

Cross Boundary Parliamentary Protocol Agreement - Wolverhampton and Walsall

Purpose	This protocol outlines the roles and responsibilities of each authority in the event of a general election. When a general election date is known, this protocol will be updated with owner names and deadline dates for each task.
Version	0.3
Date reviewed:	10 January 2024
Reviewed by:	<p>Wolverhampton: Tim Johnson – Chief Executive/Acting Returning Officer, David Pattison – Chief Operating Officer, Laura Gittos – Head of Governance, Laura Noonan – Electoral Services and Scrutiny Manager, Alice Peacock – Deputy Electoral Services Manager</p> <p>Walsall: Emma Bennett - Chief Executive/Acting Returning Officer , Tony Cox – Head of Law, Helen Dudson – Electoral Services Manager, James O’Sullivan – Deputy Electoral Services Manager</p>

Signed by Wolverhampton Acting Returning Officer Tim Johnson:

TD Johnson
TD Johnson (Jan 31, 2024 12:49 GMT)

Jan 31, 2024

Signed by Walsall Acting Returning Officer Emma Bennett:

Emma Bennett
Emma Bennett (Jan 23, 2024 11:11 GMT)

Jan 23, 2024

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Information on take in Wards

Wolverhampton takes in the following wards for a Parliamentary election (data correct as at October 2023):

Ward	Constituency	Electors	Postal Voters
Bentley and Darlaston North	Wolverhampton South East	9,458	921
Darlaston South	Wolverhampton South East	10,625	981
Short Heath	Wolverhampton North East	8,608	934
Willenhall North	Wolverhampton North East	9,066	1,065
Willenhall South	Wolverhampton South East	11,354	1,155
Total		49,111	5,056

Polling Stations

Task	Responsibility	Rationale
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Book polling stations including temporary polling stations	Walsall	Walsall will have all the contact details/avoid confusion for venues for future elections
Pay polling stations	Walsall	Walsall will have their payment details and they can invoice Wolverhampton after election.

The location of polling stations, and number of poll clerks allocated to each is as follows:

Constituency	Station	PD	Ward	Electorate	Station Name	PO	PC
Wolverhampton North East	26	EA / ED	Short Heath	1664	Temp at The Jolly Collier PH	1	2
Wolverhampton North East	27	EB	Short Heath	1515	Tenant's Meeting Room	1	3
Wolverhampton North East	28	EC	Short Heath	1517	Temp at Car Park for Shops, Stroud Avenue	1	2
Wolverhampton North East	29	EE	Short Heath	1485	Temp at Car Park for Shops, Stroud Avenue	1	2
Wolverhampton North East	30	EF	Short Heath	1628	Holy Trinity Church Hall	1	3
Wolverhampton North East	31	FA	Willenh all North	978	Temp Build off Coppice Farm Way opp Nightingale Cresc	1	2
Wolverhampton North East	32	FB	Willenh all North	1079	Temp Build off Coppice Farm Way opp Nightingale Cresc	1	2
Wolverhampton North East	33	FC	Willenh all North	2116	Temp Building sited at Milestone PH	1	2

Wolverhampton North East	34	FD	Willenh all North	1576	Short Heath Methodist Church Hall	1	3
Wolverhampton North East	35	FE	Willenh all North	1396	Temp Building Playing Fields Brereton Road	1	2
Wolverhampton North East	36	FF	Willenh all North	919	Temp at Poets Corner PH	1	2
Wolverhampton South East	37	GA	Willenh all South	2005	Willenhall Community Pavilion	1	3
Wolverhampton South East	38	GB	Willenh all South	1468	St. Giles Court Community Room	1	3
Wolverhampton South East	39	GC	Willenh all South	1395	Temp Building sited on Morrisons Car Park	1	2
Wolverhampton South East	40	GD	Willenh all South	959	Barcroft Primary School	1	2
Wolverhampton South East	41	GE	Willenh all South	2506	St. Mary's Parish Hall	1	3
Wolverhampton South East	42	GF	Willenh all South	1959	St. Andrews Community Centre	1	2
Wolverhampton South East	86	SA	Bentley & Darlaston North	1825	St. Andrews Community Centre	1	2
Wolverhampton South East	87	SB	Bentley & Darlaston North	1336	Old Hall People Partnership	1	3
Wolverhampton South East	88	SC	Bentley & Darlaston North	636	Youth Centre (Sports Barn)	1	2
Wolverhampton South East	89	SD	Bentley & Darlaston North	945	Bentley Leisure Pavilion	1	2

