

**Association of Electoral Administrators – Post Election Review May 2023**

(Post-election review of the North Lincolnshire count focussing on the Broughton and Scawby Ward May 2023)

**Review Recommendations - Response Action Plan**

Ref		Recommendation	Action	Action evidenced and date to be completed	Lead
1	6.7.1	The decision as to when the verification and counting of the votes commences at each election should be made solely by the RO, as is prescribed by the relevant election rules.	(i) RO to give future considering balancing all pros and cons. (ii) Consult other/neighbouring councils on their experiences/learning.	(i) To include consideration of preference/decision in 'Elections Assurance Plan' (31 October 2023), and subsequently arrangements given at 'Candidates and Agents Briefing Meeting' information and stated within corresponding 'Postal Vote Opening and Count Plan' (Feb/March 2027). (ii) Contact to be made with neighbouring other councils. (31 October 2023).	Returning Officer (RO)

2	7.4.1	<p>To ensure full understanding of count processes and paperwork, the face-to-face training of count supervisors, count managers and DROs should be reviewed, and where necessary improved.</p> <p><i>(All paperwork and processes to be followed should be available and discussed so that everyone understands their own role and that of other key staff)</i></p>	<p>Face to face training to be reviewed in consultation with relevant staff and enhancing adjustments made. To include applicable processes and associated paperwork.</p>	<p>To include in 'Elections Assurance Plan' (Staff Training) (31 October 2023).</p> <p>Implement enhanced training for next PCC Elections alongside any training provided by PARO at ERYC (April 2024), for Parliamentary/General (before Jan 2025) and Local Elections (April 2027). (and any requirements for by-elections).</p>	RO
3	7.4.2	<p>Considering the complexity of multi-vacancy counts, thought should be given to running a full 'dummy' count ahead of the next local elections.</p>	<p>'Dummy count' to be arranged for all key staff with particular focus on 'multi-vacancy' counts.</p>	<p>To include in 'Elections Assurance Plan' (Staff Training) (31 October 2023).</p> <p>Implement 'dummy' count before next local elections. (April 2027). (or for any by-elections).</p>	RO

4	7.4.3	To build assurance, understanding and confidence in counting processes, the information provided to candidates and election agents in advance of election counts should be reviewed on each occasion.	Opportunity provided at election 'Candidate and Agent' briefing meeting for each election, with any required updates given prior to election day.	To include in 'Elections Assurance Plan' (31 October 2023), and subsequently include in 'Candidates and Agents Briefing Meeting' information. (Feb/March 2027)	RO
5	7.4.4	The process for the management of full and empty ballot boxes should be reviewed to ensure count areas do not become unnecessarily 'cluttered'.	To be reviewed as part of 7.19.1 to increase the area used and under the supervision of each Count Supervisor.	To include in 'Elections Assurance Plan' (31 October 2023).  Implement at next PCC elections (May 2024), Parliamentary/General (by Jan 2025) and Local Elections (May 2027) (and any by-elections).  Corresponding sports hall layout plans to be adjusted.	RO
6	7.4.5	Electoral services team members should be encouraged to visit other local authorities to help understand how best to develop processes and seek out good practices, specifically in regard to counting processes, that will be of benefit to the electors of North Lincolnshire.	To consult and arrange.	Contact to be made with neighbouring other councils. (31 October 2023) and visits arranged.	RO

7	7.6.1	<p>To ensure effective management and oversight, the count plan must always be observed on all count tables, and measures introduced to ensure consistent and ongoing compliance</p>	<p>To be emphasised with all participating staff and tested at 'Dummy Run' for count.</p>	<p>To include in 'Elections Assurance Plan' (31 October 2023).</p> <p>Implement and emphasise during training for next PCC Elections alongside any training provided by PARO at ERYC (April 2024), for Parliamentary/General (before Jan 2025) and Local Elections (April 2027) (and any by-elections).</p>	RO
8	7.12.1	<p>Individuals should only be appointed as count supervisors where they are able to demonstrate experience of being involved in counts of the same nature, either through shadowing or as a count assistant</p> <p><i>(Where this is not possible, the count managers should specifically be required to provide additional support and reassurance throughout the entire count.)</i></p>	<p>Incremental experience training is provided for key/core count staff over a series of elections, and this will be included/applied.</p>	<p>To include in 'Elections Assurance Plan' (31 October 2023).</p> <p>Implement for next PCC elections (April 2024), Parliamentary/General (by Jan 2025) and Local Elections (April 2027) (and any by-elections).</p>	RO

