The Electoral Commission

Dealing with doubtful ballot papers

Supporting mayoral elections in England

Translations and other formats

All of our guidance and resources for these polls are also available in Welsh.
For information on obtaining this publication in another language or in a large-print or Braille version please contact the Electoral Commission:

Tel: 020 7271 0500
Email: publications@electoralcommission.org.uk

Contents

1 Introduction

1.1 This booklet is designed to assist Returning Officers (ROs) in adjudicating doubtful ballot papers at local authority and combined authority mayoral elections in England held under the Supplementary Vote (SV) electoral system.

> This booklet should be read in conjunction with our general guidance on managing the verification and count contained in Part E of our guidance for Returning Officers. In relation to combined authority mayoral elections, it should also be read in conjunction with any additional guidance or directions issued by the Combined Authority Returning Officer (CARO).

1.2 The RO may delegate the final decision on adjudication to one or more deputies, but this must be done explicitly in writing.[1]

1.3 Because the RO discharges a statutory function in adjudicating doubtful votes, the RO or authorised Deputy RO, and not any other staff employed by the RO at the count, should carry out this function.

1.4 There have been no decided cases in adjudicating ballot papers under SV. Although the ultimate decision rests with the RO, this booklet aims to promote consistency of approach across England.

1.5 This booklet has been developed in consultation with leading counsel and representatives from across the electoral community, including mayoral election ROs, members of the Elections, Referendum and Registration Working Group and the Electoral Coordination and Advisory Board and the Electoral Commission is grateful for their assistance throughout this process.

1.6 When undertaking the adjudication of ballot papers it is important to ensure that the process is carried out in full view of all candidates and their agents present at the count, as well as in the presence of any Commission representatives and accredited observers in attendance.

Managing the adjudication at a supplementary vote election

1.7 At SV elections with more than two candidates, if no candidate obtains more than 50% of valid first preference votes, there will be a second count that will involve counting the second preference votes for those candidates remaining in the contest given by voters who did not give their first preference vote to any of those candidates. At combined authority mayoral elections, the second count will only take place if no candidate receives more than 50% of the valid first preference votes

---

[1] Section 35(4), Representation of the People Act 1983 (in respect of combined authority mayoral elections, as applied and modified by article 3(2), (3)(a) and (4)(c), 2017 Order).

across the whole of the combined authority area. In that case, the CARO will direct the count of second preferences by local ROs.

1.8 At the first count, it is only the adjudication of first preferences that the RO needs to be concerned with. However, when adjudicating first preferences, the whole of the ballot paper will need to be considered (see chapter **2 Principles of adjudication** for further details).

1.9 If there is a second count, the RO is concerned only with the adjudication of second preference votes for each of the candidates remaining in the contest given by voters who did not give their first preference vote to any of the remaining candidates. However, the RO can only allow a second preference vote if a valid first preference vote is also marked on the ballot paper. Again, in considering second preference votes, the whole of the ballot paper will need to be considered.

1.10 Experience from some SV counts indicates that there may be a significant number of ballot papers requiring adjudication. Therefore, at either count, ROs should not wait until towards the end before starting the adjudication process; this should be carried out regularly throughout each count in clear view of those entitled to be present.

1.11 Those ballot papers that have been rejected at the first count should be stamped with the word 'rejected' and placed in the appropriate package.[2] All other ballot papers, i.e. those where a valid first preference vote is marked, must be counted.

1.12 A statement must be prepared showing the number of ballot papers rejected under each of the following headings at the conclusion of the first count:[3]

- want of official mark
- giving more than one candidate a first preference vote
- writing or mark by which the voter could be identified
- unmarked or void for uncertainty as to the first preference vote

1.13 If no candidate receives more than 50% of the valid first preference votes, the second preferences will need to be counted. A ballot paper can be adjudicated as valid at the first count and invalid in relation to the second preference vote at the second count. In those circumstances, the ballot paper should be stamped with the word 'rejected' at the second count and placed in the appropriate package.[4] At the

---

[2] Rule 48(4), Schedule 1, Local Authorities (Mayoral Elections) (England and Wales) Regulations 2007. Rule 51(4), Schedule 1, Combined Authorities (Mayoral Elections) Order 2017.
[3] Rule 48(5), Schedule 1, Local Authorities (Mayoral Elections) (England and Wales) Regulations 2007. Rule 51(5), Schedule 1, Combined Authorities (Mayoral Elections) Order 2017.
[4] Rule 48(4), read with Rule 52(3), Schedule 1, Local Authorities (Mayoral Elections) (England and Wales) Regulations 2007. Rule 51(4) read with Rule 55(3), Schedule 1, Combined Authorities (Mayoral Elections) Order 2017.

conclusion of the second count, a statement must be prepared showing the number of ballot papers rejected under each of the following headings:[5]

- want of official mark
- giving more than one candidate a second preference vote
- writing or mark by which the voter could be identified
- unmarked or void for uncertainty as to the second preference vote

1.14 A further statement must also be prepared after the second count which includes:[6]

- The total number of first preference votes given for each candidate.
- The total number of second preference votes given for each of the candidates remaining in the contest after the count of the first preference votes.
- The total number of votes given for each of those candidates.
- The number of ballot papers that were valid as a first preference vote given for a candidate who did not remain in the contest after the count of the first preference votes.
- The total number of ballot papers rejected at the count of second preference votes on the ground that they were unmarked or void for uncertainty as to the second preference vote.

---

[5] Rule 48(5), read with Rule 52(3), Schedule 1, Local Authorities (Mayoral Elections) (England and Wales) Regulations 2007. Rule 51(5) read with Rule 55(3), Schedule 1, Combined Authorities (Mayoral Elections) Order 2017.
[6] Rule 53(2), Schedule 1, Local Authorities (Mayoral Elections) (England and Wales) Regulations 2007. Rule 51(6), Schedule 1, Combined Authorities (Mayoral Elections) Order 2017.

2   Principles of adjudication

2.1   Any doubtful ballot papers should be placed in a tray for the supervisor to take to the RO for adjudication. The whole of the ballot paper needs to be considered when adjudicating doubtful votes and the front of the ballot papers should be carefully checked for any marks in case the voter has made any marks outside of the voting boxes.

2.2   The RO may only reject a ballot paper on the following grounds:[7]

- want of an official mark
- where more than one first preference vote has been given
- having any mark or writing by which the voter can be identified (except the ballot paper number and UIM)
- those which are unmarked or void for uncertainty as to the first preference vote

2.3   A ballot paper must not be rejected because the vote is:[8]

- not marked in the proper place
- marked other than by a cross
- marked by more than one mark

  if an intention to give a first preference vote for not more than one candidate clearly appears on the ballot paper.

2.4   Therefore, the following ballot papers will need to be passed to the RO for adjudication:

- those that appear to have no official mark (not the unique identifying mark)
- those appearing to contain more than one first preference vote
- those with any writing or mark by which it appears that the voter can be identified
- those where there is no mark or uncertainty as to the first preference vote

2.5   In addition, in order to help maintain the integrity of the election, the following ballot papers should be passed to the RO for further consideration:

- any paper torn or damaged in any way
- any paper with anything unusual about it (for example, any paper that appears to have been altered, either with a clearly different writing instrument or with correction fluid)

2.6   In the case of ballot papers that appear to have been altered, ROs may consider packaging them separately in case of later challenge or investigation.

