

	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Action before May 2021</b>	<b>Action after May 2021</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
	<b>Project Planning</b>			
<b>1</b>	Produce a comprehensive process manual that covers all aspects of the count and brings together existing individual written processes in a consistent form	2021 will be a COVID-secure election and the plan may differ from previous years. Ensure a detailed plan is available. Prepare full instructions for each staff role and ensure staff are aware of their role & responsibilities.	Review all processes and instructions after 2021 election. A comprehensive manual for future elections should be prepared following the 2021 election. This manual should take into account any changes implemented and also consider the recommendations of the count review report. There may be different plans for the different types of election and these should be included within the planning documents.	Plans to be prepared before end of January 2021. Will need to be COVID-secure so may be subject to change in line with any guidance in place at the time of the election.
<b>2</b>	Produce a detailed count layout plan			
<b>3</b>	Produce a detailed ballot box plan, which details to supervisory staff where boxes brought to them are placed, where boxes being verified are placed and, most importantly, where empty ballot boxes are placed			
<b>4</b>	Consider the merits of next day counting for local government elections		Discuss the issues/merits of next day counting with stakeholders. Seek examples/case studies from other authorities. Prepare final plan for 2023 District and Parish elections.	Final plan to be ready by October 2022 in readiness for 2023 elections.

<b>5</b>	Consider the number of deputies required at the count and their remit	Agree a staff structure for DROs, supervisors and count assistants and implement for 2021. Ensure that all staff are trained and understand their remit and responsibilities.	Review the structure used in 2021, make any changes necessary and update count plan for 2023.	plans to be prepared before end of January 2021.
<b>6</b>	Consider decreasing the number of count assistants by eight and instead using these staff to support supervisors			
<b>7</b>	Review the frequency and length of breaks during the count process	Include this as part of planning for 2021 election	Review and include agreed procedure in count plan for 2023.	plans to be prepared before end of January 2021.
<b>8</b>	Utilise an individual who is expert in spreadsheets to design a more sophisticated system encompassing all necessary record keeping for the verification and count	Ask staff within the Data team for assistance to prepare the necessary spreadsheets - seek examples from other electoral administrators	Consolidate learning from 2021 and ensure key staff are trained in use of spreadsheets	
<b>9</b>	Conduct further analysis on the positioning of vans for ballot box drop off and who attends them	Record times for receipt of all boxes at each collection point to inform analysis after the election.	Use data collected at 2021 election to inform planning for future elections.	plans to be prepared before end of January 2021.
<b>10</b>	Review the verification recount procedure to ensure consistency and efficiency	Prepare detailed instructions for supervisory staff and ensure everyone understands the decision making process.	Consolidate learning from 2021 and ensure procedures and plans are updated	Plans to be prepared before end of January 2021 and review to be completed by end of October 2021.
<b>11</b>	Ensure clear parameters are set out to make it clear what			

	variance count supervisors are permitted to accept and under what circumstances during the verification			
<b>12</b>	Consider the multi-member count method to be used ahead of the next local government elections, assessing the pros and cons for CDC of each of the options available	Consider use of Kangaroo boards for the parish elections being held in 2021. Prepare instructions and train staff in their use.	Review use of kangaroo boards and agree plans for future multi-member counts.	Plans to be prepared before end of January 2021.
<b>13</b>	Produce a clear and straightforward document showing the path from a count supervisor right through to the RO making the declaration, with clarity on who adjudicates on doubtful papers and within what parameters	Prepare for 2021 election and ensure all supervisory staff understand the process	Review after 2021 election and include in full count manual.	Plans to be prepared before end of January 2021.
<b>14</b>	Implement a documented recount procedure			
<b>15</b>	Further review who is responsible for moving election materials into storage, the method of	Consider appointment of a supervisor to manage the moving of election materials into storage. Introduce	Review 2021 process, update as necessary and include in full count plan.	Plans to be prepared before end of January 2021.

	storage and the way items are presented, when the documentation is moved, the sign off between the responsible individuals and the process for destruction	plans and instructions and ensure all staff are aware of their duties and responsibilities		
<b>16</b>	Introduce a detailed review process for all aspects of the count and with a range of staff, candidates and agents to consider their experiences		Use the review of 2021 to inform decisions when preparing plans for future counts. Include review processes in full count plan.	Review of 2021 election and count to be complete by end of October 2021.
<b>17</b>	Implement a performance review process for key staff the RO wishes to retain	Use 2021 to review performance and understand what skills are needed for each role.	Include a performance review in the overall review of 2021. A detailed process for performance review and implementation to be included in full count plan.	Plans to be prepared before end of January 2021.
	<b>Staffing and training</b>			
<b>18</b>	Conduct a detailed review of all count employees and implement a performance monitoring system	Use 2021 to review performance and understand what skills are needed for each role.	Include a performance review in the overall review of 2021. A detailed process for performance review and implementation to be included in full count plan.	Review of 2021 election and count to be complete by end of October 2021.

<b>19</b>	Run a straightforward practical test for all potential count staff prior to offering them a role		Seek examples for the electoral community. Consider and implement this for new staff after 2021.	Review of 2021 election and count to be complete by end of October 2021.
<b>20</b>	Review the wording on count staff appointments to ensure they understand the restrictions placed on them regarding assisting candidates or political parties	Seek examples from the electoral community. Seek advice from HR on wording. Review and implement for all appointment letters in 2021.		Appointment letters to be issued by end of January 2021.
<b>21</b>	Identify, and provide written instructions prior to mandatory training for, all staff responsible for multi member counts	See item 12 above	See item 12 above	see item 12 above
<b>22</b>	Ensure count assistants arrive by 21:30 and are formally briefed by the RO or DRO	Include time of arrival in appointment letters. Prepare script for formal briefing on arrival.	Review and include agreed procedure in count plan for 2023.	Appointment letters to be issued by end of January 2021. Scripts to be prepared as part of count plan.
<b>23</b>	Provide training for all count supervisors	Prepare detailed instructions for count supervisors and conduct detailed planning.	Review and include agreed procedure in count plan for 2023.	Training for supervisors to take place during April 2021.

