

Agenda Item No 11
Audit & Standards Committee
7 January 2025

Title: Review of 2024 Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) & UK Parliamentary Election (UKPGE) Elections
Lead Officer: Graham Leach Head of Governance & Monitoring Officer (graham.leach@warwickdc.gov.uk 01926 456114)
Portfolio Holder: Councillor Davison
Wards of the District directly affected: All

Approvals required	Date	Name
Portfolio Holder	18/12/2024	Ian Davison
Finance	18/12/2024	Alex Elston
Legal Services		
Chief Executive	18/12/2024	Chris Elliott
Director of Climate Change		
Head of Service(s)	18/12/2024	Graham Leach
Section 151 Officer	18/12/2024	Andrew Rollins
Monitoring Officer	18/12/2024	Graham Leach
Leadership Co-ordination Group	N/A	
Final decision by this Committee or rec to another Cttee / Council?	Yes	
Contrary to Policy / Budget framework?	No	
Does this report contain exempt info/Confidential? If so, which paragraph(s)?	No	
Does this report relate to a key decision (referred to in the Cabinet Forward Plan)?	No	
Accessibility Checked?	Yes	

Summary

The report provides a summary and learning points from the 2024 Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) and United Kingdom Parliament General Election (UKPGE) Elections delivery in Warwick District. It also provides an update on the actions following the 2023 Warwick District Elections and highlights key areas for change in the delivery of any future election or referendum within Warwick District.

Recommendation(s)

- (1) That the content of the report, along with the progress made on the Actions from the 2023 elections, be noted.
 - (2) That the action plan from the 2024 elections as set out at appendix 2 to the report be endorsed
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1 Reasons for the Recommendation

- 1.1 While the Committee is responsible for electoral matters, the delivery of any election is the sole responsibility of the Returning Officer. The Returning Officer for Warwick District is Chris Elliott (who is also the Chief Executive). For the PCC Chris Elliott was a Local Area Returning Officer (LARO) and for the UKPGE he was the Acting Returning Officer, this is because for each set of election there are different titles and responsibilities for the District. However, it is important for this Committee to be aware of the challenges and issues faced in delivering the election for the District Council.
- 1.2 It is important to recognise that each election that is delivered has its own set of challenges and in most cases differences within the legislation or lines of responsibilities.
- 1.3 The report covers the delivery of the elections themselves, from the initial planning through to the closure of the accounts
- 1.4 The review has been broken into themes of Core Staffing, Wider Staffing, Nominations, Polling Stations, the Count, Postal Votes and accounts. Within these there is a cross-cutting theme of phase 1 and phase 2 of the Elections Act 2022 which was implemented prior to May 2024 election.
- 1.5 There was a review of the 2023 elections reported to this committee, in January 2024, including a number of actions. These have all been implemented and the action plan is included in Appendix 1 to this report.

2 Key Election information

- 2.1 The PCC election was held on 2 May 2024. The Police Area Returning Officer (PARO) for this election was the Chief Executive of North Warwickshire Borough Council, with Chris Elliott appointed as Local Returning Officer (LRO, for the Warwick District Area, by the PARO. The PARO is responsible for the overall conduct of the election in the police area and to give notice of elections, conduct the nomination process, encourage participation, administer the candidate address process, calculate the votes given to each candidate and declare the result. The LRO is responsible for the conduct of the poll in their local authority area, the printing of ballot papers, the verification of ballot paper accounts and the counting of the votes in their area.

- 2.2 UKPGE was called on 22 May 2024. The election was held on 4 July 2024. Warwick DC is made up of two parliamentary constituencies, Warwick & Leamington and Kenilworth & Southam. Warwick District Council is a “take on authority” for Rugby Borough Council and Stratford-on-Avon District Council. That is to say, this Council takes on part of the area of these Council’s areas for electoral purposes as the parliamentary constituency of Kenilworth and Southam crosses the administrative boundaries between this Council and those Councils. This election was the first to be held on new boundaries following the revisions approved by Parliament in November 2023.

