



THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY
AT THE COMMONWEALTH CLUB



**THE ROYAL COMMONWEALTH SOCIETY
&
THE COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION
UK BRANCH**

**COMMONWEALTH OBSERVER TEAM
TO THE UK GENERAL ELECTION 2010**

FINAL REPORT

OBSERVERS

Parliamentarian Observers

- Bangladesh – Hon. Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh MP
- Ghana – Hon. George Boakye MP
- Jamaica – Ms Lisa Hanna MP
- Kenya – Hon. Ababu Namwamba MP
- Malaysia – Hon. Chua Tee Yong MP
- Rwanda – Hon. Jeanne d'Arc Uwimanimpaye MP
- Sierra Leone – Hon. Marie Marilyn Jalloh MP

Civil Society Observers

- Electoral Assistance Bureau of Guyana – Gino Persaud
- Malawi Electoral Support Network – Aloisious Nthenda
- Transition Monitoring Group of Nigeria – Innocent Chukwuma
- Centre for Monitoring Election Violence of Sri Lanka – Dasanayake Dissanayake

**RCS / CPA UK COMMONWEALTH OBSERVER TEAM
TO THE UK GENERAL ELECTION 2010**

FINAL REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The UK General Election in 2010 was the first time outside Observers were able to apply for accreditation and observe the UK electoral process. The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association UK Branch and the Royal Commonwealth Society brought an Observation Team of seven parliamentarians and four civil society officials from across the Commonwealth to the UK to observe the Election. Following briefings in London the Team split into smaller groups and observed polling and elections in four constituencies; Morecambe and Lunesdale, Rochford and Southend, Glasgow South West and Birmingham Yardley.

The aims and objectives of the Observation Team were to:

- Gain insight into the electoral processes of the UK
- Share lessons from their own countries
- Suggest recommendations for improvement

By bringing the first Observer Team from across the Commonwealth to undertake a small but objective observation of a UK General Election, the RCS and CPA UK were encouraging sharing of best practices and promote greater dialogue between member nations in anticipation that such exchanges serve to improve electoral processes and benefit the progress of modern democracy throughout the Commonwealth.

In any election process the basic ingredients are the right to vote; universal, equal suffrage and to ensure that eligible individuals can cast their vote in a secret ballot in a free and fair process. The Observation Team generally was impressed by the conduct of the election and felt it was undertaken in a fair and free manner. In particular the Team were impressed by the culture of **trust and honesty** that pervaded the entire process and the calm and civilised way in which campaigning, voting and the counting of ballots was undertaken. The Team was of the view that this was an aspect of the British system that younger democracies could aspire to develop in their own political societies.

Although the Team came away with the positive view that the UK election process produces results which reflect the will of the people, the Team observed that the system itself contains vulnerabilities that make the system *corruptible* and open to fraud. The UK electoral system operates under trust; it is assumed and understood that both voters and officials are honest and do not have plans to defraud the electorate. Because of this vulnerabilities have not been addressed and may not be recognised as weaknesses in the system. Trust may have been a sufficient anchor for the system in the past, but while trust is good, caution and deterrent controls are better.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Identification of voters should be improved – for example through the use of identification at the point of registration, the use of identification at polling stations and markers to indicate that people have voted.
- Indelible ink pens rather than pencils should be available for use in all polling stations.
- There should be a better process of verification of postal ballots in order to close the loopholes in the system. While the Team welcomed postal voting as a method to enable

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more people to vote, Team members felt that the system remained vulnerable, despite recent changes in Electoral Law.

- Political engagement with the public, particularly with young people, should be developed more. It should be asked why there appeared not to be the level of enthusiasm among young people about politics and voting as is found in other parts of the world.
- There should be an increase in the numbers of staff in polling stations. Staff should be rotated so that long hours are avoided and people are able to access facilities.
- It was observed that in some polling stations ballots were treated casually, which could compromise the secrecy of the process; the system should be reviewed to ensure that ballots are not left unattended.
- Councils should try to centralise their software to enable them to collate the electoral rolls. This would help to prevent the registration of voters in more than one constituency. A central electoral roll might also assist with the development of electoral rolls that contained individual identifiers such as photographs, signatures or voter number.