9	7.12.2	Where counts are commenced immediately following the close of poll, count supervisors should be in attendance from the start.	To be applied.	To include in 'Elections Assurance Plan' (31 October 2023).  Implement at next PCC elections (May 2024), Parliamentary/General (by Jan 2025) and Local Elections (May 2027) (and any by-elections).	RO
10	7.19.1	A review of the layout should be undertaken to ensure space for each sovereign count table is maximised.	To be reviewed with 7.4.4 above. Greater space for election of management and supervision of all tables to be provided.	To include in 'Elections Assurance Plan' (31 October 2023).  Implement at next PCC elections (May 2024), Parliamentary/General (by Jan 2025) and Local Elections (May 2027) (and any by-elections).  Corresponding sports hall layout plans to be adjusted.	RO

11	7.23.1	Consideration should be given to introducing transparent receptacles, in lieu of the opaque wheelie bins, for the mixing and storage of verified ballot papers.	To be considered.	To include in 'Elections Assurance Plan' (31 October 2023).  Implement at next PCC elections (May 2024), Parliamentary/General (by Jan 2025) and Local Elections (May 2027) (and any by-elections).	RO
12	7.31.1	At future multi-vacancy elections, the unused votes should be counted as well as those cast for candidates and marked as rejected.  <i>(This allows a true arithmetical check of the total counted votes against the number expected. There is no other accurate way that check can be done).</i>	To be applied and introduced on all associated count paperwork.	To include in 'Elections Assurance Plan' (31 October 2023) and introduce for next Local Elections (May 2027) (and any by-elections). Include in corresponding 'Postal Vote Opening and Count Plan'. (April 2027).	RO
13	7.31.2	The count paperwork and subsequent validation processes should be amended to ensure the verified ballot paper and counted/rejected/unused votes totals are clearly shown and then compared to ensure accuracy of result.	To be applied	To include in 'Elections Assurance Plan' (31 October 2023) and introduce for next Local Elections (May 2027) (and any by-elections).	RO

14	7.35.1	As part of the adjudication process at local government counts, in addition to the verified ballot paper total and the counted and rejected votes totals, the RO should proactively share the total number of unused votes.	To be applied	To include in 'Elections Assurance Plan' (31 October 2023) and introduce for next Local Elections (May 2027) (and any by-elections). Include in corresponding 'Postal Vote Opening and Count Plan'. (April 2027)	RO
15	7.35.2	To improve transparency and communication channels between the RO's team and the agents and candidates, a fixed location (or locations) should be designated in the count hall to administer the adjudication and provisional results processes.	Although a fixed location is usually applied this will be made clear to all candidates/agents.	To include in 'Elections Assurance Plan' (31 October 2023) and introduce from PCC Elections (May 2024) and all future elections. Include in corresponding 'Postal Vote Opening and Count Plan'. (April 2024).  Corresponding sports hall layout plans to be adjusted.	RO

16	7.35.3	Consideration should be given to improving accessibility to the adjudication process for agents and candidates to assist them in their role of scrutinising the provisional results.	To be applied, increasing space and time for scrutinising provisional results.	<p>To include in 'Elections Assurance Plan' (31 October 2023) and introduce from PCC Elections (May 2024) and all future elections. Include in corresponding 'Postal Vote Opening and Count Plan'. (April 2024).</p> <p>Corresponding sports hall layout plans to be adjusted. A SPOC officer will also be appointed by and located within the Communications Team to answer and respond to candidate/agent questions/queries, and introduce from PCC Elections (May 2024) and all future elections.</p>	RO
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17	10.12.4	A written protocol should be developed to assist the RO and senior colleagues in dealing with situations where urgent communication is required with key stakeholders, including agents and candidates, at any stage of an election.	Protocol to be included within Communications Plan for elections with contact details provided made available to RO and senior elections staff.	To include in 'Elections Assurance Plan' (31 October 2023) and introduce from PCC Elections (May 2024) and all future elections.	RO
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