---

[7] Rule 48(1), Schedule 1, Local Authorities (Mayoral Elections) (England and Wales) Regulations 2007. Rule 51(1), Schedule 1, Combined Authorities (Mayoral Elections) Order 2017.
[8] Rule 48(2), Schedule 1, Local Authorities (Mayoral Elections) (England and Wales) Regulations 2007. Rule 51(2), Schedule 1, Combined Authorities (Mayoral Elections) Order 2017.

Want of official mark

2.7   Absence of the official mark must lead to an automatic rejection. The RO has no discretion in this regard.

2.8   However, where instead of a pre-printed official mark a stamping instrument has been used, a partial piercing or embossing of the ballot paper should not in itself result in a rejection. As long as it is clear that the ballot paper has been stamped by polling station staff, the fact that not all the pins have stamped through the ballot paper or that the perforation is not wholly on the paper is immaterial.

Voting for more candidates than one first preference

2.9   This is a matter for the ROs judgment.

2.10 Additional marks should not lead to a rejection if it is clear that those marks were not intended as a first preference vote.

Not clearly indicating a first preference

2.11 There are a variety of circumstances in which the RO will need to determine whether or not a first preference clearly appears on the ballot paper. For example, it may be that the voter has put a number, word or symbol, instead of a cross in the first choice column. It may also be that the voter has marked their first preference vote elsewhere than in the proper place.

2.12 Alternatively, while the voter may have put an 'X' or another symbol in the first choice column, some other mark on the ballot paper may cast doubt over whether they actually intended this to be their first preference vote.

2.13 The key question a RO should ask is whether the voter's intention to cast a first preference vote for only one candidate clearly appears on the ballot paper. In order to do this, the ballot paper needs to be looked at in its entirety, i.e. all marks on the ballot paper need to be taken into account as part of the adjudication process. Not only must the ballot paper contain a vote, it must be clear that the vote is intended as a first preference vote for one candidate.

2.14 Where a voter has marked the first choice column, any additional mark on the ballot paper should be scrutinised to ensure that it does not cast doubt over whether the mark in the first choice column was intended as a first preference vote. For instance, example 32 shows how what appears to be a vote in the first choice column has been undermined by the number '1' in the second column: looking at the ballot paper as a whole, it is not clear which one of those votes was intended as a first preference and therefore the ballot paper should be rejected as being void for uncertainty as to the first preference vote.

Writing or mark by which the voter can be identified

2.15 There are two aspects to this:

- either any writing or mark on the ballot paper which, of itself, identifies the voter, (which does not include the ballot paper number and unique identifying mark on the back of the ballot paper), or
- the voter can be identified by such writing or mark

2.16 It is important to bear in mind that the legislation states that the voter **can be**, not may be or might possibly be, identified (which does not include the ballot paper number and UIM on the back of the ballot paper).

Writing or mark which, of itself, identifies the voter

2.17 A ballot paper should be rejected if:

- the electoral number of the voter written on the ballot paper unequivocally identifies the voter
- it may reasonably be held to bear the name (or signature) or unique address of the voter on its front

The voter can be indirectly identified by any writing or mark on the ballot paper

2.18 The RO is not required to investigate the matter or require evidence to be produced to identify the writing or mark, but the RO should consider any evidence that is given to them at the time.

2.19 Where there is doubt about the identity of the person who marked the ballot paper, the RO should allow rather than reject the ballot paper.

Unmarked ballot papers

2.20 Unmarked ballot papers should be rejected, even if a mark on the back of the ballot paper shows through on the front.

2.21 A ballot paper marked by means other than a pencil should not be rejected simply because of that.

2.22 Marks other than a cross, however faint, may still be valid provided it is clearly apparent that a first preference vote has been given for not more than one candidate.

Decisions on ballot papers

2.23 The decision of the RO is final, but may be subject to review on an election petition.[9]

---

[9] Rule 49, Schedule 1, Local Authorities (Mayoral Elections) (England and Wales) Regulations 2007. Rule 52, Schedule 1, Combined Authorities (Mayoral Elections) Order 2017.

3 Principles of adjudication at the Second count

3.1 Only ballot papers with a valid first preference can be included in the second count.[10]

3.2 At the second count, the same grounds for rejection as at the first count apply, except that any references to first preference votes shall be taken as references to second preference votes.[11] This means that the RO may only reject a ballot paper at the second count on the following grounds:

- it does not contain an official mark
- where more than one second preference vote has been given
- it contains a mark or writing by which the voter can be identified (which does not include the ballot paper number and unique identifying mark on the back of the ballot paper)
- it is unmarked or void for uncertainty as to the second preference vote

3.3 A ballot paper must not be rejected because the vote is:[12]

- not marked in the proper place
- marked other than by a cross
- marked by more than one mark
- if an intention to give a second preference vote for not more than one candidate clearly appears on the ballot paper

3.4 When adjudicating doubtful ballot papers at the second count, the same processes and principles described above for the first count also apply to the second count.

---

[10] Rule 52(2), Schedule 1, Local Authorities (Mayoral Elections) (England and Wales) Regulations 2007. Rule 55(2), Schedule 1, Combined Authorities (Mayoral Elections) Order 2017.
[11] Rule 52(3), Schedule 1, Local Authorities (Mayoral Elections) (England and Wales) Regulations 2007. Rule 55(3), Schedule 1, Combined Authorities (Mayoral Elections) Order 2017.
[12] Rule 48(2), read with Rule 52(3), Schedule 1, Local Authorities (Mayoral Elections) (England and Wales) Regulations 2007. Rule 51(2) read with Rule 55(3), Schedule 1, Combined Authorities (Mayoral Elections) Order 2017.

4 Summary

4.1 The principles to be applied are set out above. In practical terms, the general approach can be summarised as follows:

- Always be clear and consistent.
- Take time to ensure that a considered decision is given in every case.
- Determine whether the intention of the vote clearly appears on the ballot paper. As part of this, ROs will need to:
    - consider the whole of the ballot paper
    - consider whether the way a ballot paper has been marked means that a vote for a candidate is clearly apparent

5 Examples

5.1   The examples provided here under 'allowed' and 'rejected' are taken from the specific rules for local authority and combined authority mayoral elections in England. Ultimately, the decision on any particular ballot paper, including the question as to whether an intention to vote for a particular candidate clearly appears, rests with the RO.

5.2   References are to the Local Authorities (Mayoral Elections) (England and Wales) Regulations 2007 and the Combined Authorities (Mayoral Elections) Order 2017. Rule references should be read, in respect of a second preference vote, with Rule 52(3) at local authority mayoral elections and Rule 55(3) at combined authority mayoral elections.

5.3   To avoid repetition, the images provided in this booklet are of the local authority mayoral ballot paper only. However, the same principles apply to combined authority mayoral ballot papers. Therefore, the examples shown should be read across when adjudicating doubtful ballot papers for a combined authority mayoral election.

Allowed votes

The following are suggested examples of allowed votes.