3 By-elections

- 3.1 Warwick District Council conducted three by elections this year.
- 3.2 The All Saints and Woodloes District & Town by-election was on 18 January 2024. The electorate for the District for this election was 7232 of which 1026 polling station ballot papers and 816 postal voting ballot papers were involved in the count. The electorate for the Parish/Town for this area was 6852, of which 968 polling station ballot papers and 753 postal voting ballot papers were involved in the count giving the election a turnout of 25.5%. The count was held at Saltisford 1 offices.
- 3.3 The Leamington Clarendon District by-election was on 2 May 2024 and ran in conjunction with the PCC Elections. The electorate was 7605, of which 1759 polling station ballot papers and 701 postal voting ballot papers were included in the count giving the election a turnout of 32.3%. The count was held at Stoneleigh Park, Hall 2A.
- 3.4 The Leamington Clarendon Town by-election was on 4 July 2024 and ran in conjunction with the UKPGE Elections. The electorate was 6918, of which 3248 polling station ballot papers and 899 postal voting ballot papers were included in the count giving the election a turnout of 59.65%. The count was held at Stoneleigh Park, Hall 2.

4 Core Staffing

- 4.1 As of November 2023, the Elections Team consisted of the Electoral Services Manager, two Electoral Services Officers and a part time Electoral Services Assistant. The team also includes the role of Electoral Services Support & Annual Canvasser who provides some election support, but whose primary role is regarding electoral registration.
- 4.2 With the increased demand of the workload due to the implementation of Phase 2 of the Elections Act 2022, funding was approved for an additional Electoral Services Officer on a two-year funded contract. However, due to long term sickness and then subsequent retirement of an officer, the team remained with two Officers rather than the intended three.
- 4.3 Recognising the resources challenge, further funding was approved and in March 2024 the team recruited a temporary Elections Assistant via agency to assist with the demanding workload for the PCC election.
- 4.4 However, this was followed by the retirement of the Part Time Elections Assistant in March 2024. Funding was agreed for this role for two years to become a full-time fixed term Elections Assistant.
- 4.5 These changes within the team meant there was a significant loss of knowledge and contacts within Warwick District Council. This was because the whole team were new to the authority, with the longest standing member of the team (excluding the Electoral Services Support & Annual Canvasser Assistant) only

being with the authority for 1 year and 6 months (at the day of the PCC election). The impact of change within the team cannot be underestimated when the team had only a few weeks to recruit all staff for the election, train new starters, deliver requirements of the Elections Act 2022, and deliver against deadlines for running an election in May.

5 Wider Staffing

- 5.1 The team started a recruitment drive in November 2023 to encourage more people to apply to work for the elections. This drive consisted of contacting Local Parish/Town Council's, internal WDC staff, WCC staff and other organisations. This drive saw more than 250 applications received from November 2023 – May 2024.
- 5.2 Those recruited were employed by the Returning Officer, not Warwick District Council, therefore each one was required to have the appropriate right to work (RTW) checks including those who work for WDC. With the demand of staffing applications, the customer service team on Front Line and HR assisted with the RTW checks.

PCC Election

- 5.3 The Electoral Commission (EC) provides guidance/direction to returning officers on the numbers of staff in each polling station depending on the size of the electorate. This was increased to allow for more staff to be available to help with the increased demands of Voter ID checks. This requirement was met in all but one polling station, where it was considered acceptable not to meet the criteria due to the size of electorate for the polling station, expected turn out and number of postal voters for that area.
- 5.4 For this election a total of 523 staff members were employed into 703 roles for the election. This is inclusive of polling staff, count staff and postal vote opening staff.
- 5.5 It was expected early in the year that there would be a shortage of Presiding Officers (PO) so the elections team ran a training course for experienced Poll Clerks (PC) which outlined the duties and responsibilities of a PO to encourage them to apply to be one. This training course saw 9 experienced PC's be appointed as PO's for the PCC election.
- 5.6 In addition, the Department of Leveling Up and Housing (DLUHC) which is now known as the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) canvassed their civil service staff who lived in the area. The team exercised this option and used two of their staff for the PCC elections.
- 5.7 There were no significant issues when appointing count staff and the count was fully staffed. This was easier to appoint due to the PCC count being held on Friday which meant polling staff could also work the count, therefore utilising the staffing database and appointing staff to multiple roles.
- 5.8 The staffing fees for this election were set out by the PARO in line with the MHCLG). The reason for this is to ensure that costs could be recovered through the Electoral Claims Unit (ECU) without challenge.

