

Counting of votes at the UK Parliamentary election: statement by (Acting) Returning Officer

Constituency name:	HARTLEPOOL	Date of election:	6 MAY 2021
(Acting) Returning Officer's name:	DENISE McGUCKIN		
Required information			
Time counting of votes began: (hh/mm)	02:55AM		
Describe the steps you took to start counting the votes before 2.00am:	<p>Verificaiton procedures were put in place to take account of the four elections taking place on the day:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parliamentary By-Election • Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) • Combined Authority Mayoral Election (CAM) • All Out Local Elections <p>allowing for equitable representation for all Candidates.</p> <p>The largest venue in the town was used which has been used for all elections over recent years and provided no georgraphic barrier affecting the transportation of ballot boxes to the count venue. Queues had formed during the day and these were resolved through the deployment of additoinal management staff to assist – there were no queues reported at 10pm.</p> <p>We combined the Ballot Box for the PCC & CAM which meant there were 171 No. Ballot Boxes and 120 Postal Vote Boxes/Packets. There was an increased postal vote return at both polling stations and at the final Royal Mail sweep – robust management arrangements were in place to deal with this level of return.</p>		
Explanation of why the counting of the votes did not start by 2.00am:	<p>Due to Covid restrictions, level of turnout at polling station and postal vote returns and the sheer volume of ballot papers four elections generated, it was not possible to commence the count any earlier than the time it started. We consider that under the circumstances,</p>		

	commencing the count at 2.55am an achievement in itself and could not have been done any earlier.
Date of this statement:	13 MAY 2021