Example 1

<div align="center">

Election of the Mayor for
(insert name of authority)

</div>

Vote once ☒ in column 1 for your first choice, and

Vote once ☒ in column 2 for your second choice

	Column 1 **first choice** ▼	Column 2 **second choice** ▼
BOOTS, Dusty 2 The Cottages, Anytown XY8 9JG The League of Line Dancers Candidate ☎		
GREY, Earl (address in [relevant area]) The Mad Hatter's Tea Party Candidate 🕸	✗	
HOOD, Robin 6 The Heath, Anytown XY4 0BH The Forest Party Candidate ✉		
JIANG, Mike 33 The Lane, Anytown XY6 3GD Independent		
MILLER, Windy 21 The Grove, Anytown XY2 5JP The Alternative Power Forum Candidate		✗
WILLIAMS, Rhys 3 The Road, Anytown XY3 4JN Independent		

Allow for Grey as first preference and Miller as second preference. Local authority mayoral Rule 48(2)(a) and combined authority mayoral (CAM) Rule 51(2)(a) – vote marked elsewhere than in the proper place.

Example 2

Election of the Mayor for
(insert name of authority)

Vote once ☒ in column 1 for your first choice, and

Vote once ☒ in column 2 for your second choice

	Column 1 first choice ▼	Column 2 second choice ▼
BOOTS, Dusty 2 The Cottages, Anytown XY8 9JG The League of Line Dancers Candidate ☎	✓	✗
GREY, Earl (address in [relevant area]) The Mad Hatter's Tea Party Candidate	✗	✗
HOOD, Robin 6 The Heath, Anytown XY4 0BH The Forest Party Candidate ✉	✗	✗
JIANG, Mike 33 The Lane, Anytown XY6 3GD Independent	✗	✓
MILLER, Windy 21 The Grove, Anytown XY2 5JP The Alternative Power Forum Candidate	✗	✗
WILLIAMS, Rhys 3 The Road, Anytown XY3 4JN Independent	✗	✗

Allow for Boots as first preference and Jiang as second preference.
Local authority mayoral Rule 48(2)(b) and (c) CAM Rule 51(2)(b) and (c) – vote marked otherwise than by means of a cross and by more than one mark. In this example, the voter's intention is clearly indicated through the use of 'ticks'. Crosses have been used consistently as a negative statement, rather than as an indication of a positive choice.

Example 3

Election of the Mayor for
(insert name of authority)

| Vote once ☒ in column 1 for your first choice, and |
| Vote once ☒ in column 2 for your second choice |

	Column 1 **first choice** ▼	Column 2 **second choice** ▼
BOOTS, Dusty 2 The Cottages, Anytown XY8 9JG The League of Line Dancers Candidate ☎		▨
GREY, Earl (address in [relevant area]) The Mad Hatter's Tea Party Candidate 🕸	▨	
HOOD, Robin 6 The Heath, Anytown XY4 0BH The Forest Party Candidate ✉		
JIANG, Mike 33 The Lane, Anytown XY6 3GD Independent		X
MILLER, Windy 21 The Grove, Anytown XY2 5JP The Alternative Power Forum Candidate		
WILLIAMS, Rhys 3 The Road, Anytown XY3 4JN Independent	X	

Allow for Williams as first preference and Jiang as second preference.
Local authority mayoral Rule 48(2)(c) and CAM Rule 51(2)(c) – vote marked by more than one mark.

Example 4

Election of the Mayor for
(insert name of authority)

Vote once ☒ in column 1 for your first choice, and
Vote once ☒ in column 2 for your second choice

	Column 1 first choice ▼	Column 2 second choice ▼
BOOTS, Dusty 2 The Cottages, Anytown XY8 9JG The League of Line Dancers Candidate	no	no
GREY, Earl (address in [relevant area]) The Mad Hatter's Tea Party Candidate	yes	no
HOOD, Robin 6 The Heath, Anytown XY4 0BH The Forest Party Candidate	no	no
JIANG, Mike 33 The Lane, Anytown XY6 3GD Independent	no	yes
MILLER, Windy 21 The Grove, Anytown XY2 5JP The Alternative Power Forum Candidate	no	no
WILLIAMS, Rhys 3 The Road, Anytown XY3 4JN Independent	no	no

Allow for Grey as first preference and Jiang as second preference.
Local authority mayoral Rule 48(2)(b) and (c) and CAM Rule 51(2)(b) and (c) – vote marked otherwise than by means of a cross and by more than one mark.

Example 5

Election of the Mayor for
(insert name of authority)

Vote once ☒ in column 1 for your first choice, and	
Vote once ☒ in column 2 for your second choice	

	Column 1 first choice ▼	Column 2 second choice ▼
BOOTS, Dusty 2 The Cottages, Anytown XY8 9JG The League of Line Dancers Candidate ☎		
GREY, Earl (address in [relevant area]) The Mad Hatter's Tea Party Candidate		
HOOD, Robin 6 The Heath, Anytown XY4 0BH The Forest Party Candidate ✉	☺	
JIANG, Mike 33 The Lane, Anytown XY6 3GD Independent		
MILLER, Windy 21 The Grove, Anytown XY2 5JP The Alternative Power Forum Candidate		☺
WILLIAMS, Rhys 3 The Road, Anytown XY3 4JN Independent		

Allow for Hood as first preference and Miller as second preference.
Local authority mayoral Rule 48(2)(b) and CAM Rule 51(2)(b) – vote marked otherwise than by means of a cross.

Example 6

Election of the Mayor for
(insert name of authority)

Vote once ☒ in column 1 for your first choice, and

Vote once ☒ in column 2 for your second choice

	Column 1 first choice ▼	Column 2 second choice ▼
BOOTS, Dusty 2 The Cottages, Anytown XY8 9JG The League of Line Dancers Candidate ☎		
GREY, Earl (address in [relevant area]) The Mad Hatter's Tea Party Candidate		O
HOOD, Robin 6 The Heath, Anytown XY4 0BH The Forest Party Candidate ✉	O	
JIANG, Mike 33 The Lane, Anytown XY6 3GD Independent		
MILLER, Windy 21 The Grove, Anytown XY2 5JP The Alternative Power Forum Candidate		
WILLIAMS, Rhys 3 The Road, Anytown XY3 4JN Independent		

Allow for Hood as first preference and Grey as second preference.
Local authority mayoral Rule 48(2)(b) and CAM Rule 51(2)(b) – vote marked otherwise than by means of a cross.

Example 7

Election of the Mayor for
(insert name of authority)

> Vote once ☒ in column 1 for your first choice, and
>
> Vote once ☒ in column 2 for your second choice

	Column 1 first choice ▼	Column 2 second choice ▼
BOOTS, Dusty 2 The Cottages, Anytown XY8 9JG The League of Line Dancers Candidate ☎	*1*	
GREY, Earl (address in [relevant area]) The Mad Hatter's Tea Party Candidate 🕸		
HOOD, Robin 6 The Heath, Anytown XY4 0BH The Forest Party Candidate ✉		
JIANG, Mike 33 The Lane, Anytown XY6 3GD Independent		
MILLER, Windy 21 The Grove, Anytown XY2 5JP The Alternative Power Forum Candidate		
WILLIAMS, Rhys 3 The Road, Anytown XY3 4JN Independent		*2*

Allow for Boots as first preference and Williams as second preference.
Local authority mayoral Rule 48(2)(b) and CAM Rule 51(2)(b) – vote marked otherwise than by means of a cross.

