

Section 1 – Introduction

Background

1.1 In accordance with the requirements in section 21 of the Rural Representative Election Ordinance (Cap. 576) (“RREO”), after the Rural Ordinary Election (“ROE”) held in January 2023, the Electoral Affairs Commission (“EAC”) made arrangements for the conduct of the third Rural By-election on 17 May 2026¹ with a view to returning 19 Rural Representatives (“RRs”) for filling the Resident Representative (“ReR”) vacancies and Indigenous Inhabitant Representative (“IIR”) vacancies in 19 villages. The reasons for the vacancies are set out in paragraph 1.2 below.

The Vacancies

1.2 Since the gazettal of the second Rural By-election on 7 March 2025, a total of 19 RR vacancies arose, comprising 1 ReR vacancy each in 9 Existing Villages (“EVs”) and 1 IIR vacancy each in 10 Indigenous Villages (“IVs”). These 19 vacancies fall into 2 different groups as follows:

¹ The first and second Rural By-elections were conducted on 1 December 2024 and 27 April 2025 respectively. According to the latest arrangements set out in the Report on the 2023 ROE, the Rural By-election was originally scheduled for November/December 2025. To avoid public confusion over the 2025 Legislative Council General Election held on 7 December 2025, the Home Affairs Department (“HAD”), upon the EAC’s approval, cancelled the practical arrangements for the aforementioned Rural By-election.

- (a) **Resignation** – comprising 5 vacancies, with 1 ReR vacancy each in 3 EVs and 1 IIR vacancy each in 2 IVs. The aforementioned vacancies arose because of the resignation of the ReRs and IIRs from their offices; and
- (b) **Deceased** – comprising 14 vacancies, with 1 ReR vacancy each in 6 EVs and 1 IIR vacancy each in 8 IVs. The aforementioned vacancies arose because the relevant ReRs and IIRs had passed away after assuming the offices.

1.3 Six districts, namely Islands, North, Sha Tin, Tai Po, Tsuen Wan and Yuen Long were involved in this Rural By-election. A list showing the details of the vacancies and the dates on which the vacancies were declared in the Gazette is at **Appendix I**.

Section 2 – Appointments

Polling Day and Nomination Period

2.1 Pursuant to section 6 of the Electoral Procedure (Rural Representative Election) Regulation (Cap. 541L), the Director of Home Affairs (“DHA”) published a notice in the Gazette on 27 March 2026, appointing 17 May 2026 as the polling day of the Rural By-election and specifying the period from 2 April 2026 to 17 April 2026 (both days inclusive) as the nomination period of the Rural By-election. The Rural By-election was held to return RRs to fill an ReR vacancy in each of the 9 EVs and an IIR vacancy in each of the 10 IVs. A breakdown of the number of ReRs and IIRs to be returned by district is shown at **Appendix II**.

Appointment of Returning Officers, Assistant Returning Officers, Assistant Returning Officer (Ballot Paper Sorting Station) and Assistant Returning Officer (Legal)

2.2 In accordance with section 54 of the RREO, the EAC appointed 6 District Officers of the District Offices concerned as the Returning Officers (“ROs”), 8 members of their staff as the Assistant Returning Officers (“AROs”), and a staff member from the Sham Shui Po District Office as the ARO (Ballot Paper Sorting Station) (“BPSS”) to take charge of the operation of the BPSS. A Government Counsel was also appointed as the ARO (Legal). The appointment of ROs was published in the Gazette on 27 March 2026. A list of the ROs and AROs is shown at **Appendix III**.

Operational Manual and Briefing Session for Returning Officers and Assistant Returning Officers

2.3 To enable all parties concerned to familiarise themselves with the rules and operation of the Rural By-election, the HAD prepared and issued an Operational Manual to the ROs and AROs as well as the polling and counting staff for reference. Besides, a briefing session for the ROs and AROs, hosted by the EAC Chairman, was held on 31 March 2026 at the District Council Conference Room of the Wan Chai District Office to remind them that they must pay attention to the major provisions in the relevant electoral legislations and guidelines. Representatives of the Independent Commission Against Corruption (“ICAC”) were also present to brief the ROs and AROs on subjects within their purview.

Section 3 – Publicity

3.1 Information on the Rural By-election was uploaded onto the websites of the EAC, the HAD and the ICAC throughout the election period for reference of candidates, electors and members of the public. Important matters of the Rural By-election such as the nomination period, the polling date, the names of the validly nominated candidates, the polling arrangements and the setting up of dedicated polling stations (“DPSs”) were also published in the Gazette. These measures helped enhance the transparency of and arouse public attention to the Rural By-election.