OVERVIEW OF OBSERVATIONS

The choice of constituencies enabled the Observer Team members to view the election in a cross-section of the country; urban and rural, coastal and central, within the responsibility of a devolved legislature (Scotland), and to see all three main parties campaigning. The Observers visited 63 polling stations and due to centralised counting they witnessed the counting of election ballots from 21 constituencies. This was a small team of observers and although every effort was made to ensure as broad a cross-section of the UK Electoral Process was observed as was possible, the report does not claim to provide a comprehensive analysis of the electoral process. However, it does provide important insights based on observations of experienced individuals.

Trust. The Team was surprised and impressed by the culture of **trust and honesty** that pervaded the entire process, and the calm and civilised way in which campaigning, voting and the counting of ballots takes place. This was evident throughout the UK electoral process; it is trusted that voters are honest about their identity, that officers can be trusted when left alone with ballot boxes, and that there will not be interference with the ballot. However, because of this there is a ‘casual’ attitude surrounding the process that leaves it vulnerable. While the system is not corrupted it is certainly *corruptible*. Trust may have been a sufficient anchor for the system in the past but while trust is good, caution and deterrent controls are better.

Registration. The Observers did not observe the process of registration first-hand, but spoke to a number of voters, election officials and experts regarding the system. The Observers were of the view that registration could be improved through centralisation of the electoral roll and the use of personal identifiers when registration takes place. They observed that the current system of household registration was vulnerable because the process relies on the ‘head of household’ to complete the registration forms which can result in eligible voters not being included; those who move often are at a disadvantage; and the lack of centralisation could result in voters being registered simultaneously on two different electoral rolls. While the ‘rolling’ system of registration was welcomed as it enabled more people to register in time to vote, it caused challenges for Councils in meeting the high number of applications submitted close to polling day.

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Postal Voting. The Observers viewed the entire verification and counting process of postal ballots in a number of constituencies. With over 7 million people voting by postal ballot in 2010 posting voting has clearly become an entrenched part of the UK electoral system. This was welcomed as an excellent way to enable people to vote who may not have been able to do so otherwise. However the process of postal voting was particularly vulnerable to abuse because there was no verification of identity at the point of application, and where they were crosschecked the verification of identifiers was undertaken by just one Council Official. The vulnerabilities of the postal voting system were highlighted for the Observers by confirmed cases of fraud through postal ballots in the 2005 election and indications that there were investigations into similar incidents during the 2010 election.

The Poll. The staff at polling stations consistently undertook their duties well and were helpful to voters throughout the voting process. The Observers viewed 63 polling stations across the four constituencies and saw the process of opening and closing of the polling stations. The Observers were of the view that the polling stations they observed were understaffed with just two staff per polling station who covered the poll for the full period of 7.00am until 10.00pm. This issue could be rectified by changes to how the stations are staffed.

The Count. The count was well managed in all of the constituencies that were observed. With both the poll and the count the security of the ballot was not a priority due to the culture of trust throughout the process. The Observers were satisfied with the level of visible security as it was not felt that an overt security presence was required; it was also clear that should Police assistance be needed it would have been available quickly.

Comparisons with other Electoral Systems. The Observers were impressed by the calmness and culture of trust that pervaded the process and believed it was a positive element of the UK system that they would like to replicate in their own countries. Methods developed recently by the Electoral Commission to boost registration and engage with younger voters (for example through online registration, advertisements and other web-based engagement strategies) were also seen as examples of practice that could be replicated elsewhere.

THE VALUE OF THE COMMONWEALTH

The Commonwealth is a forum where countries can share experiences and learn from each other. Election Observing programmes bring out the true value of the Commonwealth; a family of nations that champions the democratic process. The Team members wished to emphasise that their visit to observe the UK elections was in this capacity as fellow members of the Commonwealth of Nations. One Observer noted that what happens in developing democracies, for example Kenya, is of concern to the UK as it is to Jamaica, Malaysia or Nigeria as fellow members of the Commonwealth family; and what happens in the UK should similarly be of concern to all within the Commonwealth.

