



London Borough of Richmond upon Thames  
Polling Districts and Polling Places Review 2021

Appendix 2: Review Comments and Responses

Names removed

## **FULWELL AND HAMPTON HILL (FH)**

### **COMMENT 1**

Dear Colleague,

Hope you are well.

With regard to this review.

I personally think the polling districts for the Fulwell & Hampton Hill ward and the present polling station for Hampton Hill are fine.

However using St Francis De Sales for the rest of the ward is a very long walk for people who live in Stanley Road, Church Road and other areas of Teddington (which many people call Fulwell) particularly people with mobility issues.

Have had much feedback on this from local residents.

Can I suggest St Michaels Church or the Methodist Church in Stanley Road.

The Council have decided not to close schools for polling day which I endorse.

Could Stanley School have one of its buildings used as a polling station without closing the school, it has a big campus?

I have read the guidance notes on how Developments could make a difference. The Strathmore Development which has been approved, might make a difference as it is close to Stanley School.

I really do feel the current polling station for this part of the ward should be changed.

Would be interested to hear Colleagues views.

### **COMMENT 2**

I very much agree with moving the polling station closer to the main population centre of the North Teddington polling district. As well as St Michael's, there are some council owned options. But as a school governor at Stanley I should declare an interest. As a school with a lot of spare capacity and several entrance along a long frontage we are interested in the polling station gig. Once this social distancing business is over I think it should be possible for Stanley to host a polling station without disturbing the school. Alternatively it could be in the chapel in the cemetery on Shacklegate Lane.

I would make the point that the two polling districts are not the same size, and moving Laurel rd, Featherbed Mews and Bayleaf close into the Hampton Hill polling district would rebalance things slightly. This would take the polling district boundary down the centre of Hampton rd as far as the Laurel/Hampton rd boundary. For people in Laurel rd the Hampton Hill polling station would be a walk across Bushy Park, whether it stays in the Greenwood centre or moves to either the library or Hampton Hill URC.

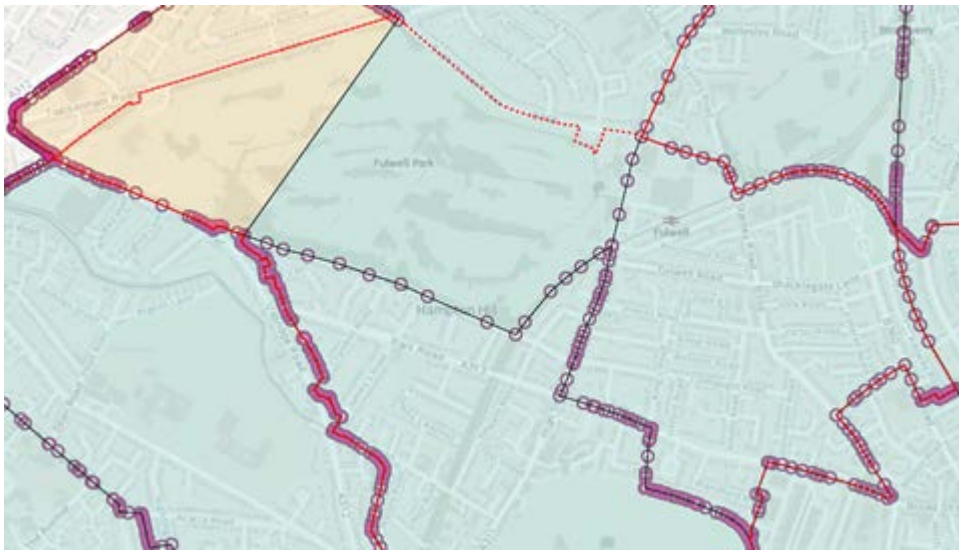
Rebalancing the polling districts would further increase the case for moving the polling station for North Teddington back towards the main centre of population.

## **Response**

Thank you for your feedback.

I would like to provide an initial response concerning your suggestions with regards to the situation of the polling stations within the Fulwell and Hampton Hill ward.

As you can see from the map below, we are required to redraw the ward boundary for the Fulwell and Hampton Hill ward following the ward boundary review (the red dotted line marks the new ward boundary).



I will be able to provide a better picture of the current ward totals and polling district totals once this exercise is complete.

However, the suggested polling stations have been visited, namely St Michaels Church, the Methodist Church and Stanley School. The room offered by Stanley School was not suitable to use as a polling station. Furthermore, Stanley School was reluctant to offer a room within the school as this would mean closing the school (which is a decision the school has to make and not the Returning Officer). I also visited the Methodist Church which would be suitable but the Church representatives came back to me advising that they did not want us to use the Church as a polling station. This leaves us with St Michaels Church. This is a perfect venue to use as a polling station but this will need to be mapped to establish its suitability for electors within the revised designated polling districts.