3.2 Apart from the publicity measures mentioned above, in response to the EAC’s recommendation to step up publicity for the Rural By-elections, the HAD invited the Heung Yee Kuk New Territories (“HYK”) to collaborate in strengthening the publicity for this By-election through actively urging eligible electors in the rural communities to exercise their rights, both as candidates and electors, in this By-election. The HAD also continued to appeal to registered electors of the villages concerned to actively participate in this By-election through various existing channels, including placing advertisements in local newspapers, putting up banners and posting notices of the By-election in the villages concerned, as well as writing to women’s organisations and youth groups in the districts concerned. In addition, before the commencement of the nomination period, the HAD had issued letters to every registered elector in the 19 villages involved, appealing to them to actively support the Rural By-election, fulfil their civic responsibility by standing for the election or nominating suitable persons as candidates, and vote actively on the polling day.

Section 4 – Nomination of Candidates

The Nomination Period

4.1 The nomination period for the Rural By-election started on 2 April 2026 and ended on 17 April 2026 (both days inclusive). Candidates were required to submit their nomination forms to the relevant ROs in person. At the close of the nomination period, the ROs had received a total of 21 nominations.

Validly Nominated Candidates

Validity of Nominations

4.2 Of the 21 nominations received, 19 were determined as valid by the ROs, 1 was withdrawn before the close of nominations and 1 was determined as invalid by the RO. Among the 19 valid nominations, 6 were for the ReR elections and 13 were for the IIR elections, covering a total of 14 RR seats in 5 EVs and 9 IVs. The remaining 5 RR seats, involving 4 EVs and 1 IV, received no valid nominations.

Uncontested Elections

4.3 Having examined the relevant nominations, the ROs concerned declared that a candidate each for the respective ReR elections for Sheung Ling Pei in the Islands District, Sha Tau Kok Market (West Lower) in the North

District, Wo Liu Hang in the Sha Tin District and Shek Pik San Tsuen in the Tsuen Wan District, and a candidate each for the respective IIR elections for Kat O and San Tong Po in the North District, Ha Yeung and Tai Po Mei in the Tai Po District and Ma Wan Main Street in the Tsuen Wan District were elected uncontested as there was only one validly nominated candidate for each vacancy. There were in total 9 candidates returned uncontested in the Rural By-election and their names were published in the Gazette on 30 April 2026.

Contested Elections

4.4 As the number of validly nominated candidates for Lin Fa Tei (an EV in the Yuen Long District), Yung Shue Ha (an IV in the Islands District), Wa Shan Tsuen (an IV in the North District), Sha Lo Tung Cheung Uk (an IV in the Tai Po District) and Kam Tsin Wai Tsuen (an IV in the Yuen Long District) exceeded the number of ReRs and IIRs to be returned for the respective villages, polls for these villages were arranged by the HAD to be held on 17 May 2026. On 24 April 2026, the ROs concerned drew lots to allocate candidate numbers and designated spots for displaying election advertisements to the candidates at the Yuen Long District Office, the Islands District Office, the North District Office and the Tai Po District Office respectively, and the names and relevant particulars of the validly nominated candidates were published in the Gazette on 30 April 2026.

Failed Elections

4.5 Regarding the remaining 1 ReR vacancy each in 4 EVs and 1 IIR vacancy in 1 IV, the ROs concerned declared that the ReR elections and the IIR election for these villages had failed because no valid nominations were received by the close of the nomination period. The notices of failure of election for these villages were also published in the Gazette on 30 April 2026.

Briefing for Candidates

4.6 The EAC Chairman conducted a briefing session for the candidates on 29 April 2026 at the District Council Conference Room of the Wan Chai District Office to go through the major provisions of the electoral legislation and the relevant electoral arrangements. The Assistant Director of Home Affairs, as well as representatives from the ICAC, the Department of Justice and the Registration and Electoral Office, were also present at the briefing session.

Section 5 – Preparatory Work

Appointment and Training of Polling and Counting Staff

5.1 Staff of the HAD were deployed as polling and counting staff for the Rural By-election. Training sessions were held on 5, 8 and 14 May 2026 for the staff who would be on duty at the polling and counting stations as well as operate the District Command Centres (“DCCs”) and DPSs on the polling day. The sessions aimed at familiarising the staff concerned with the rules, operational procedures and their respective duties.