OBSERVATIONS 1: The Election Process

Issue	What was Observed	Comments	Recommendations for Improvement
Registration	<p>The Team observed that registration is on a household basis – otherwise known as on a ‘Community Basis’.</p> <p>Registration is undertaken on a rolling basis and requires no production of identification.</p>	<p>There was concern over the verification of voters – that there was no need to register with identification nor systematic external scrutiny of households was a cause for concern.</p> <p>One person should not be able to register an entire household and the Team concurred with the opinion of the Electoral Commission that this might contribute to the level of eligible citizens not registering to vote.</p> <p>With the rolling process, while an excellent way to help ensure that there is less disenfranchisement, Councils appeared to be overstretched as a result of the late deadline and there was not a long enough period for them to process all the applications. This was also the case for postal ballots.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registration should be on an individual rather than household basis. • Identification should be required when registering to vote. • Creation of a centralised electoral roll to enable identification of individuals via voter numbers or other individualised identifiers. • Councils should centralise their software to collate electoral rolls to help prevent people being registered in more than one constituency. A centralised system for the registration of voters might also assist with a system to ensure that all eligible individuals are registered to vote.
Postal Voting	<p>The Team observed the entire process of postal voting with particular observation of the screening process for identification. Verification was done by comparison of signature and date of birth against</p>	<p>It was felt that postal voting was an area which was particularly vulnerable to abuse. The high level of postal ballots and the vulnerabilities in the verification process could lead to calls for recounts in close elections.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Justification should be required for issue of a postal ballot. • The verification process of postal ballots should be improved to close loopholes in the system that could allow phantom voters.

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	<p>the application for the postal vote.</p> <p>Across all the constituencies the level of postal voting was very high – over 7 million people voted by postal ballot in this General Election. This was clearly an entrenched voting procedure.</p> <p>Although there were no clear-cut instances of abuse, there were two instances where Observers heard reports of treating and otherwise fraudulent use of the postal vote system.</p>	<p>It was understood that postal voting was a way of addressing decline in voter participation, but perhaps there needed to be research into the causes of voter apathy rather than addressing the symptoms (see section on voter engagement below). However, postal voting was welcomed as a way to enable those who were not physically able to vote to engage in the democratic process.</p> <p>While there had been changes since 2005 to improve the verification process, there was no central database of signatures and as the vote was verified against the application the process does not contain mechanisms to prevent fraudulent applications for postal votes.</p> <p>It was also felt that the postal voting system was divorced from the democratic process. As there were so few mechanisms for verifying identity when applying for a postal ballot the system was highly vulnerable to abuse as it enabled those who were not physically present to vote. There were specific concerns raised regarding the lack of verification at the point of application for Postal Ballot.</p>	
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<p>Trust in the Electoral Process</p>	<p>The UK system is unique in its reliance on trust and this was evident at all stages of the system, It was taken on trust that that the voter was who they said they are, that there would not be mishandling of ballots, and that the ballots were safe in the hands of the staff undertaking the process.</p> <p>It was observed that the transportation of the ballot boxes was left entirely to the Presiding officers of the polling stations – again an indication of the level of trust for the officials undertaking the electoral process.</p>	<p>The Team commended the high level of trust and confidence among the public in the British electoral system. However, from an outside perspective the system appeared vulnerable to abuse and it was thought that the introduction of some measures of control would reduce abuse in the future.</p> <p>Leaving the responsibility of transporting the ballot boxes entirely to the Presiding Officer left the security of the Ballots vulnerable.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates or Party Agents should inspect ballot boxes before voting starts.
<p>Voter engagement in the democratic process</p>	<p>Voter turnout was high. However, through speaking to voters all the Observers noted that there was consistent disinterest and apathy regarding the election and UK Politics.</p>	<p>Voter engagement has become increasingly digital and so it could not be expected that the extent of voter engagement would be as visible it would be when judged by its portrayal in more traditional media outlets.</p> <p>Despite the general apathy surrounding the process, the Team was pleased to see that turnout had increased since 2005.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ways should be devised to better engage with the public, particularly with young people. • Investigation should be undertaken into why young people are enthusiastic about the political process in other parts of the world but not in the UK.
<p>Media coverage</p>	<p>Throughout the week Observers viewed the coverage of the election</p>	<p>The Team generally felt that media coverage could have been much better.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UK political parties should be more adventurous and creative in

