each candidate and must not, except in exceptional circumstances, be fewer than the number obtained by dividing the number of counting assistants employed on the counting of votes by the number of candidates.⁸⁸ For example, if there are 50 counting assistants and five candidates, then the number of counting agents may be limited to 10 for each candidate, in addition to the candidate, their guest and the election agent. When determining the maximum number of counting agents, Returning Officers should consider any health and safety implications, including fire regulations for the count venue.

⁸² Section 70(4), RPA 1983.

⁸³ Section 70(4), RPA 1983.

⁸⁴ Section 67(6), RPA 1983.

⁸⁵ Rule 27, LEPAR 2006.

⁸⁶ Rule 27(3), LEPAR 2006.

⁸⁷ Rule 30(3), LEPAR 2006.

⁸⁸ Rule 27(4), LEPAR 2006.

5.11 Notices of the appointment of both polling and counting agents with their names and addresses must be given in writing to the Returning Officer by not later than the fifth working day before the poll.⁸⁹

5.12 Polling and counting agents are subject to the requirements of secrecy and have to be given, in writing, a copy of the relevant legislative provisions.⁹⁰

5.13 If a polling or counting agent dies or becomes incapable of acting, the person who appointed them may appoint another agent in their place. Notice of the appointment must be given in writing to the Returning Officer.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Rule 27(5), LEPAR 2006.

⁹⁰ Section 66, RPA 1983.

⁹¹ Rule 27(6), LEPAR 2006.

6 Death of a candidate

6.1 The possibility exists of a candidate dying during the course of an election campaign. Unlike at a UK Parliamentary election, where the status of a candidate determines whether the poll should be countermanded or not,⁹² the procedure to be followed at local government elections depends on the time when the death of the candidate is notified to the Returning Officer.⁹³



It is the time when proof of the death is notified to the Returning Officer that is important, not the actual time of death.

6.2 Should the Returning Officer receive proof and be satisfied that a candidate has died after accepting their nomination as valid but before the deadline for the withdrawal of nominations, the Returning Officer should wait until that deadline has passed. Then, if the number of validly nominated candidates, including the deceased, is more than the number of people to be elected, the poll must be countermanded. If the number of validly nominated candidates, including the deceased, is the same as or fewer than the number of people to be elected, then all are deemed elected and the Returning Officer will have to arrange a by-election for the deceased candidate's seat (once requests for an election have been received) and any other remaining vacancies.

6.3 If proof of the death of a validly nominated candidate at a contested election is received before the opening of the poll, the notice of poll is countermanded and the poll does not take place.

6.4 If proof of the death of a validly nominated candidate at a contested election is received after the opening of the poll but before the declaration of result, the poll is abandoned and will have to be re-run. However, in this case, because the poll will have started, the documentation (i.e. issued and un-issued ballot papers, etc.) has to be returned to the Returning Officer and sealed up in the normal way. Any postal votes received must also be sealed in packets and any envelopes not opened at the time of the notification of the death must be packed unopened.⁹⁴

New election

6.5 Where a new election is required after the abandonment or countermanding of a poll due to a candidate's death, the Returning Officer must select a new day for the poll, which must fall within 35 working days of the day fixed for the first election. Candidates already validly nominated do not have to be nominated a second time.⁹⁵

⁹² Part VI, Schedule 1, RPA 1983.

⁹³ Rule 55, LEPAR 2006.

⁹⁴ Rule 55, LEPAR 2006.

⁹⁵ Section 39, RPA 1983.

7 Production and distribution of poll cards

7.1 The Returning Officer is required to send poll cards as soon as practicable after the publication of the notice of election.⁹⁶



This does not apply to parish or community council elections where the poll is not taken together with the poll for some other election. In such circumstances the parish or community council would need to request by not later than 12 noon on the nineteenth working day before the election that the Returning Officer issue poll cards for that election.⁹⁷

Production

7.2 Poll cards are required to be in the format prescribed in the legislation,⁹⁸ or a form to the like effect, and must contain the following information:

- the name of the council and the ward to which councillors are being elected
- the elector's name, qualifying address and number on the register
- the date and hours of the poll
- in the case of an elector who does not have a postal vote, the location of the polling station
- in the case of a postal or postal proxy voter, confirmation that they will receive their ballot paper by post, with an indication as to when they are likely to be sent out, and information on how the elector may arrange to cancel the postal vote
- in the case of a proxy or postal proxy voter, the proxy's name and address in addition to the details of the elector for whom the proxy is voting
- such other information as the Returning Officer thinks appropriate – different information may be provided to different electors or different descriptions of electors

7.3 In the case of an elector with an anonymous entry, the poll card must be sent in a covering envelope. It should be made clear on the poll card that the anonymous elector or their proxy **must** have their poll card to vote at a polling station. The name and address of the anonymous elector must not be shown on the poll card.