Example 8

Election of the Mayor for
(insert name of authority)

Vote once ☒ in column 1 for your first choice, and	
Vote once ☒ in column 2 for your second choice	

	Column 1 first choice ▼	Column 2 second choice ▼
BOOTS, Dusty 2 The Cottages, Anytown XY8 9JG The League of Line Dancers Candidate ☎	1	
GREY, Earl (address in [relevant area]) The Mad Hatter's Tea Party Candidate		
HOOD, Robin 6 The Heath, Anytown XY4 0BH The Forest Party Candidate ✉	2	
JIANG, Mike 33 The Lane, Anytown XY6 3GD Independent		
MILLER, Windy 21 The Grove, Anytown XY2 5JP The Alternative Power Forum Candidate		
WILLIAMS, Rhys 3 The Road, Anytown XY3 4JN Independent		

Allow for Boots as first preference and Hood as second preference.
Local authority mayoral Rule 48(2)(a) and (b) and CAM Rule 51(2)(a) and (b) – vote marked elsewhere than in the proper place (in relation to the second preference vote) and otherwise than by means of a cross.

Example 9

Election of the Mayor for
(insert name of authority)

Vote once ☒ in column 1 for your first choice, and

Vote once ☒ in column 2 for your second choice

	Column 1 first choice ▼	Column 2 second choice ▼
BOOTS, Dusty 2 The Cottages, Anytown XY8 9JG The League of Line Dancers Candidate ☎		2
GREY, Earl (address in [relevant area]) The Mad Hatter's Tea Party Candidate		
HOOD, Robin 6 The Heath, Anytown XY4 0BH The Forest Party Candidate ✉		
JIANG, Mike 33 The Lane, Anytown XY6 3GD Independent		1
MILLER, Windy 21 The Grove, Anytown XY2 5JP The Alternative Power Forum Candidate		
WILLIAMS, Rhys 3 The Road, Anytown XY3 4JN Independent		

Allow for Jiang as first preference and Boots as second preference.
Local authority mayoral Rule 48(2)(a) and (b) and CAM Rule 51(2)(a) and (b) – vote marked elsewhere than in the proper place (in relation to the first preference vote) and otherwise than by means of a cross.

Example 10

Election of the Mayor for
(insert name of authority)

Vote once ☒ in column 1 for your first choice, and

Vote once ☒ in column 2 for your second choice

	Column 1 first choice	Column 2 second choice
BOOTS, Dusty 2 The Cottages, Anytown XY8 9JG The League of Line Dancers Candidate ☎		
GREY, Earl address in [relevant area]) The Mad Hatter's Tea Party Candidate		
HOOD, Robin 6 The Heath, Anytown XY4 0BH The Forest Party Candidate ✉		
JIANG, Mike 33 The Lane, Anytown XY6 3GD Independent		
MILLER, Windy 21 The Grove, Anytown XY2 5JP The Alternative Power Forum Candidate		
WILLIAMS, Rhys 3 The Road, Anytown XY3 4JN Independent		

1 and *2* are handwritten against GREY, Earl and MILLER, Windy respectively.

Allow for Grey as first preference and Miller as second preference.
Local authority mayoral Rule 48(2)(a) and (b) and CAM Rule 51(2)(a) and (b) – vote marked elsewhere than in the proper place and otherwise than by means of a cross.

Example 11

Election of the Mayor for
(insert name of authority)

Vote once ☒ in column 1 for your first choice, and

Vote once ☒ in column 2 for your second choice

	Column 1 first choice ▼	Column 2 second choice ▼
BOOTS, Dusty 2 The Cottages, Anytown XY8 9JG The League of Line Dancers Candidate ☎		
GREY, Earl (address in [relevant area]) The Mad Hatter's Tea Party Candidate		*Grey*
HOOD, Robin 6 The Heath, Anytown XY4 0BH The Forest Party Candidate ✉		
JIANG, Mike 33 The Lane, Anytown XY6 3GD Independent	*Jiang*	
MILLER, Windy 21 The Grove, Anytown XY2 5JP The Alternative Power Forum Candidate		
WILLIAMS, Rhys 3 The Road, Anytown XY3 4JN Independent		

Allow for Jiang as first preference and Grey as second preference.
Local authority mayoral Rule 48(2)(b) and CAM Rule 51(2)(b) – vote marked otherwise than by means of a cross.

Example 12

Election of the Mayor for
(insert name of authority)

Vote once ☒ in column 1 for your first choice, and

Vote once ☒ in column 2 for your second choice

	Column 1 first choice ▼	Column 2 second choice ▼
BOOTS, Dusty 2 The Cottages, Anytown XY8 9JG The League of Line Dancers Candidate ☎	X	
GREY, Earl (address in [relevant area]) The Mad Hatter's Tea Party Candidate		
HOOD, Robin 6 The Heath, Anytown XY4 0BH The Forest Party Candidate		
JIANG, Mike 33 The Lane, Anytown XY6 3GD Independent		
MILLER, Windy 21 The Grove, Anytown XY2 5JP The Alternative Power Forum Candidate		△
WILLIAMS, Rhys 3 The Road, Anytown XY3 4JN Independent		

Allow for Boots as first preference and Miller as second preference.
Local authority mayoral Rule 48(2)(b) and CAM Rule 51(2)(b) – vote marked otherwise than by means of a cross (in relation to the second preference vote).

Example 13

Election of the Mayor for
(insert name of authority)

Vote once ☒ in column 1 for your first choice, and

Vote once ☒ in column 2 for your second choice

	Column 1 first choice ▼	Column 2 second choice ▼
BOOTS, Dusty 2 The Cottages, Anytown XY8 9JG The League of Line Dancers Candidate ☎		
GREY, Earl (address in [relevant area]) The Mad Hatter's Tea Party Candidate		
HOOD, Robin 6 The Heath, Anytown XY4 0BH The Forest Party Candidate ✉ ✗		
JIANG, Mike 33 The Lane, Anytown XY6 3GD Independent		
MILLER, Windy 21 The Grove, Anytown XY2 5JP The Alternative Power Forum Candidate		✗
WILLIAMS, Rhys 3 The Road, Anytown XY3 4JN Independent		

Allow for Hood as first preference and Miller as second preference.
Local authority mayoral Rule 48(2)(a) and CAM Rule 51(2)(a) – vote marked elsewhere than in the proper place (in relation to the first preference vote).

Example 14

Election of the Mayor for
(insert name of authority)

Vote once ☒ in column 1 for your first choice, and

Vote once ☒ in column 2 for your second choice

	Column 1 first choice ▼	Column 2 second choice ▼
BOOTS, Dusty 2 The Cottages, Anytown XY8 9JG The League of Line Dancers Candidate ☎	5	
GREY, Earl (address in [relevant area]) The Mad Hatter's Tea Party Candidate	3	
HOOD, Robin 6 The Heath, Anytown XY4 0BH The Forest Party Candidate ✉	1	
JIANG, Mike 33 The Lane, Anytown XY6 3GD Independent	2	
MILLER, Windy 21 The Grove, Anytown XY2 5JP The Alternative Power Forum Candidate	4	
WILLIAMS, Rhys 3 The Road, Anytown XY3 4JN Independent	6	

Allow for Hood as first preference and Jiang as second preference.
Local authority mayoral Rule 48(2)(b) and (c) and CAM Rule 51(2)(b) and (c) – vote marked otherwise than by means of a cross and by more than one mark.