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	<p>through various forms of media – Television, Print, Radio and on the internet. Observers also viewed the televised debates prior to their arrival in the UK.</p> <p>Apart from coverage of the voting process itself there was very little that happened – the media were used only to cover events.</p>	<p>The television debates between the leaders of the three main political parties were historic, but it seemed unfair that there was a UK election that looked at Electoral Reform and balance of representation across the UK, yet appeared to only give national prime time coverage to the three leaders.</p> <p>It was commendable that campaigning through media (such as television) was restricted in order to ensure equal access, but this restrained the extent of coverage of the political parties.</p> <p>Print coverage was fair because there were a number of outlets that gave different viewpoints of the same stories, but the print media were subjective. Only by reading all the newspapers would a balanced perception be gained.</p>	<p>adopting new ways to campaign – perhaps on the internet. There could also be allowances for parties to advertise in newspapers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There should be a more visible opportunities for smaller parties to participate in any future televised political debates.
<p>Party Campaigning</p>	<p>Throughout their time in the UK the Observers felt that there were little obvious indicators that a General Election was talking place. This was because of the absence of visible campaigning materials. There was not a sense that British culture was being prepared for an Election.</p>	<p>The Observation Team admire the campaign materials used by candidates and parties, in particular that many materials included notes on how to vote.</p> <p>There are now many more kinds of media available to a candidate. As the UK has an aging population parties will need to make active decisions as to how (and whether)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The process of party campaigning should be revisited. Where voter participation is declining other mechanisms to encourage participation should be examined. The Electoral Commission may be in a position to undertake this. • The Electoral Commission may also be in a position to undertake

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	<p>The Team’s observation was that campaigning activities are carried out in a civilised manner, and parties implement a very organised and structured system when undertaking campaigning activities.</p> <p>The Team observed that there is no tracing undertaken of how much money is spent by the larger parties.</p> <p>MPs are able to campaign up to and including the day of the election (in other countries there are cut off or cool off periods) hence people were able to give out campaign materials even outside the polling stations.</p> <p>Campaigns take place through leafleting, newspaper articles and balloons but there is little campaigning on the internet.</p> <p>In the constituencies that the Observers visited the local media outlets did not make an effort to follow the candidates, but the Observers were aware that this is a resource issue.</p>	<p>they will engage the younger voters and how these decisions will effect how they produce campaign materials. Campaigning via new types of media may be restricted because of a fear that the UK will become ‘Americanised’.</p>	<p>an inquiry into what can be done to advance campaigning activities in new ways.</p>
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<p>Procedures</p>	<p>The procedures as they exist were followed correctly: the process was clear, orderly, polls opened on time and signs inside the station were clear.</p> <p>In one polling station there were anti-BNP leaflets on one of the windows. When these were pointed out they were removed.</p>	<p>Concerns were raised about existing procedures such as use of the pencil to mark the ballot, which could be erased, and that voters did not need to present any identification in order to vote.</p> <p>Although voters are issued Polling Cards, which state that they should be brought to the polling station to facilitate voting, these were in fact rarely utilised by Polling Officers. The function of polling cards is occasionally confusing where some voters may believe that they are unable to vote without one. Voters also raised questions regarding how the cards should be disposed of.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Polling stations should provide indelible pens to mark ballot papers rather than pencils. • To prevent repeated voting there should be a process in place to indicate whether someone has voted (for example inking the voter's finger) • A process of using picture ID at the polling stations to identify voters should be introduced – an additional safeguard used in some countries is that the picture ID is also on the electoral register so picture ID can be matched.
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OBSERVATIONS 2: The Poll