Whilst St Francis De Sales is relatively on the edge of the polling district, the hall has all the requirements needed for use as a polling station with plenty of parking for electors, is suitable for electors with disabilities and on a bus route. I will review the location and depending on the electorate totals I may need to redraw polling district boundaries to accommodate the new changes.

Finally, I would be very interested to hear of any council owned buildings that would be potentially suitable for use.

## **HAMPTON NORTH (HN)**

### **COMMENT 1**

Broad Lane on the Hampton ward side being added to Hampton North is one thing but not the side roads off it too.

Also on the Uxbridge Road side roads off it and the Flats such as Fairlight are not acceptable. I am a disabled Councillor with three worn vertebrae and epilepsy and there are enough flats already in Hampton North. For more able bodied Councillors to palm these off onto a disabled Councillor who has no support is unacceptable. It would increase the risk to me having to visit these alone and canvas these alone. I am not currently part of the LD council group and have been wrongly excluded from it most of this year. In 2017 and 2018 I had to canvas for the duration of the long election campaign alone unsupported and without out slips which meant revisiting if time permitted and twice the risk should I have a seizure and fall in a stairwell alone.

As someone who has experienced this kind of incident during a seizure, I strongly advise that this is reconsidered and more able bodied Councillors retain Fairlight and flats on the Hampton Hill side of the Uxbridge Road and the side roads which have been made more hazardous as I experienced yesterday returning from the Middlesex Yeomanry Concert in Hampton Hill due to the Burton's Road Experimental Traffic Trial displacing surplus traffic in an already busy area.

Which disability charities could I send it to? Local or National or both? I am on the British Epilepsy Association (Epilepsy Action) Council of Management and am still the current Chair of the Lib Dem Disability Association. I have good connections with Ruils, Mencap including Richmond Mencap, Mind, INS, Richmond Aid and others.

Kind regards,

### **RESPONSE 1**

Good afternoon

I would like to discuss this further with you as the polling districts have not changed considerably, however, the ward boundaries have now changed which unfortunately cannot be amended.

The only changes I have made are to the area highlighted below.



The ward boundaries have changed as part of the Local Government Boundary Commission For England (LGBCE) review as per the highlighted area below and as already mentioned, the new ward boundary cannot be changed until the next review where representations can be made to the LGBCE. Information relating to the recent review can be found [here](#)



All three Councillors represent the Hampton North ward and how the two districts are represented is a matter for the Councillors representing the ward electorate to manage.

Please can you assist by contacting local disability charities.

Happy to discuss further.

**COMMENT 2** (e-mail to disability groups from Councillor)

All Richmond upon Thames Councillors have been sent the boundary changes maps for all wards with revised or maintained polling districts within these shown on maps. We have been asked by XX (copied in) to reach out to disability groups in borough for comment on the accessibility of these.

Please share with your members to seek feedback and reply to XX directly copying me in if you have any concerns or members will require any reasonable adjustments to make voting next May more accessible.

I would love to be sure that our disabled residents are given an equal opportunity to have their say on representation by whichever means they prefer whether that's by postal vote which gives more flexibility and time or at the polling station on the day.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

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Many thanks for your email and opportunity to provide feedback.

I will be meeting with our advocacy group, The Working Together Group, on Tuesday 2nd November. Can I provide you feedback for then?

**COMMENTS 3**

Most seems to be centred on COVID-19 safety which hopefully won't be as big a risk by next May.

I am considering access in a way that multiple disabled people face not only those who need ramps or transport.

What is done for the visually impaired so they can vote when they can't see their ballots? Many rely on screen readers but without electronic voting that will be

difficult. Is a braille option made available? If so, is that by postal vote ahead of the day or is a Braille option available on the day?

### **RESPONSE 3**

We assess all our venues at each election ensure that all our venues are DDA compliant and where there is an access issue such as steps, we provide ramps.

I enclose the current assessments and also the Covid Risk assessments used for the May elections for you to peruse. Our in house training also provides for our Presiding Officers to take the ballot box to electors where necessary.

We do not provide toilet facilities for electors. However, if an elector does need to use the bathroom and providing that it is not in the polling area, we advise our Presiding Officers to allow the use as long as there is no health and safety risk to either electors or staff.