UKPGE

- 5.9 703 staff members were appointed into 1008 roles for the election. This is inclusive of polling staff, count staff and postal vote opening staff.
- 5.10 Guidance was provided by the EC for the staff numbers in each of the 183 polling stations depending on the electorate's size. This was increased to allow

for more staff to be available to help with the increased demands for Voter ID checks.

- 5.11 All polling stations within the Warwick District Area were fully staffed. However, on the morning of the election, one of the PC's in Stratford area within the Kenilworth and Southam Constituency became ill and due to the electorate size, it was decided to move a PC from another station in the same constituency to cover the polling station.
- 5.12 Rugby Borough and Stratford District Councils staffed the polling stations within their area of the Kenilworth and Southam Constituency. They provided the team with the details of the staff, and they were then added to the staffing database where the Warwick District team appointed them to relevant roles and sent out their appointment letters.
- 5.13 As the Returning Officer Warwick provided support for Rugby in staffing the polling stations within the Kenilworth & Southam constituency using staff from its reserve list but this meant Warwick District had to reduce the reserve staff to cover.
- 5.14 The Warwick District team managed last minute dropouts of polling station staff meaning there was limited reserves which proposed a risk on Election Day. It should be noted there was no adverse feedback received from polling stations in terms of demand from electors and having to wait significant times to vote.
- 5.15 Count staff were more difficult to appoint for the UKPGE because most of the staff who would normally work on the count, were appointed to polling stations. As the Count was overnight on polling day, it was agreed at Project Board not to appoint polling station staff to the count due to the hours they would be working. This caused disappointment and the staff that were appointed were staff who had potentially not worked on an election previously.
- 5.16 The day after the election was called, all senior managers within the Warwick District Council had a meeting to discuss resources within the Council and how other departments could help the elections team deliver the election. The team sent out internal communications for staff to apply to work additional hours in the office to help assist with ballot box prep, PO folders, paperwork collation and postal vote applications.
- 5.17 The Civic and Committee Services Team worked alongside the Election Team to assist with the influx of postal vote applications which ensured the elections team could focus on other areas of work. The Elections Team received 3706 emails in the Elections inbox from the day the UKPGE was announced, up until election day itself.
- 5.18 The staffing fees for this election were set in line with the MHCLG. The reason for this is to ensure that costs could be recovered through the ECU without challenge.

6 Nominations

- 6.1 The PARO was responsible for the nomination for the PCC elections, so WDC did not have to deal with any for this election.
- 6.2 For UKPGE, the nomination appointments were conducted at the Town Hall due to the handling of the deposits. There were 13 nomination papers handed in.
- 6.3 The team followed the same process as the last parliamentary elections and advised the candidates to submit their nomination papers electronically for informal checking prior to their appointments. This reduced time at the appointments and ensured that all recommended amendments were complete

before formal submission.

7 Polling Stations

- 7.1 The Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations review was concluded in January 2024. This looked at the suitability of polling stations within the area. Particularly focusing on privacy for voter ID checks, disability access and overall suitability to use as a polling place.
- 7.2 Additional polling districts were created from the review to take into account future developments over the next 5 years. New polling places were also identified in these areas for the electorate to vote. Some of these were implemented for the PCC and UKPGE. There were 127 polling stations for the PCC election.
- 7.3 There were 183 polling stations for the UKPGE which included polling stations from Stratford and Rugby.