7.4 When producing poll cards, the Returning Officer should:

- Produce them in clear, large print.
- Include a helpline number and an internet and email address that people can use if they have any enquiries.
- Consider including details of postal and proxy voting on the poll card, giving the closing date for applications.

⁹⁶ Rule 25(1), LEPAR 2006.

⁹⁷ Rule 25(1), Schedule 2, P&C Rules 2006.

⁹⁸ Schedule 2, RPR 2001.

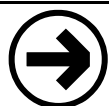
- Consider including maps showing the location of the polling station. If the location or access arrangements have changed, it is particularly important to draw this to the attention of electors. Any map included should not be so small that electors have difficulty reading it.
- Include the full postcode of the polling station so that those electors using satellite navigation or searching an online map can easily find the correct place.
- Consider including any access details on poll cards, taking into account the size of the poll card to be used. For example, inform electors about relevant accessibility information, such as that a temporary ramp is available if necessary, that there are low-level booths, and that large-print ballot papers and tactile voting templates are available. If the poll card is too small to permit the addition of this information, the Returning Officer could consider alternative ways of disseminating this additional information.

Distribution

7.5 Poll cards can be distributed by hand or by post, the method being determined by the Returning Officer as most appropriate for the particular area concerned. If poll cards are to be delivered by a postal service provider, a written statement should be given to the service provider with each batch of poll cards, showing the number of cards and the polling districts to which they relate. Proof of posting should be obtained and, if possible, tracking of deliveries undertaken in order to assist with responding to any queries regarding possible non-delivery.

8 Production and allocation of ballot papers

8.1 Once the nomination process has been completed and the statement of persons nominated has been published, ballot papers can be printed.



The Returning Officer will need to consider at the planning stage whether or not they will be outsourcing the production of ballot papers and, as part of the decision-making process, should consult the Electoral Commission's guidance on working with external partners in *Essentials of effective election management: Planning for a local government election in England and Wales*.

8.2 A check of the details of all candidates standing for election should be undertaken immediately following the close of nominations and before the ballot paper proofs are sent to print.

8.3 The Commission strongly advises that checks are made of both the proof and final versions of the ballot papers to ensure that no errors have been made. Even though the production of ballot papers has to be undertaken to a tight timescale, it is essential that the Returning Officer schedules and takes time to proofread ballot papers.



The Returning Officer can outsource some of their procedures, such as production of ballot papers, but their personal responsibility for delivering the election cannot be delegated.

8.4 No batch of ballot papers should be either issued at a postal vote issue or supplied to a polling station unless it has been checked by at least one staff member against the statement of persons nominated and the certificates requesting the use of emblems to ensure that:

- every candidate is included on the ballot paper
- every detail on the ballot paper is spelt correctly
- every emblem that has been validly requested has been included
- all party descriptions and all emblems have been printed next to the correct candidate
- where there is more than one ward with an election, the correct ballot papers are being issued to the relevant postal voters or polling station as appropriate



Combination

Where the poll at a principal area election is combined with that at a parish or community council election, it is particularly important to check that the correct ballot papers are being issued to the relevant postal voters or polling stations as appropriate.

Ballot paper security

8.5 It should be noted that the official mark can be printed when the ballot papers are created and does not need to be added at the point of issue. Where this is the case, such ballot papers are effectively 'live' as soon as they have been printed. Additional security arrangements should therefore be put in place to prevent unauthorised access to or use of the papers during the production process, while they are in the possession of the printer, and throughout delivery to and storage by the Returning Officer.

Form of ballot paper

8.6 The form of the ballot paper is prescribed in legislation and these instructions⁹⁹ have to be followed precisely.

8.7 Ballot papers for postal voters and for polling station use must be the same in form (except that the official mark may be different if desired).

8.8 An appropriate security mark must be added to the ballot paper – the '**official mark**' – and the following should be noted:¹⁰⁰

- The mark must be distinctive and does not have to be a perforation added at the time of issue of the ballot paper, although stamping instruments may still be used to create a perforating official mark.
- It could be a printed emblem or mark or a special printing device such as a watermark.
- The official mark can be the same for all ballot papers at an election or different official marks can be used for different purposes at the same election, for example one for postal votes and another for polling station ballot papers.
- The official mark cannot be re-used for five years for elections to the same local government area.
- The official mark should be capable of being seen on the front of the ballot paper so that it can be seen at the count without having to turn the ballot paper over.

