

## REVIEW OF POLLING PLACES & POLLING DISTRICTS

### INFORMATION SHEET 2019

#### **Background**

- Since the last Review in 2013, Richmond's electorate has increased from 135,829 to 141,887 (up 4.46%).

The number of residential properties has grown to 85,865 (up 2.7%).

- Although based on Parliamentary polling districts and places, these constituency arrangements are replicated for local government elections.
- This review does not cover constituency or ward boundaries.
- The final decision on the situation of polling stations and distribution of electorate rests with the Returning Officer.
- A polling district is a geographical sub-division of an electoral ward area.
- A polling place is the geographical area in which a polling station is located. In Richmond, each polling district is designated as the polling place which allows greater flexibility in locating where a polling station can be.
- A polling station is the actual area where voting takes place, located within the polling place designated for the particular polling district. The Returning Officer for each election must provide a sufficient number of stations and apportion the electors to these as he or she thinks the most convenient.

#### **Rules of the Electoral Administration Act 2006**

(a) the authority must seek to ensure that all electors in its area have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances

(b) the authority must seek to ensure that so far as is reasonable and practicable every polling place is accessible to electors who are disabled and have regard to the accessibility of potential polling stations in any place it is considering designating as a polling place.

(c) the polling place for a polling district must be an area in that district unless special circumstances make it desirable to designate any area outside it.

The Council must publish any correspondence submitted in respect of this review.

#### **Access**

DDA regulations require all public use buildings to have access facilities for disabled electors including wheelchair users. If adequate facilities are not provided, Electoral Services attempt temporary provision, usually by means of a portable ramp (although these ramps can sometimes cause a hazard so are not always a practical solution). A polling station should be within reasonable walking distance for most electors.

### **Availability**

We can only use those buildings available for hire to us in the locality.

Schedule 2 of the Local Election (Principal Areas) rules 2006, states:

Use of schools and public rooms

20. - (1) The returning officer may use, free of charge, for the purpose of taking the poll or counting the votes—

(a) a room in a school maintained or assisted by a local education authority or a school in respect of which grants are made out of moneys provided by Parliament to the person or body of persons responsible for the management of the school;

(b) a room the expense of maintaining which is payable out of any rate.

Therefore, Regulations require public buildings such as schools and libraries to be available to the Returning Officer without hire charge, but other buildings have no such obligation.

### **Suitability**

When selecting a polling station, natural boundaries, railway lines, busy main roads etc. need to be considered and the following criteria need to be taken into consideration.

- Geographically convenient for the majority of the electorate.
- Appropriate for exclusive democratic use.
- Health and safety arrangements, including enough useable space.
- Access (including parking)
- Welfare facilities for staff
- Cost

### **Overall Number of Polling Stations**

Where the number of registered electors within polling districts requires, the polling venue is split to provide two or more polling stations within them.

### **Timetable for the Review**

Date	Detail
16 <sup>th</sup> August 2019	Publication of Notice of Review and start of public consultation period.
27 <sup>th</sup> September 2019	Publication of the (Acting) Returning Officer's comments and proposals.
14 <sup>th</sup> October 2019	Public consultation period closes.
26 <sup>th</sup> November 2019	Final proposals including all received representations considered at Richmond Full Council meeting