8 The Count

PCC

- 8.1 The count took place on Friday 3 May 2024 and was held in Hall 2A at Stoneleigh Park. The electorate was 111178, with a turnout of 25.95%.
- 8.2 WDC was well supported by the venue and their staff, but it is recognised that the venue presented some challenges in respect of temperature changes throughout the day.
- 8.3 Count staff and Candidates/Agents were scanned in with barcode ticket scanners using a new WDC designed IT system. There was a security issue identified during the day in respect to the wristbands being issued which was quickly resolved.
- 8.4 The count was divided up into mini counts for the first time at WDC. The count areas were based on the 14 county divisions as this was an easier divide for the amount of ballot papers expected for each division.
- 8.5 Introducing mini counts at the PCC Election meant the Count Supervisor process changed significantly. General feedback from Count Supervisors and the Central Verification table was that the new process was more streamlined and carried out more efficiently within the time available.
- 8.6 Post PCC elections, the general feedback from staff overall at the election was positive excluding a few operational and layout issues. The operation and layout issues were not unexpected due to the use of a new hall.

UKPGE

- 8.7 The count took place on Thursday 4 July 2024 and was held in Hall 2 at Stoneleigh Park. The electorate for Warwick and Leamington Constituency was 76294, providing a turn out of 64%. The electorate for the Kenilworth and Southam was 74923, with a turn out of 75%.
- 8.8 Having the mini counts meant the Count Supervisor process changed significantly. General feedback from Count Supervisors and Central Verification table was that the new process was more streamlined and carried out more efficiently within the time. This meant there was less pressure on the central verification table to input the ballot paper accounts as count teams started counting postal votes first.
- 8.9 The count took longer than expected which was in essence down to the verification of postal votes. Which is covered in paragraph 9.5 below.

9 Postal Votes

- 9.1 For the UKPGE, media outlets were reporting issues with electors not receiving their postal vote in time for the election. For this election there was an increased expectancy from electors to receive their postal votes immediately after applying. In anticipation of this lack of awareness, of when postal votes were to be delivered, Warwick District Council took a number of proactive steps to promote its postal voting delivery schedule, including publishing it on its website, issuing regular press releases on social media, and the schedule dates were included on the elections email auto response. The new national online postal voting application system has been an improvement in enabling easier applications but it has come with drawbacks by reducing the interaction between electors and the Elections Team. Previously, upon completed applications, which identified electors being away from home, the elections team would look to contact electors to explain postal voting delivery schedules and offer alternatives such as a Proxy Vote if their postal vote would not be seen to arrive in time of the elections. This is a barrier of the new online application portal which has been raised with the Electoral Commission.
- 9.2 The postal vote opening sessions were held in Building 2 of Saltisford. Whilst the venue size was ideal for the postal vote layout, there were challenges on the facilities available due to the building being out of regular use, however these were resolved by the landlord.
- 9.3 A total of 29302 postal votes were issued across both constituencies with a return rate of over 80% for each constituency. The postal votes for the Leamington Clarendon Town by-election were dispatched later in the election timetable due to the date the by-election was announced however this had no implication on the postal vote returns and the by-election still had a return rate, circa 70%, which was greater than the Town Council elections held in May 2023.
- 9.4 The postal vote opening sessions followed a new process and all paperwork was managed electronically rather than the paper forms used in previous elections. A major improvement to the processes was scanning the ballot papers to count the number of ballot papers returned (not the votes cast). All ballot papers that were scanned were always dealt with face down with the barcode facing up ensuring no votes could be seen throughout the process. The scans also checked to ensure the postal vote was valid (i.e. the signature and date of both checked and had been matched correctly by the Deputy Returning Officer). This was an effective double check and will be a step that will continue for future elections.
- 9.5 There were issues with the delivery of the postal votes from Royal Mail which for the PCC saw a few being delivered to the Police HQ rather than this Council. With both the PCC and UKPGE there was a significant number of discussions with Royal Mail around agreed delivery times of completed postal votes to the Council each day, as these were not initially met, but this situation did improve.
- 9.6 The completion of the count overall was delayed due to the significant demand from postal votes being returned from polling stations. A weakness in the spreadsheet used as a control and the Elections Management System, which could lead to different calculations of postal votes returned were identified and is being reviewed to ensure they are more robust. This will be tested ahead of the next election held.