Issue	What was Observed	Comments	Recommendations for Improvement
Opening of Polling stations	The Team observed the opening of polling stations in each of the four constituencies. There were queues of voters at 7.00am in some stations.	All polling stations observed opened on time.	
Accessibility of Polling Stations	<p>It was noted that portable polling stations were set up in some areas.</p> <p>Observers saw one inaccessible polling station. This station was particularly difficult for elderly voters to access. There was a steep road and a cafe in front of the building which confused voters. A number of complaints were registered including by the Presiding Officer who indicated that the polling station was supposed to be at the front of building. No action was taken despite the complaints registered.</p>	<p>Generally there was good accessibility and there were accessible polling booths for disabled people inside the stations.</p> <p>It was noted that portable polling stations were set up in some areas, which was positive. In addition, these portable stations were well signposted.</p> <p>Although the portable polling stations were well signposted, in general signs identifying the polling stations were inadequate. In many instances there was solely a printed sheet of A4 paper.</p> <p>A positive comment was that polling stations are numbered chronologically rather than geographically which is clear and easy for the voter.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications between polling staff and returning officers regarding location / accessibility should be regularly undertaken. • Polling stations need to be accessible to the elderly and those with mobility problems; the whole environment needs to be accessible. • The post-election meeting should assess accessibility issues so as to ensure that problems do not arise in the future. • Bulletins could be printed in the community newspapers explaining where the polling stations will be located. • Visibility and signage should be bigger and brighter.
Competency of Staff	It was generally felt that polling staff were competent, eager, experienced, kind and pleasant, and guided voters through the process.	The shortage of staff at polling stations and the long hours they worked was noted as a problem. This could compromise the paperwork at the close of the poll when	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the numbers of staff in polling stations. • Rotate staff so that long hours are avoided and people are able to

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	<p>In some constituencies Observers met roving council officials who monitored the process.</p>	<p>officials are fatigued and weary.</p> <p>It was noted that some staff were not clear about the end of day paperwork and the presence of Observers was not consistently recorded in some of the polling stations.</p> <p>The presence of ‘roving council officials’ is commended.</p>	<p>access facilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend the process of monitoring of polling staff by roving council staff so that this takes place in all constituencies.
<p>Role of Party Agents</p>	<p>Party Agents observed were following proper protocol.</p> <p>Party Agents were not seen very much at polling stations during the day. Where Party Agents were seen, they were working together in a friendly manner. Party Agents were visibly present at the count and acted in accordance with regulations.</p> <p>In one area Observers were told that political activists had been distributing literature in close proximity to a polling station which had been of concern to the Presiding Officer. This had been reported to the Police who arrived quickly and moved the campaigners.</p>	<p>That Party Agents were noticeable by their absence shows a high level of trust in the electoral process.</p>	

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<p>Voter Awareness at Polling Stations</p>	<p>Observers were viewing an election in which there was more than one election taking place at the same time: in England both Local and General Elections were being held, and in Scotland there was a by-election for one of the wards.</p> <p>Staff generally gave proper directives.</p>	<p>Some voters were not aware that they were voting in two elections. Some voters were confused when they were presented with two different ballot papers.</p> <p>There needs to be a better awareness on the part of the voters that they cannot vote after 10.00pm.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where different voting procedures are being used clerks should be clear in explaining the different processes to the voters. This underlines the need to increase the numbers of staff in polling stations.
<p>Secrecy of the Ballot</p>	<p>There was secrecy in the marking process.</p>	<p>In the case of postal ballots there were areas in which the secrecy of the ballots could be compromised or had the scope of compromise (see section on Postal Voting above).</p> <p>There were concerns about the traceable ballot, which could compromise secrecy. However one Observer noted that traceability was also a positive anti-fraud measure.</p> <p>Postal ballots at the count were left unsecured once they had been opened, which could compromise secrecy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Electoral Commission should investigate the traceability of ballots and develop more robust anti-fraud measures. • Once verified, postal ballots should be secured afterwards. In some places it was observed that ballots were treated casually and secrecy could have been compromised. • Manual oversight of Postal ballot signatures should be altered: where signatures of postal ballots are checked manually (due to the computer rejecting them) more than one person should undertake this, or there should be some oversight of the process.