Polling and Counting Station

5.2 The HAD designated the following polling-cum-counting stations:

Election	Polling-cum-counting Station
ReR election for Lin Fa Tei in the Yuen Long District	Pat Heung Central Primary School
IIR election for Yung Shue Ha in the Islands District	Sok Kwu Wan Family Medicine Clinic
IIR election for Wa Shan Tsuen in the North District	Fung Kai Liu Man Shek Tong Secondary School
IIR election for Sha Lo Tung Cheung Uk in the Tai Po District	Tai Po Community Centre
IIR election for Kam Tsin Wai Tsuen in the Yuen Long District	Kam Tsin Wai Tsuen Ancestral Hall

Dedicated Polling Station

5.3 To enable registered electors of the contested villages who were imprisoned or remanded by the Correctional Services Department (“CSD”) to cast their votes on the polling day, the HAD would set up DPSs in penal institutions for the Rural By-election where necessary. Since the CSD indicated that there were registered electors of the contested villages in custody at two of its penal institutions, namely Hei Ling Chau Addiction Treatment Centre and Tung Tau Correctional Institution, on the polling day, the HAD set up DPSs at these two penal institutions for registered electors who were imprisoned or remanded in custody to cast their votes on the polling day.

5.4 In addition, the HAD had also designated the Mei Tin Community Hall in the Sha Tin District as a DPS for this Rural By-election, to enable registered electors of the contested villages who were remanded or detained on the polling day by law enforcement agencies (“LEAs”) (other than the CSD) to cast votes. Since the LEAs might arrest persons who happened to be registered electors of the contested villages at any time on the polling day, the polling hours for this DPS were the same as those of an ordinary polling station, i.e. from noon to 7 pm.

5.5 A notice of designation of the polling stations, DPSs, BPSS and counting stations was gazetted by the DHA on 30 April 2026.

Introduction to Candidates and Polling Notices to Electors

5.6 The HAD produced the “Introduction to Candidates” to provide registered electors with information on the relevant personal particulars, election platforms and photographs of the validly nominated candidates, enabling electors to fully grasp the candidates’ information and make an informed choice on the polling day.

5.7 On 7 May 2026, the HAD sent a polling notice to each of the electors of the contested villages, notifying them of the polling date, polling hours and location of the polling station. The notice was accompanied by the relevant “Introduction to Candidates”, voting guide, location map of polling station and an ICAC leaflet. A notice was also sent to each of the electors of the uncontested villages to inform them that no poll would be conducted for their villages.

The Contingency Plan

5.8 To cope with situations where the poll could not be conducted as scheduled at the designated polling stations due to emergencies (e.g. occurrence of public danger) or inclement weather, the HAD had identified various venues as the alternative polling stations and gazetted the designation of alternative polling stations on 30 April 2026.

5.9 The designated polling stations and the DPS at the Mei Tin Community Hall were also reserved for the same purpose on the fallback day of 24 May 2026.

5.10 In addition, the arrangements in case of emergencies or inclement weather on the polling day were also included in the Operational Manual for ROs and AROs and that for polling and counting staff for reference.

Section 6 – The Poll

Polling Date and Polling Hours

6.1 The poll was held on Sunday, 17 May 2026. According to the established arrangement for the RR Elections, the polling hours for the polling stations at the contested villages and the DPS at the Mei Tin Community Hall were from noon to 7 pm.

Logistical Arrangements

6.2 The designated polling stations and the DPS at the Mei Tin Community Hall operated as scheduled on the polling day. The Central Command Centre at HAD Headquarters was responsible for overseeing the operation of the polling and counting stations as well as the DCCs, and for co-ordinating the communication and dissemination of information for all parties concerned on the polling day. The Complaints Centre at the Treasury Building was responsible for receiving and handling complaints from the public throughout the polling hours.

6.3 There were also designated officers on duty from the ICAC and the Hong Kong Police Force (“HKPF”) to attend to complaints on the polling day.