10 Elections Act 2022

- 10.1 In October 2023, the Elections Act 2022 implemented changes to postal voting. These changes introduced the requirement for all postal vote applications to be identity checked prior to approval of application. Electors are now required to provide their National Insurance Number alongside their date of birth.
- 10.2 A limit was introduced as part of the Elections Act 2022 on how many people a person could act as proxy for. A proxy can only be appointed for two people. If they are proxy on behalf of UK voters who live overseas, they can act as a proxy for up to four people (but only two of those can live in the UK).
- 10.3 Postal votes are now only in place for 3 years with the need to re-apply after this time. The Elections Team are required to conduct a write out to all the existing postal voters within the District by January 2026 requesting they re-apply for their postal vote before it expires.
- 10.4 The ability to apply for a postal vote online was another measure that was introduced under the Act, enabling electors to apply for postal votes easier. This saw an increase in the number of applications the elections team received. For the PCC the team received 517 postal vote applications from the Notice of Election to the postal vote application deadline. For the UKPGE the team received 4593 from the date the election was called to the postal vote application deadline.
- 10.5 Postal vote handling restrictions were enforced in polling stations and office buildings. Voters are not allowed to hand in more than five postal ballot packs (in addition to their own). When handing in postal votes, voters are required to complete a form. Postal votes will be rejected if the form is not completed, or they hand in more postal votes than is allowed. Implementing this change required the team to train the town hall staff on how to accept postal votes, how to complete the forms and how to store the received postal votes. It also created addition changes to Presiding Officers in the polling stations and extra processes and paperwork to be in place. Whilst Postal Vote Handling was a big change to implement initially, there was little negative feedback from the changes in polling stations or council offices.
- 10.6 In January 2024 changes to overseas electors were implemented, removing the 15 year rule and allowing overseas electors to have an entitlement to register to vote regardless of how long they have been residing overseas and extending their registration period from 1 year to three years. Warwick DC received 655 overseas applications since January 2024 up until the registration deadline for the UKPGE.
- 10.7 The PCC elections were the first to be conducted since the changes to the voting system for Mayoral and PCC Elections. Previously the election used the Supplementary Vote (SV) system, where voters could choose a first and second choice vote. Now, voters choose a single candidate on the ballot paper. This is the same system as UKPGE and local elections in England.
- 10.8 EU Residents right to register to vote and vote in elections was the latest change to be implemented by the Elections Act 2022. EU citizens now are only eligible to register to vote if they are from a country where the UK Government has negotiated agreements with EU Members States to allow its citizens living in the UK to vote or if they have settled or pre-settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme prior to 31 December 2022. To establish which electors currently on the electoral register had eligibility, the Elections Team were required to write out to all EU electors requesting this information. Failure to respond to this request required a personal visit from a canvasser. The Elections Team started the EU write out shortly after the PCC elections in May,

however had to delay completing due to the announcement of the UKPGE.

11 Public Engagement

PCC

- 11.1 Warwick District Council communicated news of the Police and Crime Commissioner and Leamington Clarendon By Election, to residents using a mixture of online and offline communications to inform them of deadlines and the date.
- 11.2 Six press releases were issued, ranging from a Leamington Clarendon Councillor resignation to reminding residents that the poll letters were sent out to residents, staff recruitment for elections, deadlines, and reminder to bring voter ID.
- 11.3 Polling station staff were issued with posters to put up in the polling stations, informing voters what to bring with them to the polling station and what to do when they arrive.
- 11.4 Posters informing voters what to bring to the polling station and the changes to postal voting was shared by email to our warm hubs contact list, which includes community centres, churches, mosques, and temples.
- 11.5 The website was also updated with the latest information from the Electoral Commission.