Back of ballot paper

8.9 The following information must be included on the ballot paper reverse in the following format:¹⁰¹

No. [ballot paper number]
Election for the [ward name] ward of the [county/district/London borough/county borough] of [county/district/London borough/county borough name]
on day/month 20XX

⁹⁹ Rule 16 and Appendix of Forms, LEPAR 2006.

¹⁰⁰ Rule 18, LEPAR 2006.

¹⁰¹ Form of back of ballot paper, Appendix of Forms, LEPAR 2006.

8.10 The following must **both** be printed on the **back** of the ballot paper:¹⁰²

- a ballot paper number that follows the letters 'No.' (see above)
- other unique identifying mark

8.11 The unique identifying mark can be letters and numbers and could be a repeat of the ballot paper number with the addition of a prefix or a suffix. Also, a unique identifying mark can be, but does not have to be, a barcode. It is **not** the same as an official mark.

The ballot paper number should:

- be unique for each ballot paper at the election
- run consecutively, but it does not have to start at '1'
- be printed on the back of the ballot paper

The unique identifying mark:

- should be unique for each ballot paper at the election
- can be re-used at the next election
- should be printed on the back of the ballot paper

The official mark:

- can be any mark that the Returning Officer considers to provide appropriate security
- can be the same for all ballot papers at an election or different marks may be used for different purposes at the same election
- cannot be re-used for five years for elections to the same principal area, parish or community
- should be visible on the **front** of the ballot paper

8.12 Decisions on what to use as the official mark and unique identifying mark should be made at an early stage in the planning process, to enable decisions to be reached and preparations made with printers as appropriate.

8.13 Due to the use of a corresponding number list in connection with the issue and receipt of postal ballot papers and the issue of ballot papers at polling stations, ballot papers need not have a printed counterfoil attached. The Returning Officer will therefore need to consider with their print suppliers how best to produce the ballot papers for use at polling stations. Options might include producing counterfoil-less books that are securely glued at the seam or having the books produced with narrow, blank counterfoils that are discarded after use.

Printing of candidate details

8.14 Candidates should be listed as in the statement of persons nominated. The surname, or commonly used surname if supplied, of each candidate

¹⁰² Rule 16(2)(c), LEPAR 2006.

should be printed by itself in large capital letters, with the other details printed in ordinary type, i.e. in normal sentence structure. The exception is if two or more candidates share the same surname. In this case, the candidates' other names should be printed in small capital letters.

8.15 The address details of the candidate, as shown on the statement of persons nominated, should be printed below their name.

8.16 Under the address details, the description (if any), as stated in the statement of persons nominated, must be printed.

8.17 If a candidate standing on behalf of a political party has requested it, the requested emblem of the party they represent must be included next to their name. Where a registered emblem is to be printed against a candidate's name, it must not exceed two centimetres square. If the candidate supplies a copy of the emblem, the Returning Officer should ensure that the copy provided is a precise copy of the registered emblem.

8.18 The whole space between the top and bottom of the ballot paper, i.e. the area in which the candidates' details are printed, should be divided equally horizontally. It is recommended that the maximum possible sizes of font be used. To ensure consistency, the same font size must be used for each candidate for each equivalent line. The directions as to printing are very precise and should be followed carefully to ensure full compliance with the legal requirements.¹⁰³

8.19 The colour of the ballot papers is not prescribed and is for the Returning Officer to determine; however, whatever colour and paper thickness is chosen, the Returning Officer should liaise with the printer at an early stage in the planning process to ensure that there will be sufficient stock of paper to print ballot papers at short notice. Tendered ballot papers must, however, be a different colour from the ordinary ballot papers.¹⁰⁴



Where the principal area election is combined with a parish or community council election or any other election, different-coloured ballot papers must be used for each election.

Allocation of ballot papers

8.20 The Returning Officer must provide each polling station with such number of ballot papers as they consider necessary.¹⁰⁵ Careful consideration needs to be given to the number that will be required; the number of postal voters should be removed from the calculation.

8.21 When allocating ballot papers, it is important that the numbers given to each Presiding Officer run consecutively in order to avoid any problems with completing the corresponding number list or ballot paper accounts.

¹⁰³ Appendix of Forms, LEPAR 2006.

¹⁰⁴ Rule 39, LEPAR 2006.

¹⁰⁵ Rule 26(1), LEPAR 2006.

8.22 Presiding Officers should also be advised to check the numbering of the ballot papers allocated to them in order to ensure that there are no printing, numbering or distribution errors.