Voter Turnout Rates

6.4 The voter turnout and voter turnout rates of this Rural By-election are as follows while the breakdowns of the turnout rates are shown at **Appendices IV(A) and (B)**:

- (a) The ReR election for Lin Fa Tei – a total of 219 (i.e. 42.86%) of the 511 registered electors cast their votes;
- (b) The IIR election for Yung Shue Ha – a total of 60 (i.e. 74.07%) of the 81 registered electors cast their votes;
- (c) The IIR election for Wa Shan Tsuen – a total of 101 (i.e. 54.30%) of the 186 registered electors cast their votes;
- (d) The IIR election for Sha Lo Tung Cheung Uk – a total of 101 (i.e. 43.16%) of the 234 registered electors cast their votes; and
- (e) The IIR election for Kam Tsin Wai Tsuen – a total of 136 (i.e. 67.66%) of the 201 registered electors cast their votes.

Section 7 – The Count

Counting Station and Ballot Paper Sorting Station

7.1 All ordinary polling stations were immediately converted into counting stations for counting of votes after the close of the poll. The counting stations were supervised by the Officers-in-charge of the counting stations concerned.

7.2 The HAD set up a BPSS at the Hin Keng Neighbourhood Community Centre in Sha Tin to sort the ballot papers from various DPSs according to the elections of the respective Villages, and the sorted ballot papers would be delivered to the corresponding counting stations for counting of votes. A total of three DPSs were set up for this Rural By-election, two in penal institutions and one at the Mei Tin Community Hall. To enhance the efficiency of counting, as in the past, the HAD made special arrangements in respect of the delivery of ballot papers for the DPSs at the Mei Tin Community Hall and penal institutions as follows:

- (a) if no elector was to cast vote in the DPSs at the Mei Tin Community Hall or penal institutions, the ballot boxes would be delivered to the BPSS. The ARO(BPSS) would open the empty ballot boxes from the DPSs and inform the Officers-in-charge of the counting stations concerned that no ballot paper would be delivered to the counting stations; or

- (b) if elector(s) did cast vote(s) in the DPSs at the Mei Tin Community Hall or penal institutions, the ballot boxes would first be delivered to the BPSS. The ARO(BPSS) would open the ballot boxes from the DPSs and sort the ballot papers according to the names of the Rural Areas as shown on the respective envelopes. After being delivered to the relevant counting stations, the ballot papers concerned would be mixed with those from the ordinary polling stations and then counted.

Counting Process

7.3 All polling stations were smoothly converted into counting stations in less than 35 minutes. Since votes were cast in the DPSs at the penal institutions, in accordance with the special arrangements stated in paragraph 7.2(b) above, the ARO(BPSS) opened the ballot boxes from the DPSs, and then sorted the ballot papers according to the names of the Rural Areas as shown on the respective envelopes before delivering them to the relevant counting stations. After the ballot papers concerned had been delivered to the relevant counting stations, the Officers-in-charge of the counting stations concerned opened and emptied the ballot boxes and mixed the ballot papers with those from the DPSs. The count then commenced immediately.

Counting Method

7.4 Manual counting was adopted in this Rural By-election. Counting staff first sorted and placed the ballot papers into the relevant transparent plastic boxes according to the votes marked thereon by the electors, and then counted the number of votes obtained by each candidate. The Officers-in-charge of the

counting stations were responsible for monitoring the sorting of ballot papers and the counting process, as well as determining whether the questionable ballot papers should be counted.

Declaration of Result

7.5 The election results were declared by each RO gradually from 7:40 pm at the relevant counting stations after the completion of the count. The results of the contested elections were published in the Gazette on 22 May 2026.

7.6 The lists of successful and unsuccessful candidates (including those returned uncontested) in the ReR and IIR elections are shown at **Appendices V(A) and (B)**.

EAC Visit

7.7 The EAC Chairman and two EAC Members visited the polling stations at Fung Kai Liu Man Shek Tong Secondary School, Pat Heung Central Primary School and Kam Tsin Wai Tsuen Ancestral Hall respectively. Afterwards, the two EAC Members met with the EAC Chairman at the polling station at Fung Kai Liu Man Shek Tong Secondary School. After the polling station was converted into a counting station, the EAC Chairman, together with the two EAC Members, the Deputy Director of Home Affairs (1), the RO concerned and the Officer-in-charge of that counting station emptied the ballot box and monitored the counting process. The EAC Chairman and the two EAC Members considered that the polling and counting processes had proceeded smoothly, and that the relevant arrangements were satisfactory.

Section 8 – Complaints

Complaints-handling Period

8.1 The complaints-handling period started on 2 April 2026 (i.e. the day of commencement of the nomination period) and ended on 1 July 2026 (i.e. 45 days after the polling day on 17 May 2026).