UKPGE

- 11.6 Warwick District Council communicated news of the 2024 General Election and Leamington Clarendon Town Ward By Election, to residents using a mixture of online and offline communications to inform them of deadlines and changes to voting legislation, e.g. Postal vote handling changes.
- 11.7 Five press releases were issued covering election deadlines, an update on the number of postal votes that were received before polling day, and a reminder to bring voter ID.
- 11.8 Polling station staff were issued with poster to put up in the polling stations, informing voters what to bring with them to the polling station and what to do when they arrive.
- 11.9 Posters informing voters what to bring to the polling station and the changes to postal voting were emailed to our warm hubs contact list, which includes community centres, churches, mosques, and temples.
- 11.10 For the Voter ID campaign targeting students, Warwick District Council created posters and social media assets with suggested copy to be shared by the Universities of Warwick and Coventry and the sixth forms and colleges in Warwick District. The assets were also shared with Town and Parish Councils to be shared through their channels to reach a wider audience.
- 11.11 The website was also updated with the latest information from the Electoral Commission, notices of poll and Statement of persons nominated.

12 Alternative Options

- 13** The report is presented for information only and therefore no alternative options are provided.

14 Legal Implications

- 14.1 There are 10 pieces of legislative requirements for the delivery of elections, rather than a specific act as well as additional regulations and further guidance from the Electoral Commission. To help ensure that these are complied with the Returning Officer operates an elections project board which meets each month with representatives from all relevant teams across the Council and representatives from the Electoral Commission.

15 Financial Implications

- 15.1 PCC account deadline is February 2025 and the UKPGE is April 2025. Work is progressing well in completing this as a joint piece of work between the Finance Team and Electoral Services Team and they are on schedule for submission in line with the deadlines.

16 Corporate Strategy

- 16.1 Warwick District Council has adopted a Corporate Strategy which sets three strategic aims for the organisation. This report does not directly relate to them in that it only sets out the review of 2024 elections.

17 Environmental/Climate Change Implications

- 17.1 There are significant environmental impacts from delivering an election and over the years steps have been taken to try to minimise this through effective procurement for example of printing contracts and the papers/inks used for these. The area being considered next for improvement is the stationery packs purchased and used by Presiding Officers and if these can be produced differently. This is part of the Electoral Services Team Operational Plan for 2026.

18 Analysis of the effects on Equality

- 18.1 This report is just to note but where changes are being implemented the Equality Impact initial screening will be undertaken.

19 Data Protection

- 19.1 There are no specific data protection implications of the proposal.

20 Health and Wellbeing

- 20.1 There are no specific health and wellbeing implications from the report.

21 Risk Assessment

- 21.1 Each election will have its own dedicated risk register managed by the Election Project Board. This register is based on the template from the Electoral Commission.

Background papers:

None

Supporting documents:

[2023 Review of Elections Report – Audit and Standard Committee](#)

[Electoral Commission Report on May 2024 and UKPGE Elections](#)

[WDC website - General Election 2024](#)

[WDC website – PCC elections 2024](#)

Action Plan – May 2023

Action	Why	Status	Notes
Additional Elections Officer within Team	The increased demand from Elections Act 2022 on the team	Implemented	An additional officer was employed within the team in November 2023.
Presentation to all WDC Councillors on Election Act Phase 2	Increase awareness for the changes and challenges that are faced	Implemented	Electoral Services Manager conducted training sessions around the new law.
Advertising campaign for polling staff	Increase in poll staff needed and high turnover in staff	Implemented	Recruitment drive was conducted in November 2023
Training for front line staff on process for nominations and checking election post	The move out of RSH will mean no election staff based at the same venue as reception	Not Required	Nominations were conducted by the Elections Team.
Increased front line staffing during election period for increased demand	The increased demand with the new election laws.	Not met	WDC was unable to recruit to the post available and the UKPGCE was too short notice followed on the back of the PCC to allow for training of a new member of staff. Based on demand though with changes within the Council overall this will not be required at future elections.
RUCIS grants to help polling stations where we can	Polling places with accessibility issues where no alternative venue is available.	Implemented	Promoted the grants and contacted all polling stations to highlight the grant particularly around hearing loops in the polling station
Refine count layout so based on two horseshoes rather than 3	Due to feedback from elections 23.	Implemented	Two horseshoes were implemented for each parliamentary constituency with a separate designated zone for postal votes
Introduce a taped line in front of each count table that all agents and candidates have to stand behind	Due to May 23 elections candidates & agents caused interruptions to the counting process.	Implemented	The tables were doubled up at the elections to create distance.
Work with Electoral Management System supplier for increasing the tickets that can be issued	To provide greater flexibility on Count ticket allocation for candidates and agents in line with regulations	Implemented	Count tickets were reviewed and an internal software was developed by IT for ticket scanning.