All our venues will either have parking suspensions for disabled users to park as close to the polling station as possible on polling day or, if the venue provides, parking facilities are provided for electors with a disability.

Finally, all our Presiding Officers are issued with a handbook and should there be any concerns with regards to access issues they are noted and the venue is visited to assess its needs for future elections. I have reviewed the current handbook for both Hampton High School and All Saints Church and no concerns have been noted.

### **COMMENT 4**

Hi X, thanks for the swift response. Re Braille – very few people use or require braille these days so very much a dying art form. The tactile voting devices sound interesting – are they available at every venue? How do people know they are available for use, what parking is available, step free access etc before turning up?

### **RESPONSE 4**

- A) A device known as a tactile voting device (TVD) is provided for electors with a visual impairment and where needed the Presiding Officer is able to assist the elector to vote. Ballot papers are not produced in a braille format.
- B) The voting devices are available at all polling stations and although they are not promoted as an aid, our staff are trained in how to assist electors with all manners of disabilities and know how to use the devices should an elector require assistance. Parking is made available wherever possible and where there are restricted parking facilities, parking enforcement is relaxed unless vehicles are causing an obstruction. Where there is an issue with access, we will either provide a ramp or in exceptional circumstances, the ballot box can be taken to the elector. All polling staff are advised of this at their required training session.
- C) The voting devices are available at all polling stations and although they are not promoted as an aid, our staff are trained in how to assist electors with all manners of disabilities and know how to use the devices should an elector require assistance. Parking is made available wherever possible and where there are restricted parking facilities, parking enforcement is relaxed unless vehicles are causing an obstruction. Where there is an issue with access, we

will either provide a ramp or in exceptional circumstances, the ballot box can be taken to the elector. All polling staff are advised of this at their required training session.

#### **COMMENT 5**

I have looked briefly at this and note it refers principally to Covid=-safe provision – and to an extent greater than I experience in a Supermarket, Cinema or Theatre. The Election will be held in a Summer month. My principal concern with All Saints is Parking – many of the elderly and disabled need to arrive by car. The whole Car Park used to be available. Then came a Council decision to close the Car Park causing distress and anxiety to many voters who complained to me. The local LibDems broadly supported me on this. I was glad that last time Mr X as returning Officer, ensured that limited parking was available. That is absolutely essential – otherwise the whole system discriminates against the elderly and disabled. Inside I am anxious that at both polling stations there are no unnecessary obstacles to easy voting

#### **RESPONSE 5**

In answer to your concerns regarding parking at All Saints, I can confirm that the same parking arrangements will apply as they did for the GLA elections in May 2021. Limited parking will be made available for electors with disabilities and parking enforcement is relaxed around the polling station unless a vehicle is causing an obstruction. A walkway is provided around the car park for electors to enter the station in a safe manner.

#### **SOUTH RICHMOND (SRA)**

##### **COMMENT 1**

You probably already have this in hand, but the Meadows Hall site is due for development and whilst it may still be possible to site a portacabin there next year longer term another location will have to be found

##### **RESPONSE 1**

I am aware of the building works due to be undertaken at Meadows Hall and as such we are looking to secure an alternative polling place. We are also trying to minimise the use of caravans as polling stations going forward. Any suggestions would be very much appreciated.

##### **COMMENT 2**

Thanks X and we'll think but I know when we considered before the only option we came up with was Holy Trinity Hall and I don't think they were keen because of the impact on their bookings and regular classes. Times have changed so it could be worth another approach - Cllr X may be able to advise on this