Wolverhampton South East	90	SE	Bentley & Darlaston North	1186	Temp at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School	1	2
Wolverhampton South East	91	SF	Bentley & Darlaston North	789	Darlaston Methodist Church	1	2
Wolverhampton South East	92	SG	Bentley & Darlaston North	1499	Salisbury Primary School	1	3
Wolverhampton South East	93	SH	Bentley & Darlaston North	461	Kings Hill Nursery School	1	2
Wolverhampton South East	94	TA	Darlaston South	1282	Woods Bank Academy	1	3
Wolverhampton South East	95	TB	Darlaston South	997	Temp sited at Grace Academy	1	2
Wolverhampton South East	96	TC	Darlaston South	1210	Pinfold Street Primary School	1	2
Wolverhampton South East	97	TD	Darlaston South	1020	The Moxley People's Centre	1	2
Wolverhampton South East	98	TE	Darlaston South	724	Salvation Army	1	2
Wolverhampton South East	99	TF	Darlaston South	1123	Rowley View Nursery School	1	2
Wolverhampton South East	100	TG	Darlaston South	1414	Kings Hill Nursery School	1	3
Wolverhampton South East	101	TH	Darlaston South	1313	Temp at The Fiery Holes	1	2
Wolverhampton South East	102	TI	Darlaston South	636	Temp at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School	1	2
Total staff						34	80

Equipment

Task	Responsibility	Rationale
Loan ballot boxes to Wolverhampton for polling stations	Walsall	Wolverhampton may loan some ballot boxes depending on combination of election.
Deliver polling booths and privacy screens to these stations	Walsall	Walsall will be delivering polling booths to all other stations/familiar with these sites. Both councils have the same equipment – PakFlatt Quad Boots and Vote Pod Privacy Screens.
Invoice for delivery and collection of polling booths	Walsall	Wolverhampton to pay and claim back from ECU.

Staff recruitment and training

Task	Responsibility	Rationale
Pay polling station staff.	Walsall	Walsall to pay staff via MEA as they will have all of their bank account details, and invoice Wolverhampton after the election. Both councils have agreed to pay the same rates of pay + 20% uplift for combined poll. Both councils pay 12.09% holiday pay on top.
Allocate staff to polling stations to EC ratios and share staff details with Wolverhampton. Walsall to confirm in appointment previous experience of staff (PO and PC)	Walsall	Likely to have regular staff who work in these stations for all other elections.

Provide list of reserve staffing for polling stations	Walsall	Walsall appoint 3 poll clerks to each polling station regardless of ratio to build a list of reserves. The reserves for these stations will be reserve for Wolverhampton staff. Both can work together to support filling drop outs if struggling to recruit
Undertake right to work checks for staff from Walsall	Walsall	Walsall to undertake right to work checks as they are paying the staff.
Allocate Polling Station Inspectors to these wards (5 – one for each ward)	Walsall	Likely to have regular staff who work in these stations for all other elections.
Formally appoint staff	Wolverhampton and Walsall	Walsall to send generic appointment letter in MEA to confirm the station they have been appointed at and advise that Wolverhampton will email appointment letter outside of system with detailed information specific to working for Wolverhampton ARO.
Train staff	Wolverhampton	They will be working for Wolverhampton – need to be clear that they collect ballot box and drop off ballot box in Wolverhampton (or a designated drop off spot), not the Walsall count venue. If combined, Walsall will arrange a separate training session for all cross boundary Presiding Officers and Wolverhampton will attend to deliver a joint training session. Both councils to input in to the poll clerk online training.
Pay staff	Walsall	Walsall to pay via MEA and invoice Wolverhampton.

Nominations, Candidates and Agents

Task	Responsibility	Rationale
Send nomination register to Wolverhampton	Walsall	To enable Wolverhampton to check subscribers on nomination papers who are from the take in wards.
Conduct nominations for WSE and WNE Constituencies	Wolverhampton	Wolverhampton must do this as the Lead ARO for the constituency.
Wolverhampton to provide all nomination, interim and final registers for distribution.	Walsall	Walsall to provide electronic registers to Wolverhampton as candidates standing in this area are entitled to these parts of the register and it makes it easier for candidates to request from one authority.

Ballot papers

Task	Responsibility	Rationale
Agreed following colours for ballot papers: Parliamentary – White CAM (Combined Authority Mayoral) – Yellow Local - Lilac	Both	To reserve white paper in case of general election and to assist with consistent instructions to staff and instructions to postal voters
Use enhanced ballot paper numbering	Both	To ensure ballot paper numbers are unique and can both do this as both on Xpress.