Example 15

Election of the Mayor for
(insert name of authority)

> Vote once ☒ in column 1 for your first choice, and
>
> Vote once ☒ in column 2 for your second choice

1. Hood
2. Miller

	Column 1 first choice ▼	Column 2 second choice ▼
BOOTS, Dusty 2 The Cottages, Anytown XY8 9JG The League of Line Dancers Candidate		
GREY, Earl (address in [relevant area]) The Mad Hatter's Tea Party Candidate		
HOOD, Robin 6 The Heath, Anytown XY4 0BH The Forest Party Candidate		
JIANG, Mike 33 The Lane, Anytown XY6 3GD Independent		
MILLER, Windy 21 The Grove, Anytown XY2 5JP The Alternative Power Forum Candidate		
WILLIAMS, Rhys 3 The Road, Anytown XY3 4JN Independent		

Allow for Hood as first preference and Miller as second preference.
48(2)(a), (b) and (c) and CAM Rule 51(2)(a), (b) and (c) – vote marked elsewhere than in the proper place, otherwise than by means of a cross and by more than one mark.

Example 16

Election of the Mayor for
(insert name of authority)

Vote once ☒ in column 1 for your first choice, and

Vote once ☒ in column 2 for your second choice

	Column 1 first choice ▼	Column 2 second choice ▼
BOOTS, Dusty 2 The Cottages, Anytown XY8 9JG The League of Line Dancers Candidate	→	
GREY, Earl (address in [relevant area]) The Mad Hatter's Tea Party Candidate		
HOOD, Robin 6 The Heath, Anytown XY4 0BH The Forest Party Candidate		→
JIANG, Mike 33 The Lane, Anytown XY6 3GD Independent		
MILLER, Windy 21 The Grove, Anytown XY2 5JP The Alternative Power Forum Candidate		
WILLIAMS, Rhys 3 The Road, Anytown XY3 4JN Independent		

Allow for Boots as first preference and Hood as second preference.
Local authority mayoral Rule 48(2)(b) and CAM Rule 51(2)(b) – vote marked otherwise than by means of a cross.

Example 17

Election of the Mayor for
(insert name of authority)

Vote once ☒ in column 1 for your first choice, and

Vote once ☒ in column 2 for your second choice

	Column 1 first choice ▼	Column 2 second choice ▼
BOOTS, Dusty 2 The Cottages, Anytown XY8 9JG The League of Line Dancers Candidate ☎		
GREY, Earl (address in [relevant area]) The Mad Hatter's Tea Party Candidate	X	1
HOOD, Robin 6 The Heath, Anytown XY4 0BH The Forest Party Candidate ✉	X	2
JIANG, Mike 33 The Lane, Anytown XY6 3GD Independent		
MILLER, Windy 21 The Grove, Anytown XY2 5JP The Alternative Power Forum Candidate		
WILLIAMS, Rhys 3 The Road, Anytown XY3 4JN Independent		

Allow for Grey as first preference and Hood as second preference.
Local authority mayoral Rule 48(2)(c) and CAM Rule 51(2) (c) – vote marked by more than one mark.

Example 18

Election of the Mayor for
(insert name of authority)

Vote once ☒ in column 1 for your first choice, and
Vote once ☒ in column 2 for your second choice

		Column 1 first choice ▼	Column 2 second choice ▼
BOOTS, Dusty 2 The Cottages, Anytown XY8 9JG The League of Line Dancers Candidate	☎	2	X
GREY, Earl (address in [relevant area]) The Mad Hatter's Tea Party Candidate	🕸	1	X
HOOD, Robin 6 The Heath, Anytown XY4 0BH The Forest Party Candidate	✉		
JIANG, Mike 33 The Lane, Anytown XY6 3GD Independent			
MILLER, Windy 21 The Grove, Anytown XY2 5JP The Alternative Power Forum Candidate	✽		
WILLIAMS, Rhys 3 The Road, Anytown XY3 4JN Independent			

Allow for Grey as first preference and Boots as second preference.
Local authority mayoral Rule 48(2)(c) and CAM Rule 51(2)(c) – vote marked by more than one mark.

Example 19

Election of the Mayor for
(insert name of authority)

| Vote once ☒ in column 1 for your first choice, and |
| Vote once ☒ in column 2 for your second choice |

	Column 1 first choice ▼	Column 2 second choice ▼
BOOTS, Dusty 2 The Cottages, Anytown XY8 9JG The League of Line Dancers Candidate ☎		
GREY, Earl (address in [relevant area]) The Mad Hatter's Tea Party Candidate 🕸		
HOOD, Robin 6 The Heath, Anytown XY4 0BH The Forest Party Candidate ✉		☒
JIANG, Mike 33 The Lane, Anytown XY6 3GD Independent		
MILLER, Windy 21 The Grove, Anytown XY2 5JP The Alternative Power Forum Candidate ❁	☒	
WILLIAMS, Rhys 3 The Road, Anytown XY3 4JN Independent		

Allow for Miller as first preference and Hood as second preference.
Local authority mayoral Rule 48(2)(c) and CAM Rule 51(2) (c) – vote marked by more than one mark.

Example 20

Election of the Mayor for
(insert name of authority)

Vote once ☒ in column 1 for your first choice, and

Vote once ☒ in column 2 for your second choice

	Column 1 first choice ▼	Column 2 second choice ▼
BOOTS, Dusty 2 The Cottages, Anytown XY8 9JG The League of Line Dancers Candidate ☎	X	first
GREY, Earl (address in [relevant area]) The Mad Hatter's Tea Party Candidate		
HOOD, Robin 6 The Heath, Anytown XY4 0BH The Forest Party Candidate ✉		
JIANG, Mike 33 The Lane, Anytown XY6 3GD Independent		
MILLER, Windy 21 The Grove, Anytown XY2 5JP The Alternative Power Forum Candidate		
WILLIAMS, Rhys 3 The Road, Anytown XY3 4JN Independent	X	second

Allow for Boots as first preference and Williams as second preference.
Local authority mayoral Rule 48(2)(c) and CAM Rule 51(2)(c) – vote marked by more than one mark.

Allowed first preference votes only

The following are suggested examples of first preference votes that should be allowed and second preference votes that should not be allowed.

Example 21

Election of the Mayor for
(insert name of authority)

Vote once ☒ in column 1 for your first choice, and

Vote once ☒ in column 2 for your second choice

	Column 1 first choice	Column 2 second choice
BOOTS, Dusty 2 The Cottages, Anytown XY8 9JG The League of Line Dancers Candidate ☎	X	
GREY, Earl (address in [relevant area]) The Mad Hatter's Tea Party Candidate 🕸		X
HOOD, Robin 6 The Heath, Anytown XY4 0BH The Forest Party Candidate ✉		
JIANG, Mike 33 The Lane, Anytown XY6 3GD Independent		X
MILLER, Windy 21 The Grove, Anytown XY2 5JP The Alternative Power Forum Candidate		
WILLIAMS, Rhys 3 The Road, Anytown XY3 4JN Independent		

Allow for Boots as first preference and reject second preference -
Local authority mayoral Rule 48(1)(b) and CAM Rule 51(1)(b) – giving more than one second preference vote.