<b>24</b>	Produce job descriptions for all count roles with a clear chart showing reporting lines and how all count staff sit within the overall structure	Prepare job descriptions and charts to be sent out with appointments for 2021.	Review and include agreed procedure in count plan for 2023.	Appointment letters to be issued by end of January 2021.
<b>25</b>	Distribute experienced count assistants throughout teams allowing them to support and improve less experienced counters	Review when making 2021 appointments	Review and include agreed procedure in count plan for 2023.	Plans to be prepared before end of January 2021.
<b>26</b>	Consider placing the best count supervisors between other supervisors with less experience or recognised development needs allowing them to act as mentors			
<b>27</b>	Provide further training to POs on the completion of ballot paper accounts	Include ballot paper account training as part of training and also PO briefing. Ask polling station inspectors to check that POs understand how to complete the accounts.	Use 2021 verification records to check PO performance and instigate performance management as needed.	Update training and briefing notes for training taking place in April 2021.
<b>28</b>	Introduce a process for assessing the standard of count assistants, as well as	Use job descriptions and person specifications to understand what is required	Review performance management information from supervisory staff and	Appointment letters to be issued by end of January 2021.

	other count staff, and an improvement plan for those identified as below the required standard	of each role. Include a performance management system as part of training for supervisory staff.	implement an improvement plan as needed.	
29	Train count assistants about what should and should not be classed as a doubtful ballot paper	Review instructions and training for count staff.	Consider conducting separate training for count staff before the day.	Appointment letters to be issued by end of January 2021.
30	Consider count supervisors contacting their counting assistants prior to the count to confirm attendance and give any necessary instruction	Consider this carefully and possibly introduce for 2021 but if not, review and introduce in future elections		Include as part of 2021 plans if possible.
	<b>Process</b>			
31	Consider verifying then immediately counting eight of the wards that are in and around Cirencester before any other wards are verified	Prepare a detailed schedule for 2021 count - include details of where each count will take place e.g. table 1 counting division A.	Review after 2021 and include in full count plan for 2023.	Plans to be prepared before end of January 2021.
32	Provide clear signage displaying which ballot box or electoral area is being verified or counted at a count table	Review and order signs as required for county divisions.	Review and order signs as required.	

33	Create a system of clear record keeping for the reception team at Cirencester, allowing identification of POs who take longer than expected to leave their stations enabling remedial action to be taken	Ensure timing of ballot box receipt is included at each of the ballot box collection points. Make contact with any POs taking longer than expected after the election to go through the close of poll instructions and review performance.	Use 2021 verification records to check PO performance and instigate performance management as needed	Plans to be prepared before end of January 2021.
34	Consider allocating ballot boxes to ensure all count teams can start the verification in a timely fashion	Prepare a detailed schedule for 2021 count - include details of where each count will take place e.g. table 1 counting division A.	Review after 2021 and include in full count plan for 2023.	
35	Record ballot paper account discrepancies to identify training needs and discuss them as necessary with the POs	Use updated spreadsheets to record discrepancies with ballot paper accounts. Use the evidence collected to discuss with POs as necessary.	Review and update instructions as required.	Spreadsheets to be ready to be included in supervisor training in March/April.
36	Remind POs in double stations of the importance of keeping ballot boxes from different stations as far apart as possible and review the layout of these stations	Include in PO training and briefing. Ask polling station inspectors to check on double stations		Update training notes for POs and inspectors.



37	Review instructions given to the postal vote team to ensure they understand any priorities	Postal vote supervisors to be included in count planning and training. Also include in postal vote team training.	Review postal vote process and prepare detailed plans for future elections.	Update postal vote instructions in time for training in March/April.
38	Consider requiring DROs to pre-sort doubtful ballot papers to assist the RO making determinations	Supervisors/DROs to sort doubtful papers into categories as they work through the count. Ensure this is included in instructions and that staff are given training.	Review and update instructions as required.	Plans to be prepared before end of January 2021.
39	Record unused votes for multi member counts	See item 12 above	See item 12 above	See item 12 above
40	Use labelled archive boxes for storing used and unused ballot papers and seal these at the count	See item 15 above	see item 15 above	see item 15 above
	<b>Candidates and agents</b>			
41	Ensure the structure and process for the count is covered in detail at a briefing for candidates and agents	Review timing and agenda for candidate/agent briefings.	Review communication with candidates and agents after May and make necessary changes to plans for future elections	Plans for candidates/agents briefings to be in place for March
42	Provide candidates and agents with a written count plan before the count begins,	Prepare and include in candidate/agent briefing.		

	showing where each polling station will be verified, and each electoral area counted			
<b>43</b>	Ensure clear announcements are made about the adjudication of doubtful ballot papers and the consultation on provisional results	Prepare scripts for RO/DRO throughout the count process.	Review and include agreed procedure in count plan for 2023.	Plans to be prepared before end of January 2021.
<b>44</b>	Proactively provide verification statements to candidates and agents, or provide a clear contact who can provide them on request	Include details in full count plan.		