Poll cards

Task	Responsibility	Rationale
Issue poll cards for give away areas	Walsall	<p>As Electoral Registration Officer Walsall will deal with all queries in relation to registration. Poll cards will say issued on behalf of the Wolverhampton Acting Returning Officer but contact details will be for Walsall. Walsall to recharge printing and postage costs after election. Both teams will proof these poll cards and Wolverhampton will sign off.</p> <p>Printers: Walsall use Print Image and Wolverhampton use FCS.</p>

Postal Vote Packs

Task	Responsibility	Rationale
Send postal vote data file to Wolverhampton	Walsall	<p>Wolverhampton will then forward on to print company – FCS. Wolverhampton will let Walsall know when despatch dates are for queries from electors.</p> <p>Both teams will proof postal vote packs and sign off the artwork to ensure that instructions to electors are clear, especially if it's combined with other elections.</p>
Take queries from electors on postal	Walsall	<p>If Walsall determine that a replacement is required – pass details on to Wolverhampton ARO via a spreadsheet on a daily basis from date</p>

packs and determine applications		of re-issue up to polling day. Walsall to inform electors day before and on poll that they can only be collected from Wolverhampton office.
Re-issue postal packs	Wolverhampton	As Acting Returning Officer for the election.
Send data for verification of postal votes	Walsall	For opening sessions. This can be imported in to Wolverhampton Xpress.
If combined, issue separate postal packs – one for local//cam and one for general election.	Both	If the packs were combined, ARO would have to open all and arrange to transport postal ballot box to Walsall.
Send postal vote rejection data	Wolverhampton	Send list of rejected postal votes to enable Walsall to send out the rejected notices to their electors.
Share copy of rejected postal vote on request	Wolverhampton	If a Walsall elector requests to see a copy of their postal vote statement – Wolverhampton will email this to Walsall to share with elector.
Appoint a Deputy Returning Officer with specific responsibility for handling postal votes from each authority to deliver and collect postal votes for both areas day before and day of poll	Both	To ensure that any general election votes and local/CAM for each authority are delivered in time to each respective council.

Ballot box receipt

Task	Responsibility	Rationale
Identify a convenient drop off location for the 5 wards in Walsall.	Walsall	To reduce the distance presiding officers in Walsall need to travel to drop off box. All PSI's in Walsall will have responsibility for checking in

		boxes in single location, and Walsall will appoint security team to assist with this.
Appoint someone from Wolverhampton to oversee receipt of ballot boxes in Walsall and safe delivery over to Wolverhampton	Wolverhampton	To provide assurance to ARO and to check that the next ballot paper to be issued is sellotaped on to back of ballot paper account. The ballot paper should be sellotaped so you can see the number on the ballot paper.

Verification and Count

Task	Responsibility	Rationale
If combined, Wolverhampton would have to verify all of the five Walsall local Wards/regional ballot papers	Wolverhampton	Legal requirement as the lead ARO
If combined, collect verified local/regional ballot papers	Walsall	To provide assurance to RO. Walsall will appoint their security team to transport them.
If combined, agree number of verification count agents Walsall wards can appoint	Wolverhampton	Entitled to oversee the verification for local/CAM wards.
If combined, submit invoice for count staff fees.	Wolverhampton	Walsall would be liable for a portion of cost of fee paid to count staff that verify the local ballot papers at the count
Brief RO and DRO's at Walsall on count plans	Wolverhampton	Wolverhampton to share count plans, verification and count paperwork and to invite Walsall RO team to see count layout on the day to provide assurance.

Communications

Task	Responsibility	Rationale
Share protocol with relevant committee	Both	To ensure there is political sign off and awareness of the protocol at both councils.
To ensure the key cross boundary information is shared in both candidates and agents briefings	Both	To ensure consistent messages are shared
Keep websites up to date with key dates and provide link to each other's election pages for queries	Both	So that electors understand they come under Wolverhampton constituency for parliamentary election.
Set up meeting with Comms Leads to discuss the strategy to be implemented across the constituency	Both	So that electors understand they come under Wolverhampton constituency for parliamentary election.

Publication of notices

Task	Responsibility	Rationale
Publish notice of election, situation of polling stations and statement of persons nominated	Wolverhampton	Lead RO, but Wolverhampton will send to Walsall so that they can also display them on their website and noticeboards.











Wolverhampton Walsall Cross-Boundary Protocol

Final Audit Report

2024-01-31

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