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Complaints of Voters or Polling Staff	<p>Generally no complaints were observed. However, there were two exceptions to this:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elderly people who had trouble accessing a polling station (see Section on Accessibility of Polling Stations above). • At one of the polling stations observed there were people who wanted to vote but as it was past 10.00pm, they were not allowed to vote. 	<p>The Team read with concern reports of polling station that were unable to cope with the number of voters, and particularly that a large number of people were prevented from voting despite having arrived prior to the close of the stations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There should be a process to allow all voters who arrive prior to the 10.00pm close to cast their ballots. • The complaints heard by Observers emphasised the need for polling stations to be accessible for all. • The complaints of those who were unable to vote emphasised the need to increase the numbers of staff in polling stations.
Security at the Poll	<p>There were no Police Officers outside the station and only one seen in the polling stations across the four Constituencies. However, there was a sense that if security were required it would arrive quickly.</p>	<p>It was generally felt that the issue of security could be compromised because of a reliance on trust.</p> <p>In the polling stations ballot boxes were too close to the Presiding Officer which could enable them to interfere with the process.</p> <p>After the close of the poll ballot boxes were left alone with only the Presiding Officer. This could potentially compromise the security of the ballot boxes. The seals on the ballot boxes were not fully secure.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The seals on ballot boxes should be improved. • A review of processes that oversee the role of the Presiding Officer should be undertaken, so as to counteract vulnerabilities caused by reliance on trust rather than process.
Close of Poll	<p>Generally, the close ran smoothly. The ballot boxes were transported in the Presiding Officer's car to a</p>	<p>Transportation of the ballot boxes without security made them vulnerable.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security of the ballot boxes during transportation should be improved.

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	larger van, which then transported the boxes to the central counting centre. The Polling Inspector was responsible for the boxes once they were in the van.	The speed at which ballot boxes were transported to central counting stations was commended.	
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OBSERVATIONS 3: The Count

Issue	What was observed	Comments	Recommendations for improvement
<p>The Count Process</p>	<p>In general the count was calm, quiet and there was no evidence of external interference. The Observers did not find any problems with the arrangements.</p> <p>The Team observed the impressive number of volunteers who took part in the counts.</p> <p>Overall the process was very transparent with Candidates called to look at spoilt ballots so there were no complaints. This was the same for postal ballots.</p> <p>In one constituency the Team observed the use of counting machines for the first time. The machines were solely used to verify the number of ballots in the boxes. Prior to Election Day the Council organised demonstrations of the machines for all those involved with the election and count.</p>	<p>The system was slow and there were some cases where the count took a long time, particularly in the case of verifying postal ballots. The rechecking of the votes was particularly time consuming.</p> <p>In a two party system it is easy to employ this system of counting. Where there were a larger number of candidates it became an increasingly long process.</p> <p>In the UK there is an expectation that results are delivered by the next day. This puts strain on staff who worked overly long hours. In other countries the count can take much longer.</p> <p>In one constituency where counting machines were used for the first time there appeared to be a lack of trust in the machines.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councils should investigate alternative counting methods that may be more efficient. • If changes are made to the process (such as the use of counting machines) officials need to build trust in any new methods.
<p>Security of the Ballot at the Count</p>	<p>There was not an overt security or Police presence at the Counts, but in order to enter the individual had to be accredited. Not everyone could</p>	<p>The Observers felt that adequate procedures for crosschecking the ballot papers was important in order to prevent manipulation of the vote.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates or Party representatives should follow ballot boxes between the close of poll and the counting centre.