Complaints-handling Parties

8.2 The parties responsible for handling complaints relating to this Rural By-election included the EAC, the ROs, the HKPF, the ICAC and the Presiding Officers (“PROs”) (for the polling day only). The EAC, supported by the EAC Secretariat, would deal with cases that were within its jurisdiction and not covered by any statutory provisions involving criminal liability.

8.3 During the complaints-handling period, the EAC Secretariat assumed the role of co-ordinator, responsible for compiling the statistical information on complaints from each party and submitting consolidated reports to the EAC regularly.

Number and Nature of Complaints

8.4 A total of 5 complaints were received by the five parties mentioned in paragraph 8.2 above.

8.5 The RO received 4 complaints directly² before the polling day, relating to nomination and candidature (3 cases) and personal data privacy (1 case). The ICAC also received 1 complaint referred by other government departments/organisations/personnel before the polling day. No complaints were received by any parties on or after the polling day. A breakdown of the complaint cases, categorised by the means of receipt and natures of complaint, is shown at **Appendix VI**. All investigations to the complaint cases had been completed and the breakdowns of the outcome of investigations are shown at **Appendices VII(A) and (B)**.

² Directly received complaints refer to cases received directly by the EAC, the ROs, the HKPF, the ICAC and the PROs, as well as cases referred from 1823 to the aforementioned parties. If the same complaint is received directly by more than one party, the case will be recorded separately in the statistics of the respective parties.

Section 9 – Review and Recommendations

9.1 After reviewing the electoral procedures and arrangements for this Rural By-election, the EAC considers that the polling and counting were conducted smoothly and satisfactorily.

9.2 This Rural By-election involved a total of 19 RR vacancies, of which 5 (involving 4 EVs and 1 IV) could not be filled at the close of the nomination period as no nomination was received.

9.3 The EAC notes that the HAD had enhanced the publicity of this Rural By-election by inviting the HYK to collaborate in encouraging eligible electors in the rural communities to exercise their rights by actively running for and voting in this By-election, while continuing to promote this Rural By-election through different channels, including placing advertisements in local newspapers, putting up banners and posting notices in the Rural Areas concerned, and sending letters to relevant Rural Committees, relevant women's organisations and youth groups in the districts concerned, as well as every registered elector in the villages concerned, to appeal to electors to actively participate in this Rural By-election. However, due to various circumstances of individual Rural Areas, the relevant seats remained vacant with no nomination received.

9.4 The EAC recommends that the HAD should make continuous efforts to strengthen its publicity measures and, through daily community liaison work, actively engage residents of the villages in rural affairs and encourage them to actively participate in the RR elections by enhancing their understanding of the functions of RRs and thus the importance of RRs in village development.

Section 10 – Acknowledgement

10.1 The EAC wishes to extend its gratitude to the HAD, particularly those serving as ROs, AROs, PROs/Officers-in-charge of counting stations as well as polling and counting staff for their efforts in validating nominations, making the necessary preparations for the Rural By-election and conducting the poll and count on the polling day. Their dedication was the key to the success of the Rural By-election. The EAC is also thankful to various government departments for rendering valuable assistance throughout the Rural By-election, including the Registration and Electoral Office which was responsible for drafting this report, arranging the EAC's visits to polling and counting stations and co-ordinating the handling of complaints for the Rural By-election. Besides, the EAC would like to thank the CSD, the HKPF and other LEAs for their assistance provided to the HAD in making necessary arrangements for the operation of the DPSs. The EAC is also grateful to the police officers who conscientiously performed their duties in maintaining law and order during the Rural By-election.

10.2 The EAC also extends its thanks to the HYK, the relevant Rural Committees, and the women's organisations and youth groups in the relevant districts for helping promote this Rural By-election and encouraging electors to participate actively.

10.3 The EAC would also like to express its appreciation to the electors who turned up to cast their votes at the polling stations and all those who complied with the electoral legislations and guidelines.

Section 11 – The Way Ahead

11.1 The HAD is planning the conduct of the ROE in early 2027 to return 695 ReRs and 789 IIRs for 709 Villages, as well as 56 Kaifong Representatives for two Market Towns in Cheung Chau and Peng Chau.

11.2 The EAC would like to recommend that this report be made public, at a time when the Chief Executive thinks appropriate, to uphold the principle of transparency in elections and to enable the public to better understand the preparatory work of the EAC during this Rural By-election.