



Review of Polling Districts & Polling Places 2021

Introduction & background

Richmond upon Thames Borough Council has undertaken a review of its polling district and polling stations.

Under the provisions within the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013, the previous statutory review of all the polling districts and polling places in Richmond was undertaken in 2019.

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) has since reviewed all of the ward boundaries in Richmond.

The Richmond (Electoral Changes) Order 2020, to implement recommendations made by the LGBCE for new electoral arrangements in Richmond, was made on 05th November 2020.

New ward arrangements for Richmond have now successfully completed a 40-day period of Parliamentary scrutiny and will come into force at the local elections on 5 May 2022. The final recommendations can be found on the LGBCE site <https://www.lgbce.org.uk/all-reviews/greater-london/greater-london/richmond-upon-thames>

The number of wards will remain at 18, and the number of elected Councillors will remain at 54. Each ward will be represented by three members.

As a result of this a further review of the polling districts is required before the changes are implemented in time for the full local council elections to be held on Thursday 5 May 2022.

A Notice of Review of Polling Districts and Places was published on 5th July 2021 seeking representations and views from residents, political parties, local councillors and persons or groups possessing expertise in relation to access to possible polling places.

Further representations, comments and feedback is now sought on any aspect of the proposed polling districts or polling places set out in this report.

The aim of the review is to ensure that:

- All electors have as reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances; and that
- So far as is reasonable and practicable that the polling places are accessible to all electors having regard to the accessibility needs of disabled persons

- To consider the current polling districts forming new polling districts or a major part thereof, where this can be achieved to ensure continuity where possible
- To consider natural boundaries for example railway lines, major roads and rivers.

Roles and responsibilities and definition of terms

The Council

The statutory responsibility for reviewing UK Parliamentary polling districts and places rests with each relevant local authority in Great Britain for so much of any constituency as is situated in its area.

Depending on the structure of the local authority, it may not be the full council which makes the decisions on any changes to polling districts or polling places. Some local authorities have delegated that function to a committee or sub-committee. This will be set out in the council's constitution. For Richmond delegated authority sits with the Council.

The Electoral Registration Officer (ERO)

Where a local authority makes any alterations to the polling districts within its area, the ERO must amend the register of electors accordingly – either on a notice of alteration or by publishing a revised register. The changes to the register take effect on the date that the ERO publishes a separate notice stating that the alterations have been made, which should be done to coincide with the publication of a notice of alteration/publication of a revised register. Richmond intends to republish the register of electors based on the new polling scheme on 4 January 2022. The last such register based on the existing wards would therefore be published on 1 December 2021.

The (Acting) Returning Officer

The election rules require the (Acting) Returning Officer to decide how many polling stations are required for each polling place and they must allocate electors to the polling stations in such manner as they think most convenient.

New wards effective May 2022

Below is a table of all the new wards. This also shows how many Councillors will be elected to represent each ward.

NAME OF NEW ELECTORAL WARD	PD Prefix	No of Councillors
Barnes	BN	3
East Sheen	ES	3
Fulwell & Hampton Hill	FH	3
Ham, Petersham & Richmond Riverside	HP	3
Hampton	HA	3
Hampton North	HN	3
Hampton Wick & South Teddington	HW	3
Heathfield Ward	HE	3
Kew	KW	3
Mortlake & Barnes Common	MB	3
North Richmond	NR	3
South Richmond	SR	3
South Twickenham	ST	3
St. Margarets & North Twickenham	SM	3
Teddington	TE	3
Twickenham Riverside	TR	3
West Twickenham	WT	3
Whitton	WH	3

PROPOSED CHANGES

Heathfield (HE) –To replace the caravan at Simpson Road with a new polling station at Hounslow Heath Community Centre, Edgar Road. The only other changes are to the compulsory ward boundary change and to realign the polling district boundaries as in Appendix 1

Whitton (WH) - No changes to be made to the current polling station locations. The only change is the realignment of the polling district boundaries as in Appendix 1 and the compulsory ward boundary change. It is worth noting that the Boundary Commission’s initial proposals for the new parliamentary boundaries suggest that the Whitton Ward may be moved from the Twickenham Constituency to the Brentford and Isleworth Constituency, but this would be for parliamentary elections only.

West Twickenham (WT) - No changes to be made to the current polling station locations. The only change is the compulsory ward boundary change and to realign the polling district boundaries as in Appendix 1

St Margarets and North Twickenham Ward (SM) – No changes to be made to the current polling station locations. The only change is the compulsory ward boundary change and to realign the polling district boundaries as in Appendix 1

South Twickenham Ward (ST) - No changes to be made to the current polling station locations. The only change is the compulsory ward boundary change and to realign the polling district boundaries as in Appendix 1

Twickenham Riverside (TR) - No changes to be made to the current polling station locations. The only change is the compulsory ward boundary change and to realign the polling district boundaries as in Appendix 1

Hampton (HA) – No changes to be made to the current polling station locations. The only change is the compulsory ward boundary change and to realign the polling district boundaries as in Appendix 1

Fullwell and Hampton Hill (FH) – No changes to be made to the current polling station locations. The only change is the compulsory ward boundary change and to realign the polling district boundaries as in Appendix 1

Hampton Wick & South Teddington (HW) - (previously Hampton Wick) – No changes to be made to the current polling station locations.