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	<p>attend.</p> <p>During a heated recount at one Centre there were two Police Officers present.</p> <p>The Team observed many occasions where ballots were simply kept upside down on the table without any security.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Visible security of the seals of the ballot boxes should be improved.• Candidate witnesses should be present throughout the whole process and particularly during the open and close of the poll.
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APPENDICES

Observer Team Programmes

Monday 3 May

0930	Welcome and Introductions <i>Helen Haywood</i> (Commonwealth Parliamentary Association UK Branch) <i>Danny Sriskandarajah</i> (Royal Commonwealth Society) Introduction to the organisations and what they could expect from the Programme; Observers introduced themselves to the Team.
1000	Introduction to Election Observation and the UK Electoral System <i>Rt Hon. Bruce George</i> Discussed his experience of observing elections in a number of countries and drew comparisons to the UK system; answered questions on particular aspects of the UK electoral system to look out for and the role of observers in the process.
1130	Briefing: Electoral Reform International Services (ERIS) <i>Chris Childs</i> Briefing on Election observation missions with particular reference to the International Guidelines for Election Observers and key questions to keep in mind during observation.
1430	Briefing: Electoral Reform Society Briefing on the different electoral systems used in the UK and on the debate over Electoral Reform.
1800	Dinner with <i>John Phillips</i> (Public Affairs Adviser to the Secretary-General, Commonwealth Secretariat)

Tuesday 4 May

1000	Briefing: Stuart Wilks-Heeg (Director of Democracy Audit) Briefing on the 2005 Election; previous Electoral Fraud cases in the UK; voter registration and the work of Democracy Audit.
1100	Meeting with <i>Peter Kellner</i> (President of YouGov and Chair of the Royal Commonwealth Society)
1200	Political Briefing <i>Lord Chidgey</i> Discussed the main issues for voters in the 2010 election; the policy debates that were pushing swing voters; the impact of the first televised debates and media coverage of the election.

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1400	Briefing: By the Electoral Commission for all International Observers Chaired by <i>Keith Best</i> (Electoral Reform International Services)
1415	The Electoral Commission and the Election Process <i>Peter Wardle</i> (Chief Executive) <i>Michael Gallagher</i> (Policy and Risk Manager) <i>Rob Cannon</i> (Campaigns Manager) Briefed on the role of the UK Electoral Commission, the objectives and functions of the UK Electoral Commission and its role in elections.
1600	The Political Context <i>Professor Phillip Cowley</i> (University of Nottingham)
1645	Conclusion <i>Electoral Commission and ERIS</i>
1700	Parliamentarians travelled to the Constituencies

Wednesday 5 May

	Civil Society Observers – London	Glasgow South West Constituency	Morecambe and Lunesdale Constituency	Birmingham Yardley Constituency	Rochford and Southend Constituency
0900				Observed the opening of Postal Ballots	Observed the opening of Postal Ballots
1000	Briefing: The Commonwealth Foundation	Met with Deputy Returning Officer Annemarie O'Donnell to discuss the organisation of the election process in Glasgow's seven constituencies	Met with Labour PPC Geraldine Smith and her Election Agent at Campaigning office		
1100		Met with Labour PPC Ian Davidson and his campaigning team	Met with Labour campaign team to discuss campaigning techniques		Observed campaigning activities by Conservative Candidates and staff

APPENDICES

1200	Briefing: Power 2010 <i>Pam Giddy</i> (Director)	Observed Campaigning activities in Glasgow	Met with Local newspapers and journalists to discuss coverage of Election and campaigning activities		
1300			Walked through Morecambe constituency discussing with voters their views on the election	Observers interviewed at BBC Birmingham television and radio centre	Met with James Duddridge PPC and the Conservative campaigning team to discuss their campaigning strategies and activities.
1400	Briefing: Unlock Democracy <i>Peter Facey</i>	Visited Ian Davidson's constituency office	Mets with Election officials and Head of Media Liaison	Visited Ladywood Constituency to observe campaigning activities by Liberal Democrat PPCs and Local Council Candidates	Visited neighbouring constituency (marginal seat) to observe campaign activities there
1500				Met with Liz Lynne MEP regarding campaigning in the constituency	
1600	Civil Society Observers travelled to join Parliamentarians in the Constituencies			Observed Council Briefing for Counters	Met Liberal Democrat PPC John Hemming and Liberal Democrat campaign staff
1700			Observed the Collection of Ballot boxes and booths by Presiding Officers	Observed demonstration of the mechanical counting match	
1800					

