

REVIEW OF POLLING PLACES & POLLING DISTRICTS INFORMATION SHEET 2011

Background

- The Electoral Administration Act 2006 requires each local authority to undertake a review every four years, the last having been in 2007.
- Since 2007, Richmond's electorate has risen from 132,850 to 137,631 (up 3.59%) peaking at 138,868 in June 2010; and the amount of monthly alterations rose from 8,310 to 16,256 last year.
The number of residential properties has grown to 82,611 (up 1.6%).
- 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 allot 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. 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 taken into account and the following criteria need to be considered.

- 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. Factors affecting this are the number of electors registered with a postal vote and the predicted turn out at particular types of election.

Richmond was relatively constant over the decade prior to the 2007 review, when two new polling stations were added. Over the past four years the level of new developments has slowed. However there are still some areas where new residential properties are beginning to become occupied and will do so over the next few years.

Timetable

Publication of Notice of Review – 1 July 2011

Consultation period 1 July – 12 August

Report Submitted to Council – 1 November 2011

Publication of Review Report – 4 November 2011

Report recommendations implemented on Register of Electors published 1

December 2011, in effect for subsequent elections (GLA elections 3 May 2012).