

## **PRESS RELEASE**

Date : 16 August 2007

### **Legion provide top level security for Ealing by-election**



*Legion security officers in full dress uniform outside Ealing town hall*

When the Ealing by-election was announced, the Council's security contractor Legion Group had just over a week to prepare a 17 strong team to cover the event. Gordon Brown had been Prime Minister for only a few weeks and was expected to put in an appearance at the Labour Party's first real test under his stewardship, so stringent security was essential. In the event it was his deputy, Harriet Harman, who attended as his representative, and the by-election naturally attracted significant interest from the media, including national television.

Council officials were delighted with the way in which Legion handled the security arrangements for the high-profile event at such short notice.

"Any election requires a hard working and dedicated team to ensure it runs smoothly," commented Ealing's Chief Executive Darra Singh after the event. "Legion did a magnificent job of ensuring that security in the Town Hall was kept as tight as possible and I was extremely impressed by the professionalism of their staff."

A strategic security plan for the event was drawn up following a series of meetings with Dave Allen, Facilities Manager for Ealing Council, and Legion's management team headed by Regional Manager Mark Wiggins.

The security project, termed "Project Vote", was led by Legion's Contract Support Manager Mark Ryan. Drawing on his considerable experience of handling mass public events, Mark produced a briefing pack so that all staff understood their roles and how the positional deployment would work.

Legion's security team consisted of highly experienced officers from the London region as well officers drafted in from the company's Walsall and Cambridge offices, several of whom had taken part in previous special events.

Security officers were positioned at two of the polling stations throughout the day, but the main activity centred on the counting of votes during the evening and early morning at Ealing Town Hall. Legion's brief was to ensure only legitimate personnel were allowed into the various areas of the building for the duration of the counting of the votes.

A team of security officers were positioned at the main entrance to the Town Hall and at various other strategic points throughout the building, as well as in the car park at the rear. Three of the security officers were kitted out in full dress uniform, which helped to enhance the authority of the security presence at key positions at the Town Hall main entrance and on the stairs leading to the main hall where the votes were being counted.

80 ballot boxes were recovered from the various polling stations around the borough as soon as they closed at 10 pm. Once the ballot boxes had been delivered the television crews started their almost continuous coverage from the Town Hall.

Legion management were in regular contact with the local police presence and the Council's Facilities Manager throughout the evening to ensure any changes to arrangements could be accommodated, and the whole event passed without incident.

- ends -