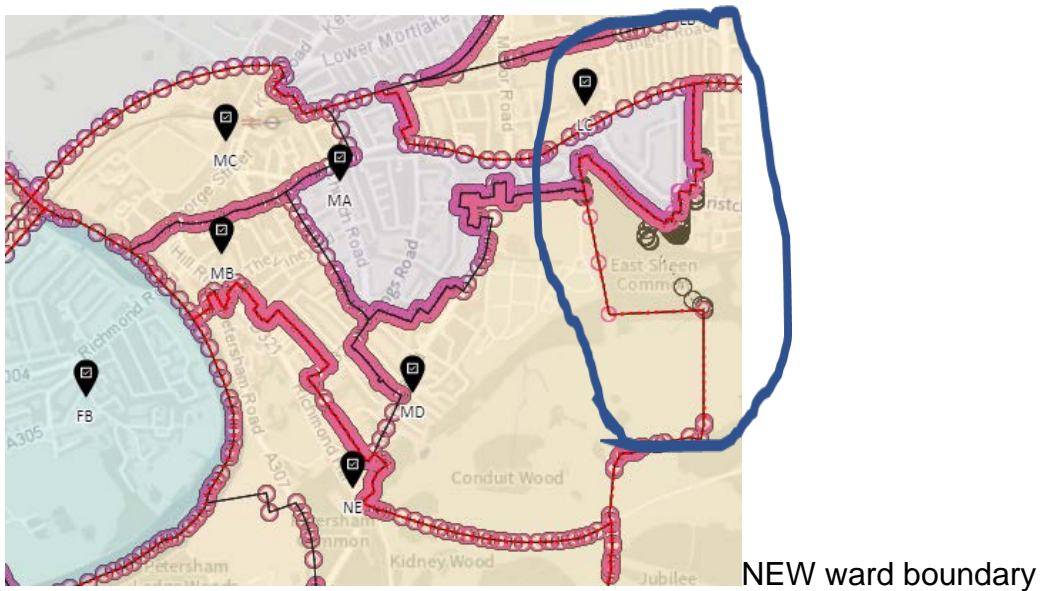
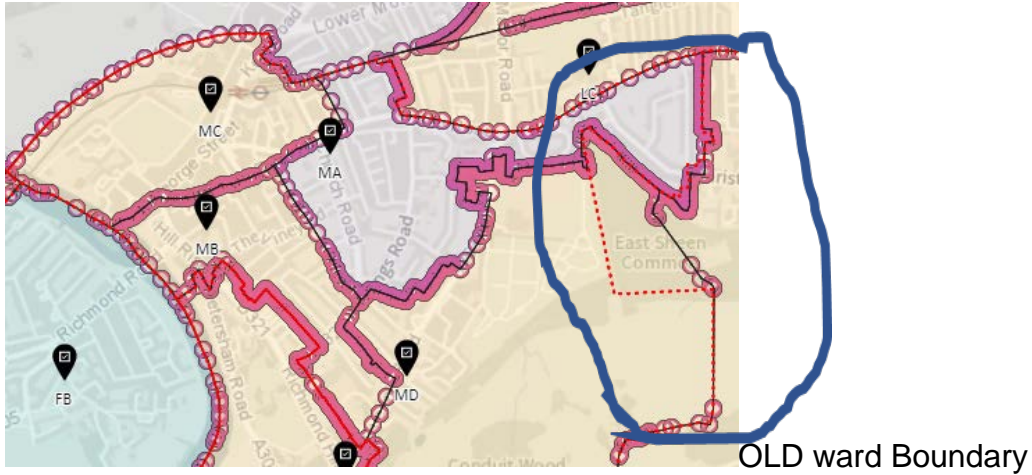


**RESPONSE 2**

Thank you for your feedback. I have looked into the location of Holy Trinity Hall and I believe it is located in the North Richmond ward. Therefore, it is unsuitable as a location for the South Richmond ward.

One option following the ward boundary review, would be to remove polling district MA altogether and combine the polling district with the other three MB, MC and MD.

I enclose a map of the new ward boundary and the old ward boundary for your reference;





## **NORTH RICHMOND**

### **COMMENT 1**

The consensus from North Richmond is that this is unacceptable. I understand that the cabin is not ideal for your staff but this area has our highest density of vulnerable people (elderly, disabled etc) and Our Lady Queen of Peace necessitates their being able to get across the level crossing at Manor Road. We are worried it will just mean that they won't bother to vote. I assume you have looked at other locations in the area?

X, please may I add to Cllr X comments that the distance from the Lower Richmond Road junction with Shalstone Road exceeds one mile and that there is no public transport linkage (bus or rail) between these points. It is unacceptable to remove this polling location,

### **RESPONSE 1**

I hope you are well and thank you for your feedback. Whilst I think my proposals would have worked, I understand your concerns and I agree that the use of a caravan is not ideal for staff or electors especially if we have to put in place Covid restrictions as we did for the May elections.

We received a number of complaints on election day from local residents stating that they were unhappy with the position of the caravan and the noise made from the generators at night. It is likely that we will receive a number of complaints as we do at every election, however, we are limited as to where we can safely position a caravan in this area. I have looked around the area in question and cannot find a suitable alternative and as the mandate for not using schools is in place, we are unable to utilise them even though regulations provide that we can use schools and community buildings free of charge.

Should you recommend that I reinstate the use of a caravan at Lambert Avenue, I will redraw the original polling district boundaries to accommodate three polling districts within the North Richmond Ward and resend them to you for review.

### **COMMENT 2**

I agree with Cllr X that we need to maintain a polling station in that area between the A316 and the railway line.