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Thursday 6 May

0700		Observed the opening of polling stations	Observed the opening of polling stations	Observed the opening of polling stations	Observed the opening of polling stations		
0800			Visited 20 polling stations across Morecambe	Observed voting at 11 polling stations across Yardley Met with roaming Council Officials at Polling stations.	Visited 5 polling stations across Rochford and Southend.		
0900		Met with the SNP PPC for East Dunbartonshire, Dr Iain White					
1000		Observation of seven other polling stations in and around Glasgow	Observed an inner city polling station, a marginal seat and a polling station where a by-election (Drumchapel/Annie'sland) was taking place at the same time	Observed the opening of Postal votes at Lancaster City Council		Met Returning Officer Rob Tinlin to discuss electoral process in Southend and Rochford	
1100							Visited four polling stations in neighbouring constituencies
1200							
1300				Met with the Presiding Officers responsible for overseeing Postal Ballots and Polling Station Inspectors			
1400							
1500							
1600							
1700					Met John Hemming PPC to discuss reports of problems at polling stations in neighbouring constituencies	Met James Duddridge PPC at campaign office and visited polling stations with the candidate and his Election Agent	
1800			Observed eight Polling stations in Morecambe		Observed campaigning activities of the PPC and	Observed their	

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				campaign office on Election Day	campaigning activities and the role/restrictions on their activities on Election Day.
1900					
2000					
2100					
2200		Observed the Closing of the Poll and transportation of the ballot	Observed the Closing of the Poll and transportation of the ballot	Observed the closing of the poll and transportation of the ballot	Observed the closing of the poll and transportation of the ballot
2300					

Friday 7 May

0000		Observed the manual count of the general election votes		Observed the verification of ballots, the count and the declaration	Observed the verification of ballots, the count and the declaration
0100					
0200		the electronic count of the by-election			
0300					
0400					
0700		Meeting at Govan High School between Aliosious Nthenda and pupils and teachers who have links with Malawi	Observed the verification and counting of Ballots		
0800					
1300	All Observers return to London				
1700	Observers reconvened to discuss experiences and produce Interim Statement				
1800	Press Conference				

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1830	Reception Observers met guests from Commonwealth organisations and HE Ms. Mmasekgoa Masire-Mwamba, Deputy Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Secretariat
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Saturday 8 May

0930	Observers reconvened to discuss observations and write full report. Group split into two groups across Constituency Visits.
1000	Group A discussed Section 1 of Report. Group B discussed Section 2 of Report.
1200	Both groups discussed the Count process (separately)
1400	Meeting with Enfield's Area Youth Forum participants Enfield's Area Youth Forum act as a platform for young people aged 11-19, to meet and discuss issues identify as important to them and their peers and have their ideas and opinions heard by senior members of the local authority. The Young people sitting on the Area Youth Forums can put themselves forward to stand for the Enfield Youth Parliament. This body meets regularly to discuss Borough-wide issues.
1500	Discussed and agreed text of observations and report.
1600	End of Programme.

APPENDICES

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The Royal Commonwealth Society. Founded in 1868, the RCS conducts a range of events and activities aimed at promoting international understanding. Its educational, youth and cultural programmes include one of the world's oldest and largest schools essay competitions, and an innovative international youth leadership programme. HM Queen Elizabeth II is Patron and Peter Kellner is Chairman. Headquartered at the Commonwealth Club in London, the RCS has some 4000 members in the UK and a presence in 40 Commonwealth countries through a network of branches and Commonwealth societies. <http://www.thercs.org/>

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association UK is one of over 175 branches of the CPA – the professional association of all Commonwealth parliamentarians. CPA UK's membership is made up of Members from both Houses of the United Kingdom Parliament who work to strengthen parliamentary democracy. CPA UK conducts international parliamentary outreach on behalf of Parliament and the wider CPA by parliamentary diplomacy and parliamentary strengthening activities to contribute to the capacity of partner parliaments. <http://www.cpaukbranch.org/>

The Commonwealth. The modern Commonwealth was established with 8 members in 1949. In 2010, it has 54 members with a total population of nearly 2 billion. It is an association of governments and peoples, built around shared language, institutions, challenges, aspirations and values. The Commonwealth promotes democracy, development, and diversity within its member countries and across the world.

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