Teddington (TE) - Ellera Hall was approached for the GLA elections in 2021 due to the unavailability of St John Ambulance Hall. St John Ambulance Hall continues to be unavailable and following further discussions with Ellera Hall with the support of Councillors, it has been agreed that the hall can be used for future elections. The hall is accessible and is large enough to accommodate a double polling station. It is recommended that the Ellera Hall remains the preferred location for a polling station in the TEB polling district.

Hampton North (HN) – No changes to be made to the current polling station locations. The only change is the compulsory ward boundary change and to realign the polling district boundaries as in Appendix 1

North Richmond (NR) –Staff are increasingly reluctant to work in mobile units due to being in a confined area and lack of facilities including running water and adequate ventilation. Mobile units are very costly and are only used where there is no viable alternative. Therefore, the proposal is to remove the caravan from the old polling district LB and combine this polling district into polling district NRB - Our Lady Queen of Peace and to realign the polling district boundaries as in Appendix 1. There is also a small change to the ward boundary.

South Richmond – (SR) Staff are increasingly reluctant to work in mobile units due to being in a confined area and lack of facilities including running water and adequate ventilation. Mobile units are very costly and are only used where there is no viable alternative. Furthermore, the land at Meadows Hall is currently being developed and therefore, the caravan cannot be situated in the grounds of Meadows Hall. It is proposed that to remove the caravan from the old polling district MA and move the electorate to the new polling station at St Mathias Church (SRA) and to realign the polling district boundaries as in Appendix 1. There is also a small change to the ward boundary.

Ham, Petersham & Richmond Riverside Ward (HP) - Staff are increasingly reluctant to work in mobile units due to being in a confined area and lack of facilities including running water and adequate ventilation. Mobile units are very costly and are only used where there is no viable alternative. Therefore, the proposal is to reduce the number of polling districts from 5 to 4 in order to remove the use of one caravan from the old polling district ND (caravan at Latchmere Lane/Cowper Road junction) and combine this with the polling district HPC at Ham Christian Centre. It is proposed that the caravan placed at the Russell School Nursery (HPA) and the caravan near the Star and Garter Home (HPD) remain as there is no alternative suitable building and to realign the polling district boundaries as in Appendix 1

East Sheen (ES) – No changes to be made to the current polling station locations. The only change is the compulsory ward boundary change and to realign the polling district boundaries as in Appendix 1

Mortlake & Barnes Common (MB) – Staff are increasingly reluctant to work in mobile units due to being in a confined area and lack of facilities including running water and adequate ventilation. Mobile units are very costly and are only used where there is no viable alternative. Therefore, the proposal is to remove the use of the caravan adjacent to Warwick Drive (PB) and combine this polling district into MBA, The Pavillion, Vine Road, Barnes. Barnes Green Social Centre is now within the Barnes ward and therefore cannot be used in the Mortlake and Barnes ward. A new polling station has been recommended; St Michaels and All Angels Church to replace Barnes Green Social Centre and therefore, the polling district boundaries have been realigned as in Appendix 1. There is also a small change to the ward boundary.

Kew (KW) – No changes to be made to the current polling station locations. The only change is the compulsory ward boundary change and to realign the polling district boundaries as in Appendix 1

Barnes (BN) – No changes to be made to the current polling station locations. The only change is the compulsory ward boundary change and to realign the polling district boundaries as in Appendix 1

COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

The costs of the polling districts and polling places review will be met from within existing budgets. The costs of actual polling are met within the Council's budget for borough elections. However, the polling costs for the GLA and parliamentary elections are met from the Cabinet Office budget.

CONSULTATION

A Notice of holding a review of Polling Districts and Polling Places was published on 12th July 2021 seeking views on the existing polling scheme and any suggested changes thereto.

As per the recommendations in the Electoral Commission guidance this review notice was published on the council website, sent to all elected members, local political parties and known disability groups.

No responses or comments have been received from members of the public or political parties. This is normal and no specific or further public engagement is expected or required.

The review invited formal and informal representations.

Informal representations have been received by Councillors regarding the Fullwell and Hampton Hill ward– see Appendix 1 for full and further details.

It is proposed that the whole Polling Districts are designated as Polling Places allowing the Returning Officer to allocate polling stations as they become available or as land to place a portacabin for voting purposes can be identified and agreed. This is permitted in such circumstance under Section 18B (5) of the Representation of the People Act 1983.

EQUALITY IMPACT NEEDS ANALYSIS

Electoral Services considered a review of all possible polling places and used a suitability and access checklist. One checklist has been completed for each existing poll place and all proposed new polling places.

All polling staff receive equalities training as part of the induction for working on the election.

Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

The Electoral Registration & Administration Act 2013 requires all authorities to keep polling districts and polling places in its area under review.

Representations have been sought from political groups and the report considers informal conversations held with members and party agents.

Appendices: Appendix 1 – Summary of the review – (Acting) Returning Officers Report

Background papers: None.

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