Example 22

Election of the Mayor for
(insert name of authority)

Vote once ☒ in column 1 for your first choice, and
Vote once ☒ in column 2 for your second choice

	Column 1 first choice ▼	Column 2 second choice ▼
BOOTS, Dusty 2 The Cottages, Anytown XY8 9JG The League of Line Dancers Candidate		
GREY, Earl (address in [relevant area]) The Mad Hatter's Tea Party Candidate	✗	✗
HOOD, Robin 6 The Heath, Anytown XY4 0BH The Forest Party Candidate		
JIANG, Mike 33 The Lane, Anytown XY6 3GD Independent		
MILLER, Windy 21 The Grove, Anytown XY2 5JP The Alternative Power Forum Candidate		
WILLIAMS, Rhys 3 The Road, Anytown XY3 4JN Independent		

Allow for Grey as first preference and second preference cannot be counted. Local authority mayoral Rule 52(1) and CAM Rule 55(1) – second preference cannot be counted. If Grey has been eliminated from the contest, a ballot paper marked up in this way will not be included in the count of second preferences. If Grey has remained in the contest, the second preference is not included in the count because the voter has already given their first preference to Grey.

Example 23

Election of the Mayor for
(insert name of authority)

Vote once ☒ in column 1 for your first choice, and

Vote once ☒ in column 2 for your second choice

	Column 1 **first choice** ▼	Column 2 **second choice** ▼
BOOTS, Dusty 2 The Cottages, Anytown XY8 9JG The League of Line Dancers Candidate ☎		
GREY, Earl (address in [relevant area]) The Mad Hatter's Tea Party Candidate	✗	(crossed)
HOOD, Robin 6 The Heath, Anytown XY4 0BH The Forest Party Candidate ✉		
JIANG, Mike 33 The Lane, Anytown XY6 3GD Independent		
MILLER, Windy 21 The Grove, Anytown XY2 5JP The Alternative Power Forum Candidate		
WILLIAMS, Rhys 3 The Road, Anytown XY3 4JN Independent		

Allow for Grey as first preference, as equivalent to a cross in each box against Grey, and second preference cannot be counted. Local authority mayoral Rule 52(1) and CAM Rule 55(1) – second preference cannot be counted.

Example 24

Election of the Mayor for
(insert name of authority)

Vote once ☒ in column 1 for your first choice, and	
Vote once ☒ in column 2 for your second choice	

	Column 1 first choice ▼	Column 2 second choice ▼
BOOTS, Dusty 2 The Cottages, Anytown XY8 9JG The League of Line Dancers Candidate ☎	X	X
GREY, Earl (address in [relevant area]) The Mad Hatter's Tea Party Candidate		X
HOOD, Robin 6 The Heath, Anytown XY4 0BH The Forest Party Candidate ✉		X
JIANG, Mike 33 The Lane, Anytown XY6 3GD Independent		
MILLER, Windy 21 The Grove, Anytown XY2 5JP The Alternative Power Forum Candidate		X
WILLIAMS, Rhys 3 The Road, Anytown XY3 4JN Independent		X

Allow for Boots as first preference and reject second preference. Local authority mayoral Rule 48(1)(b) and CAM Rule 51(1)(b) – reject second preference for giving more than one second preference vote. While in the first column, the ballot paper has been marked in accordance with the instructions, it is not clear who the voter intended to vote for as their second preference.

Example 25

Election of the Mayor for
(insert name of authority)

Vote once ☒ in column 1 for your first choice, and

Vote once ☒ in column 2 for your second choice

	Column 1 first choice ▼	Column 2 second choice ▼
BOOTS, Dusty 2 The Cottages, Anytown XY8 9JG The League of Line Dancers Candidate		
GREY, Earl (address in [relevant area]) The Mad Hatter's Tea Party Candidate	✗ Grey	
HOOD, Robin 6 The Heath, Anytown XY4 0BH The Forest Party Candidate		
JIANG, Mike 33 The Lane, Anytown XY6 3GD Independent		✗ Miller
MILLER, Windy 21 The Grove, Anytown XY2 5JP The Alternative Power Forum Candidate		
WILLIAMS, Rhys 3 The Road, Anytown XY3 4JN Independent		

Allow for Grey as first preference and reject second preference. Local authority mayoral Rule 48(1)(d) and CAM Rule 51(1)(d) – reject second preference vote as void for uncertainty as to the second preference vote. In this example, the inclusion of the candidate's name 'Miller' in the voting box conflicts with the cross in the second preference column and casts doubt over who the voter intended to vote for as to their second preference.

Rejected votes

The following are examples of votes that should be rejected.

Example 26

Election of the Mayor for
(insert name of authority)

Vote once ☒ in column 1 for your first choice, and

Vote once ☒ in column 2 for your second choice

	Column 1 **first choice** ▼	Column 2 **second choice** ▼
BOOTS, Dusty 2 The Cottages, Anytown XY8 9JG The League of Line Dancers Candidate		
GREY, Earl (address in [relevant area]) The Mad Hatter's Tea Party Candidate	✗	
HOOD, Robin 6 The Heath, Anytown XY4 0BH The Forest Party Candidate		
JIANG, Mike 33 The Lane, Anytown XY6 3GD Independent		
MILLER, Windy 21 The Grove, Anytown XY2 5JP The Alternative Power Forum Candidate		
WILLIAMS, Rhys 3 The Road, Anytown XY3 4JN Independent	✗	

Reject. Local authority mayoral Rule 48(1)(b) and CAM Rule 51(1)(b) – more than one first preference given.

Example 27

Election of the Mayor for
(insert name of authority)

Vote once ☒ in column 1 for your first choice, and

Vote once ☒ in column 2 for your second choice

F. Brown
5 Riber Close
AT15 6YC

	Column 1 **first choice** ▼	Column 2 **second choice** ▼
BOOTS, Dusty 2 The Cottages, Anytown XY8 9JG The League of Line Dancers Candidate		
GREY, Earl (address in [relevant area]) The Mad Hatter's Tea Party Candidate	✗	
HOOD, Robin 6 The Heath, Anytown XY4 0BH The Forest Party Candidate		✗
JIANG, Mike 33 The Lane, Anytown XY6 3GD Independent		
MILLER, Windy 21 The Grove, Anytown XY2 5JP The Alternative Power Forum Candidate		
WILLIAMS, Rhys 3 The Road, Anytown XY3 4JN Independent		

Reject. Local authority mayoral Rule 48(1)(c) and CAM Rule 51(1)(c) – voter can be identified.

Example 28

Election of the Mayor for
(insert name of authority)

Vote once ☒ in column 1 for your first choice, and
Vote once ☒ in column 2 for your second choice

	Column 1 **first choice** ▼	Column 2 **second choice** ▼
BOOTS, Dusty 2 The Cottages, Anytown XY8 9JG The League of Line Dancers Candidate		
GREY, Earl (address in [relevant area]) The Mad Hatter's Tea Party Candidate		
HOOD, Robin 6 The Heath, Anytown XY4 0BH The Forest Party Candidate		
JIANG, Mike 33 The Lane, Anytown XY6 3GD Independent		
MILLER, Windy 21 The Grove, Anytown XY2 5JP The Alternative Power Forum Candidate		
WILLIAMS, Rhys 3 The Road, Anytown XY3 4JN Independent	X	X

None of the above

Reject. Local authority mayoral Rule 48(1)(d) and CAM Rule 51(1)(d) – void for uncertainty as to the first preference vote.