### **RESPONSE 2**

I will update my records to show the polling district changes adding in the caravan and send you the revised map and electorate figures. This will then be my proposal at the Council meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> November.

## **HAM, PETERSHAM & RICHMOND RIVERSIDE**

### **COMMENT 1**

I am very unhappy about the proposed removal of the mobile polling station on Latchmere Lane. As I live on this road myself, I know first-hand that expecting residents to go up to Lock Road will have a detrimental impact on the number of people voting in this polling district.

### **RESPONSE 1**

Thank you for your feedback.

I note your concerns regarding the removal of the mobile unit at Latchmere Lane/Cowper Road junction. When reviewing the polling district boundaries, the Council must have due regard to the Electoral Commission's (EC) guidance. One of the guidance recommendations is that polling stations are allocated approximately 2500 electors (this does not include postal voters).

The total number of polling station electors attending Ham Christian Centre under the new proposal is approximately 2112, this number being well within the EC guidance. This includes 318 electors who would have normally voted at the mobile unit, now using Ham Christian Centre.

When drafting the polling district proposals, each ward has been roughly divided into 2-3 polling districts. The Ham Petersham and Richmond Riverside ward has a proposal of 4 polling districts which is more than the average number of polling districts in the borough. Furthermore, under my proposals the only other polling station with less than 1000 voters is the Dene Estate Social Centre which will have 340 voters at a hiring cost of £240. The reason for siting this polling station is due to a major road (the A316) which runs through the Whitton ward. This problem does not apply to the location in question and most of the polling district is not populated.

On average in the borough, the furthest distance for electors travelling to polling stations is around 20 minutes by foot, which is the case for this ward under my proposals.

The average cost of supplying a mobile unit is in the region of £4500 and I have to be mindful of the overall costs of running an election and the need to ensure value for money.

For these reasons I feel my proposals are reasonable and I am not minded to amend them. The official consultation period has now ended; however, I will consider any further submissions from you and the other Ham Petersham and Richmond Riverside ward Councillors until Friday 12<sup>th</sup> November. I will be producing a final report on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> November which will go before Council on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021.

Please be assured that in the event of any changes to the existing arrangements, we will always engage extensively with voters as follows:

- Household Notification Letter (HNL) providing details of the new polling station location

- Communication press releases to neighbourhood forums
- Poll cards highlighting the changes
- Encouraging electors who cannot get to their polling station to apply for a postal vote/proxy vote
- Highlighting this change with Candidates and Agents

Should you have any further questions at this point, please contact me.

### **COMMENT 2**

Many thanks, I will engage with the Working Together Group and get feedback back to you next week.

### **RESPONSE 2**

The consultation feedback technically closed on 1<sup>st</sup> November, however, I should be grateful for any feedback as to how we can improve our service for elections such as providing an easy to read booklet for electors with disabilities; we can put this on our website and provide a copy to our elections team working in polling stations should electors need some specific assistance. All our venues are DDA compliant in so far as access is concerned with limitations regarding space in the caravans we use. Should you have anything further that can assist us in providing our service to electors, I would very much welcome your feedback.

### **COMMENT 3**

Many thanks for your comprehensive email, it's greatly appreciated.

Sorry to not provide feedback for 1st November. However, I've had a chance to sit with the WTG and gather feedback on their views for the polling barriers and elections:

- Our members who vote at Ham, Petersham and Richmond Riverside liked the change of polling place to the Caravan near Russell School, as they commented it was easy to get into and accessible.
- Easy Read, as you said, is a big area they discussed, such as having access to Easy Read manifestos, as well as Easy Read instructions on the day. They particularly commented on some information on the day to clarify what the vote would be for (referendum, local election, national election etc.)
- Having polling stations at local community venues such as libraries were very popular as members felt safe there and it was a familiar location.

Those were some ideas the Working Together Group came up with when I chatted, and if any other feedback arises I will send it your way.

Thanks for all your hard work and for taking the time to hear feedback from our members at Richmond Mencap.

If you need anything else, let me know and I will get back to you as soon as I can.

## **HEATHFIELD**

### **COMMENT 1**

Can I belated reply to the council's consultation on the relocation of a polling station in Heathfield ward.

#### **Returning Officer's recommendations in relation to the Ward**

To recommend that the caravan at Simpson Road is replaced with a new polling station at Hounslow Heath Community Centre, Edgar Road. The only other changes include the compulsory the ward boundary change and to realign the polling district boundaries

I can tell you that the Labour agrees with and endorses the polling station change.