Appendix 1

Future elections only scan in staff and have this at point of entry	Less time consuming and easier to calculate payments.	Implemented	Candidates and Agents were still scanned however two separate entrances were implemented.
Security management with staff moving tables to get in and out due to entry point how to stop this?	This helps the venue to run more effectively and provides clear boundary between roles.	Implemented	The tables were doubled up at the elections to create a barrier to this practice.
Green zipper bags to have marked registers in too, so we have control of them	Less time spent after the election searching bags for missing registers.	Implemented	Reviewed the close of poll procedure, removed the green zipper bag and introduced a more efficient system of reconciliation of packets.
Increase initial provisions within stationery box allocated to each count table	There was a lot of time spent by count tables collecting additional materials form a central area, this could be reduced for future elections	Implemented	We did not have enough thimbles for counters however all other items were sufficiently stocked. Going forward, thimbles will not be provided to the polling stations to ensure efficient quantities at the count.
Wire baskets or uses the plastic trays to count into.	For so many elections with significant number of candidates it was identified that insufficient wire baskets were held by the Council. These are used so all can clearly see where ballot papers are and indicatively (by volume) who has the most votes.	Not met	Was met at PCC however due to number of candidates and additional count tables required at UKPGE, there were insufficient wire trays. Officers will review this further on how this issues can be resolved.
Technician support for PA system to ensure it can be heard through the hall	Improved understanding for all on what is happening at the Count	Implemented	PA system were reviewed and no issues were found at both elections.
Complete count instructions basics earlier (easier for PCC)	Count supervisors have more time to familiarise themselves with the instructions.	Implemented	Count instructions were sent out beforehand and online teams training sessions were conducted beforehand. In additional prior to commencement of the count, a huddle recapped the important aspects and the DRO

Appendix 1

			gave a brief on expectations.
Counting sheets liaison with express to ensure unused votes included on templates	Efficient paperwork throughout	Implemented	Meeting with the Electoral Commission and they have supplied a template to include unused
For multi seats wards ensure more calculators are available for use by counters	Each area only had a calculator but some had three members of staff needing to use them. While most people have their phone available appropriate resources should be provided by the Count.	Not Applicable	This is waiting for the next multi seat Ward election.
For all future elections move to counting in 10 rather than 25	This is considered easier for Count staff and while more clips are required it reduces errors.	Implemented	Counting in 10's was implemented for future elections and will remain the process going forward
The returning Officer has to display official notices for elections. The location for this in 2024 is to be determined following the move from Riverside House	This will be reviewed on completion of the works at the Pump Rooms	Implemented	All notices for the elections were published at the Town Hall and online.
Poll card letter to say why two postal packs	Confusion with electors	Implemented	Poll card wording was amended to state this.

Action Plan - 2024

Action	Why	When	Who
Review of postal vote spreadsheet	To ensure accurate recording of postal vote returns	January 2025	Postal Vote Opening Manager and IT
Contingency plan for postal vote opening	In case of faults within IT systems	January 2025	Postal Vote Opening Manager and IT
Write out to all postal voters within the District	Due to legislation changes from Elections Act 2022	January 2026	Elections Team
Review quantities of wire trays at future parliamentary	Not enough at the count for UKPGe	January 2025	Elections Team