Example 29

Election of the Mayor for
(insert name of authority)

Vote once ☒ in column 1 for your first choice, and

Vote once ☒ in column 2 for your second choice

	Column 1 first choice	Column 2 second choice
BOOTS, Dusty 2 The Cottages, Anytown XY6 9JG The League of Line Dancers Candidate		
GREY, Earl (address in [relevant area]) The Mad Hatter's Tea Party Candidate		
HOOD, Robin 6 The Heath, Anytown XY4 0BH The Forest Party Candidate		
JIANG, Mike 33 The Lane, Anytown XY6 3GD Independent		
MILLER, Windy 21 The Grove, Anytown XY2 5JP The Alternative Power Forum Candidate		
WILLIAMS, Rhys 3 The Road, Anytown XY3 4JN Independent		

Reject. Local authority mayoral Rule 48(1)(d) and CAM Rule 51(1)(d) – void for uncertainty as to the first preference vote.

Example 30

Election of the Mayor for
(insert name of authority)

Vote once ☒ in column 1 for your first choice, and

Vote once ☒ in column 2 for your second choice

	Column 1 first choice ▼	Column 2 second choice ▼
BOOTS, Dusty 2 The Cottages, Anytown XY8 9JG The League of Line Dancers Candidate ☎		✗
GREY, Earl (address in [relevant area]) The Mad Hatter's Tea Party Candidate		
HOOD, Robin 6 The Heath, Anytown XY4 0BH The Forest Party Candidate		
JIANG, Mike 33 The Lane, Anytown XY6 3GD Independent		
MILLER, Windy 21 The Grove, Anytown XY2 5JP The Alternative Power Forum Candidate		
WILLIAMS, Rhys 3 The Road, Anytown XY3 4JN Independent		

Reject. Local authority mayoral Rule 48(1)(d) and CAM Rule 51(1)(d) – void for uncertainty as to the first preference vote. In this example, the cross in the second column could mean the voter intended to vote for Boots as their second preference and forgot to mark their first preference, or it could mean that they intended to vote for Boots as their first preference. It is therefore not clearly apparent whether the vote was intended as a first preference.

Example 31

Election of the Mayor for
(insert name of authority)

Vote once ☒ in column 1 for your first choice, and

Vote once ☒ in column 2 for your second choice

	Column 1 first choice ▼	Column 2 second choice ▼
BOOTS, Dusty 2 The Cottages, Anytown XY8 9JG The League of Line Dancers Candidate ☎		
GREY, Earl (address in [relevant area]) The Mad Hatter's Tea Party Candidate 🕸		
HOOD, Robin 6 The Heath, Anytown XY4 0BH The Forest Party Candidate ✉		1
JIANG, Mike 33 The Lane, Anytown XY6 3GD Independent	2	
MILLER, Windy 21 The Grove, Anytown XY2 5JP The Alternative Power Forum Candidate		
WILLIAMS, Rhys 3 The Road, Anytown XY3 4JN Independent		

Reject. Local authority mayoral Rule 48(1)(d) and CAM Rule 51(1)(d) – void for uncertainty as to the first preference vote. It is unclear whether the 1 in the second preference column is intended as a first preference vote or whether the voter used a 1 in the second column to indicate their second preference vote.

Example 32

Election of the Mayor for
(insert name of authority)

Vote once ☒ in column 1 for your first choice, and	
Vote once ☒ in column 2 for your second choice	

	Column 1 first choice ▼	Column 2 second choice ▼
BOOTS, Dusty 2 The Cottages, Anytown XY8 9JG The League of Line Dancers Candidate		
GREY, Earl (address in [relevant area]) The Mad Hatter's Tea Party Candidate		
HOOD, Robin 6 The Heath, Anytown XY4 0BH The Forest Party Candidate		
JIANG, Mike 33 The Lane, Anytown XY6 3GD Independent	X	
MILLER, Windy 21 The Grove, Anytown XY2 5JP The Alternative Power Forum Candidate		
WILLIAMS, Rhys 3 The Road, Anytown XY3 4JN Independent		1

Reject. Local authority mayoral Rule 48(1)(d) and CAM Rule 51(1)(d) – void for uncertainty as to the first preference vote. In this example, what appears to be a first preference vote for Jiang has been undermined by the number 1 in the second column. Looking at the ballot paper as a whole, it is not clearly apparent which one of those votes was intended as a first preference.

Example 33

Election of the Mayor for
(insert name of authority)

Vote once ☒ in column 1 for your first choice, and
Vote once ☒ in column 2 for your second choice

	Column 1 first choice ▼	Column 2 second choice ▼
BOOTS, Dusty 2 The Cottages, Anytown XY8 9JG The League of Line Dancers Candidate ☎		
GREY, Earl (address in [relevant area]) The Mad Hatter's Tea Party Candidate	☒ *Hood*	
HOOD, Robin 6 The Heath, Anytown XY4 0BH The Forest Party Candidate ✉		
JIANG, Mike 33 The Lane, Anytown XY6 3GD Independent		☒ *Jiang*
MILLER, Windy 21 The Grove, Anytown XY2 5JP The Alternative Power Forum Candidate		
WILLIAMS, Rhys 3 The Road, Anytown XY3 4JN Independent		

Reject. Local authority mayoral Rule 48(1)(d) and CAM Rule 51(1)(d) – void for uncertainty as to the first preference vote. In this example, the inclusion of the candidate's name 'Hood' next to the cross against Grey casts doubt over who the voter intended to vote for as a first preference. As a result, no first preference vote is clearly apparent.

Example 34

Election of the Mayor for
(insert name of authority)

Vote once ☒ in column 1 for your first choice, and

Vote once ☒ in column 2 for your second choice

	Column 1 first choice ▼	Column 2 second choice ▼
BOOTS, Dusty 2 The Cottages, Anytown XY8 9JG The League of Line Dancers Candidate ☎	5	1
GREY, Earl (address in [relevant area]) The Mad Hatter's Tea Party Candidate	3	2
HOOD, Robin 6 The Heath, Anytown XY4 0BH The Forest Party Candidate ✉	1	3
JIANG, Mike 33 The Lane, Anytown XY6 3GD Independent	2	4
MILLER, Windy 21 The Grove, Anytown XY2 5JP The Alternative Power Forum Candidate	4	6
WILLIAMS, Rhys 3 The Road, Anytown XY3 4JN Independent	6	5

Reject. Local authority mayoral Rule 48(1)(d) and CAM Rule 51(1)(d) – void for uncertainty as to the first preference vote. In this example, there are two candidates with a number 1 against them. Looking at the ballot paper as a whole, it is not clearly apparent which one of those votes was intended as a first preference.

Example 35

Election of the Mayor for
(insert name of authority)

Vote once ☒ in column 1 for your first choice, and	
Vote once ☒ in column 2 for your second choice	

	Column 1 first choice ▼	Column 2 second choice ▼
BOOTS, Dusty 2 The Cottages, Anytown XY8 9JG The League of Line Dancers Candidate ☎	X	
GREY, Earl (address in [relevant area]) The Mad Hatter's Tea Party Candidate		
HOOD, Robin 6 The Heath, Anytown XY4 0BH The Forest Party Candidate ✉		1
JIANG, Mike 33 The Lane, Anytown XY6 3GD Independent		2
MILLER, Windy 21 The Grove, Anytown XY2 5JP The Alternative Power Forum Candidate		
WILLIAMS, Rhys 3 The Road, Anytown XY3 4JN Independent		

Reject. Local authority mayoral Rule 48(1)(d) and CAM Rule 51(1)(d) – void for uncertainty as to the first preference vote. What appears to be a first preference for Boots has been undermined by the number 1 in the second column. Looking at the ballot paper as a whole, it is not clearly apparent which one of those votes was intended as a first preference.