8.23 Tendered ballot papers must also be supplied to Presiding Officers. They must be a different colour from the ordinary ballot papers¹⁰⁶ and should be placed in an envelope with instructions stating that the envelope should only be opened and the ballot papers issued in prescribed circumstances, along with brief details of those circumstances. This can help to avoid tendered ballot papers being issued in error. This message should be reinforced at briefing or training sessions for polling station staff.

8.24 When deciding on the number of tendered ballot papers to be supplied to polling stations, the Returning Officer should bear in mind that tendered ballot papers can be issued in the following circumstances and where the prescribed questions have been answered satisfactorily:

- An elector or proxy has been marked on the register or any amendment notice, or on the list of proxies, as having already voted.
- An elector or proxy who is shown on both the register of electors and the postal or proxy postal voters list as having been issued with a postal ballot paper claims never to have applied for a postal vote.
- After 5pm, an elector or proxy who is shown on both the register of electors and the postal or proxy postal voters list as having been issued with a postal ballot paper claims to have lost or not received their postal vote.

Corresponding number lists

8.25 The Returning Officer will need to consider how the corresponding number lists will be produced, since, for each ballot paper printed, the ballot paper number and unique identifying mark must be recorded. The corresponding number lists are prescribed documents.¹⁰⁷ There are two corresponding number lists: L1 and L2.

8.26 Form L1 will contain the number of every ballot paper produced for the election and the corresponding unique identifying mark for that ballot paper. It is also used for the issue of postal votes and so has a column for the addition of the elector number for those ballot papers issued at the postal vote issue.

8.27 Form L2 is for use in polling stations and contains only the ballot paper number and a column to add the elector number of voters to whom the ballot papers are issued. This polling station corresponding number list will be produced to match the ballot papers that are issued to each polling station. Although these forms can be 'adapted so far as circumstances require', with particular reference to the corresponding number list to be used in the polling station, the Returning Officer should note that this does not allow the

¹⁰⁶ Rule 39, LEPAR 2006.

¹⁰⁷ Rule 17 and Appendix of Forms, LEPAR 2006.

corresponding number list to be produced in elector number order. It must be produced in ballot paper order.



Combination

Combined polls require a combined polling station corresponding number list to be used.¹⁰⁸ If the issue of postal votes has been combined, then a combined corresponding number list will also have to be used at the issue of postal votes.

¹⁰⁸ Forms M1 and M2, Appendix of Forms, LEPAR 2006.

9 Polling notices and equipment

Notice of poll

9.1 If there are more candidates than vacancies and there is to be a contest, the Returning Officer must publish a notice of poll for each ward not later than the sixth working day before polling day, stating the day and hours fixed for the poll, the name of the ward, the number of councillors to be elected, the particulars of each candidate remaining validly nominated (using candidates' commonly used names where applicable) and the names of all persons subscribing a candidate's nomination paper.¹⁰⁹ Where a candidate stands validly nominated by more than one nomination paper, the details of subscribers must be taken from the selected nomination paper. If the candidate cannot or does not do this, then the Returning Officer must choose one.¹¹⁰

Notice of situation of polling stations

9.2 The Returning Officer is required to give public notice of the situation of each polling station and the description of voters entitled to vote there not later than the sixth day before polling day.¹¹¹ This means indicating the elector numbers of electors entitled to vote at each polling station.

9.3 When determining the polling stations that will be used at the election, the Returning Officer should consult the list of polling places held by the local authority. The polling station should be within the polling place for that area. There should also be consideration of any comments made during the last review of any accessibility issues and how they can be addressed for this election.

9.4 All election agents should be given copies of the notice of poll and the notice of situation of polling stations as soon as practicable.¹¹²

9.5 Public notice is defined as posting the notice in some conspicuous place or places in the local government area.¹¹³ Notice may also be given in any other manner that the Returning Officer thinks appropriate. All appropriate communication channels should be used, which should include using the council's website where possible in order to ensure that the information reaches the widest possible audience.

Polling station equipment, notices and supplies

9.6 The Returning Officer is required to supply each polling station with materials to enable voters to mark the ballot papers.¹¹⁴ The legislation does

¹⁰⁹ Rule 21, LEPAR 2006.

¹¹⁰ Rule 9(7), LEPAR 2006.

¹¹¹ Rules 1 and 21, LEPAR 2006.

¹¹² Rule 21(3), LEPAR 2006.

¹¹³ Section 200(1A), RPA 1983.

¹¹⁴ Rule 26, LEPAR 2006.

not specify any particular means, but pencils probably remain the most convenient. It is sensible to ensure both that the quality of the ballot papers is conducive to pencil and that the pencils are suitable for making a clear, bold mark.



A checklist of items that the Returning Officer must provide to each polling station is contained in Part D, 'The poll', Appendix, 'Resources'.