Example 36

Election of the Mayor for
(insert name of authority)

Vote once ☒ in column 1 for your first choice, and

Vote once ☒ in column 2 for your second choice

	Column 1 **first choice** ▼	Column 2 **second choice** ▼
BOOTS, Dusty 2 The Cottages, Anytown XY8 9JG The League of Line Dancers Candidate ☎		
GREY, Earl (address in [relevant area]) The Mad Hatter's Tea Party Candidate		
HOOD, Robin 6 The Heath, Anytown XY4 0BH The Forest Party Candidate ✉		
JIANG, Mike 33 The Lane, Anytown XY6 3GD Independent	X	
MILLER, Windy 21 The Grove, Anytown XY2 5JP The Alternative Power Forum Candidate	X2	
WILLIAMS, Rhys 3 The Road, Anytown XY3 4JN Independent		

Reject. Local authority mayoral Rule 48(1)(d) and CAM Rule 51(1)(d) – void for uncertainty as to the first preference vote.

Example 37

Election of the Mayor for
(insert name of authority)

Vote once ☒ in column 1 for your first choice, and

Vote once ☒ in column 2 for your second choice

	Column 1 first choice ▼	Column 2 second choice ▼
BOOTS, Dusty 2 The Cottages, Anytown XY8 9JG The League of Line Dancers Candidate ☎	X	1
GREY, Earl (address in [relevant area]) The Mad Hatter's Tea Party Candidate 🕸	X	X
HOOD, Robin 6 The Heath, Anytown XY4 0BH The Forest Party Candidate ✉		
JIANG, Mike 33 The Lane, Anytown XY6 3GD Independent		
MILLER, Windy 21 The Grove, Anytown XY2 5JP The Alternative Power Forum Candidate ✾		
WILLIAMS, Rhys 3 The Road, Anytown XY3 4JN Independent		

Reject. Local authority mayoral Rule 48(1)(d) and CAM Rule 51(1)(d) – void for uncertainty as to the first preference vote.

Example 38

Election of the Mayor for
(insert name of authority)

Vote once ☒ in column 1 for your first choice, and	
Vote once ☒ in column 2 for your second choice	

	Column 1 first choice ▼	Column 2 second choice ▼
BOOTS, Dusty 2 The Cottages, Anytown XY8 9JG The League of Line Dancers Candidate ☎	1✗	3✗
GREY, Earl (address in [relevant area]) The Mad Hatter's Tea Party Candidate	4	5
HOOD, Robin 6 The Heath, Anytown XY4 0BH The Forest Party Candidate ✉	6	6
JIANG, Mike 33 The Lane, Anytown XY6 3GD Independent	5	2✗
MILLER, Windy 21 The Grove, Anytown XY2 5JP The Alternative Power Forum Candidate	3	4
WILLIAMS, Rhys 3 The Road, Anytown XY3 4JN Independent	2	1

Reject. Local authority mayoral Rule 48(1)(d) and CAM Rule 51(1)(d) – void for uncertainty as to the first preference vote.

Example 39

Election of the Mayor for
(insert name of authority)

Vote once ☒ in column 1 for your first choice, and
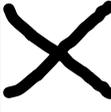
Vote once ☒ in column 2 for your second choice

	Column 1 **first choice** ▼	Column 2 **second choice** ▼
BOOTS, Dusty 2 The Cottages, Anytown XY8 9JG The League of Line Dancers Candidate ☎	╱	
GREY, Earl (address in [relevant area]) The Mad Hatter's Tea Party Candidate	✗	
HOOD, Robin 6 The Heath, Anytown XY4 0BH The Forest Party Candidate ✉		╱
JIANG, Mike 33 The Lane, Anytown XY6 3GD Independent		✗
MILLER, Windy 21 The Grove, Anytown XY2 5JP The Alternative Power Forum Candidate		
WILLIAMS, Rhys 3 The Road, Anytown XY3 4JN Independent		

Reject. Local authority mayoral Rule 48(1)(d) and CAM Rule 51(1)(d) – void for uncertainty as to the first preference vote.

Appendix – legislation

The local authority mayoral election rules

The relevant rules for local authority mayoral elections are as follows:

Rejected ballot papers

Rule 48. –

(1)   Any ballot paper –

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

shall, subject to paragraph (2), be void and not counted.

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

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

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

    (i)   at an election at which more than two candidates remain validly nominated, an intention that a vote shall be given, by way of a first preference vote, for not more than one of the candidates clearly appears; or
    (ii)   at any other election, an intention that a vote shall be for one only of the candidates clearly appears, and (in either case) the way the paper is marked does not itself identify the voter and it is not shown that he can be identified by it.

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

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

(5)   The returning officer must draw up a statement showing the number of ballot papers rejected, under the several heads of—
    (a)   want of official mark;
    (b)   voting for more than one candidate as to the first preference vote;
    (c)   writing or mark by which the voter could be identified; and

(d)   unmarked or void for uncertainty as to the first preference vote.

[…]

Decisions on ballot papers

Rule 49.   The decision of the returning officer on any question arising in respect of a ballot paper shall be final, but shall be subject to review on an election petition. […]

The count of second preference votes

Rule 52. –

(1)   The returning officer must count the number of second preference votes for each of the candidates remaining in the contest given by voters who did not give their first preference vote to any of those candidates.

(2)   A ballot paper which is not otherwise void and on which not more than one second preference vote is marked shall be valid as respects that vote and shall be counted accordingly if, but only if, a valid first preference vote has also been marked.

(3)   Rules 46(2) to (5), 47(6), (7), (9) and (10), 48 (except paragraph (3)) and 50 (except the words "the votes, or as the case may be," in both paragraphs where they appear) shall apply in relation to the count of second preference votes as they apply in relation to the count of first preference votes as if references to first preference votes were references to second preference votes.

(4)   The returning officer shall not be required to re-examine any decision taken under rule 49.

The combined authority mayoral election rules

The relevant rules for combined authority mayoral elections are as follows:

Rejected ballot papers

Rule 51. –

(1)   Any ballot paper–

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

shall, subject to paragraph (2), be void and not counted.

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

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

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

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

      (ii)   at any other election, an intention that a vote shall be for one only of the candidates clearly appears, and (in either case) the way the paper is marked does not itself identify the voter and it is not shown that he can be identified by it.

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

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

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

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

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

[…]

The count of second preference votes

Rule 55. –

(1)   If directed by the combined authority returning officer in accordance with rule 58, the returning officer must, at the time and place notified to the counting agents, count the number of second preference votes for each of the candidates remaining in the contest given by voters who did not give their first preference vote to any of those candidates.

(2)   A ballot paper which is not otherwise void and on which not more than one second preference vote is marked shall be valid as respects that vote and shall be counted accordingly if, but only if, a valid first preference vote has also been marked.

(3)   Rules 49(2) to (5), 50(4) to (7), 51 (except paragraph (3)) and 53 (except the words "the votes, or as the case may be," in both paragraphs where they appear) shall apply in relation to the count of second preference votes as they apply in

relation to the count of first preference votes as if references to first preference votes were references to second preference votes.

(4)   The returning officer shall not be required to re-examine any decision taken under rule 52.