

Report title	REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES
Report author	Kath Richards, Head of Electoral Services
Department	Law and Governance
Exempt?	No

Purpose of report:

To resolve

Synopsis of report:

To advise Members of the final recommendations in Appendix A which resulted from the full review of the Parliamentary polling districts and polling places in the Borough which took place between 2 September and 2 October 2024.

Recommendation(s):

To approve the recommendations of the full review of the Parliamentary polling districts and polling places set out in Appendix 1.

1. Context and background of report

- 1.1 Members are advised that the Representation of the People Act 1983 requires local authorities to undertake regular reviews of polling districts and polling places in their area. Such polling districts and places are used for the conduct of Parliamentary and local elections.
- 1.2 Previously local authorities were required at least every four years to carry out a full review of the arrangements under which their area was divided into polling districts and polling places provided within those districts.
- 1.3 If there is a change to electoral boundaries as would arise as a result of an Electoral Review a local authority may conduct a review in order to accommodate any such changes if they will come into operation prior to the next formal review being undertaken.

2. Report and, where applicable, options considered and recommended

- 2.1 Under the Representation of the People Act 1983, the Council is required to divide its area into polling districts and to keep these districts under review. In doing so, the Council must give all electors such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances. Wards should therefore be divided into as many polling districts as are appropriate to give reasonable voting facilities. As far as possible, districts should have reasonable numbers of electors to facilitate the efficient running of polling stations. The establishment of polling districts is a matter for the Council to decide and the determination of premises to be used as polling stations is a matter for the Returning Officer for elections.
- 2.2 The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 introduced a change to the timing of compulsory reviews of UK Parliamentary polling districts and polling places. A review must be carried out in the 16 months beginning 1 October 2013 and then in the 16 months beginning 1 October every 5th year after that – i.e. 2018, 2023, 2028 etc. Therefore, the next compulsory review must now be started and completed between 1 October 2023 and 31 January 2025 (inclusive).
- 2.3 The Council last undertook a formal review during the latter part of 2019
- 2.4 Therefore, it was necessary to conduct a full review to comply with the compulsory review timetable which took place from 2 September 2024 and concluded by 1 December 2024 to coincide with the publication of the Register of Electors. However, it has been decided that because the Ottershaw By-Election is being held on 12 December that the publication be postponed until 2 February 2025.
- 2.5 The process for holding the review is as follows:
- (i) Public Notice of intention to hold a review;
 - (ii) Circulation of information on existing polling districts to interested parties, i.e., Councillors and representatives of political parties;
 - (iii) Consideration of comments received and publication of all correspondence plus Council Officer responses;
 - (iv) Report to Corporate Management Committee with final recommendations.
- 2.6 In addition, when reviewing its polling places, the Council is required to consider any representations from local residents in its area, including any issues regarding access to premises or facilities for persons with disabilities. Any elector can make their views known and the process for doing so will be publicised.
- 2.7 In encouraging views, it is of course the case that the availability of suitable polling places is a key determining factor in the makeup of polling districts. Therefore, in asking for comments, the Council will request that alternative proposals should include suggestions for polling station locations. In extreme circumstances where there is no local alternative available and there is nowhere to install a Mobile Unit, the polling station can be placed outside the polling district, but this is not recommended to avoid confusion for electors.
- 2.8 The criteria which will be used for the reviews are as follows:
- (i) As far as possible, to have a uniform number of polling districts in each ward, except where it is geographically sensible to have further splits;
 - (ii) All electors should be given such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable;

- (iii) All premises should be accessible or capable of being made accessible to disabled voters;
- (iv) The polling station should be in its own polling district, and electors should where possible not have to travel past another polling station to get to their own station.
- (v) In some areas, geographical boundaries mean that it is sensible to have polling districts which may be smaller in these clearly defined areas.
- (vi) Where current areas can continue as a major part of the new districts, and there are sensible reasons for continuing with existing arrangements, then this principle will be followed.
- (vii) Where possible to use alternative premises to schools.
- (viii) Account to be taken of geographical factors such as natural boundaries (e.g., major roads and railways), and demographic factors (population densities, housing developments etc.).

2. Policy framework implications

- 2.1 There are no specific policy framework implications associated with the subject matter of this report as it is an action required by legislation.

3. Resource implications/Value for Money

- 3.1 None.

4. Legal implications

- 4.1 Relevant legal issues are set out within the body of the report.
- 4.2 Following the conclusion of a review, certain persons have a right to make representations to the Electoral Commission (EC). If, on receipt of such representations, the EC find that a local authority's review did not:
- meet the reasonable requirements of the electors in the constituency, or a body of them, or
 - take sufficient account of the accessibility for disabled persons of a polling station/ polling stations within a designated polling place
- 4.3 The EC may then direct the authority to make any alterations to the polling places that the EC think necessary and, if the alterations are not made within two months, the EC may make the alterations.

5. Equality implications

- 5.1 The provision of polling stations and more particularly, access to them, may affect someone who has a protected characteristic. The Equalities Group will be involved in the consultation process to ensure that any issues that relate to the Council's Public Sector Equalities Duty are identified and where appropriate address as early as possible.

6. Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications

- 6.1 The electoral process in the United Kingdom involves individuals being able to attend in person at polling stations to cast their votes. Whilst the ability to cast votes via postal ballots is open to voters and this is clearly more environmentally friendly because it avoids the need for car journeys this is an option for voters to select rather than being a method which can be imposed. When selecting polling stations efforts

are made to select locations which are easily accessible to voters, and which minimise the travel time.

7. Risk Implications

- 7.1 The democratic process in the United Kingdom involves the conduct of elections at which voters can cast their votes. The locations at which votes can be cast need to be selected to ensure that they are appropriately located to allow access to voters. A failure to carry out this exercise would create a grave risk that the democratic process is not conducted properly and undermine public confidence in that process.

8. Other implications

- 8.1 Not applicable

9. Timetable for Implementation

- 9.1 The timetable which was followed for this exercise is as follows:

2 September 2024	Start the review by posting the review notice – Consultation period commences
As soon as possible after 2 September 2024	Publish the Acting Returning Officer's Submission
1 October 2024	Consultation period concludes
15 October 2024	Final recommendations
21 November 2024	Corporate Management Committee agree the recommendations
1 February 2025	Re-publish the register

10. Conclusions

- 10.1 There is a statutory requirement on local authorities to undertake periodic reviews of their polling districts and places. There exists a statutory timetable for undertaking such exercises.

11. Background papers

None

12. Appendices

- 12.1 Appendix A – Final Recommendations Polling District Review for the Borough of Runnymede 15 October 2024



Final Recommendations
Polling District and Polling Places Review
For the Borough of Runnymede
15 October 2024

Runnymede Borough Council
Civic Offices
Station Road
Addlestone
Surrey
KT15 2AH

RECOMMENDATIONS

Polling Places

The only recommendation is to create an additional polling station at the Woodham and New Haw Day Centre as the current electorate exceeds the threshold recommended by the Electoral Commission. No other changes are suggested as Polling Places are reviewed every year prior to the May elections. Below are listed all of the Polling Places in Runnymede Borough and the final recommendations.

Polling District	Polling Place	Polling Station Electors 2 May 2024	Recommendations	Constituency	Managing Authority
AN1	Surrey Muslim Centre, Albert Road, KT15 2PX	1217	Unchanged	Runnymede & Weybridge	Runnymede
AN2	Baptist Church Hall, Crouch Oak Lane, KT15 2AN	1345	Unchanged	Runnymede & Weybridge	Runnymede
AN2	Baptist Church Hall, Crouch Oak Lane, KT15 2AN	1226	Unchanged	Runnymede & Weybridge	Runnymede
AS1	Church of Jesus Christ Latter Day Saints, Weybridge Road, Addlestone, KT15 2QS	815	Unchanged	Runnymede & Weybridge	Runnymede
AS3	Addlestone Community Centre, Garfield Road, KT15 2NJ	1216	Unchanged	Runnymede & Weybridge	Runnymede
AS3	Addlestone Community Centre, Garfield Road, KT15 2NJ	1312	Unchanged	Runnymede & Weybridge	Runnymede
AS4	Sayes Court School, Sayes Court Farm Drive, KT15 1NB	800	Unchanged	Runnymede & Weybridge	Runnymede
CR1, CR3	Abbey Rangers FC, Addlestone Moor, Addlestone, KT15 2QH	1088	Unchanged	Runnymede & Weybridge	Runnymede
CR2	Chertsey Hall, Heriot Road, Chertsey, KT16 9DR	1626	Unchanged	Runnymede & Weybridge	Runnymede
CR4	Army Reserve Centre, Drill Hall Road, Chertsey, KT16 8EN	1241	Unchanged	Runnymede & Weybridge	Runnymede
CS1	Chertsey Museum, The Cedars, 33 Windsor Street, KT16 8AT	1630	Unchanged	Runnymede & Weybridge	Runnymede
CS2	Pycroft Grange Primary School, Pycroft Road, KT16 9EW	1369	Unchanged	Runnymede & Weybridge	Runnymede

CS3	Army Reserve Centre, Drill Hall Road, Chertsey, KT16 8EN	1115	Unchanged	Runnymede & Weybridge	Runnymede
EGE1	Jurgens Centre, Adj to the Catholic Church, 91 Harvest Road, TW20 0QR	1432	Unchanged	Windsor	RBWM
EGE2	Students Union Building, Royal Holloway University of London, Egham Hill, TW20 0EX	1160	Unchanged	Windsor	RBWM
EGW1	Forest Estate Community Hub, 57 Larchwood Drive, Englefield Green, TW20 0SL	1620	Unchanged	Windsor	RBWM
EGW1	Forest Estate Community Hub, 57 Larchwood Drive, Englefield Green, TW20 0SL	1510	Unchanged	Windsor	RBWM
EH1	Hythe Centre, Thorpe Road, Staines, TW18 3HD	1768	Unchanged	Runnymede & Weybridge	Runnymede
EH1	Hythe Centre, Thorpe Road, Staines, TW18 3HD	1616	Unchanged	Runnymede & Weybridge	Runnymede
EH2, EH3	Hythe Centre, Thorpe Road, Staines, TW18 3HD	826	Unchanged	Runnymede & Weybridge	Runnymede
ET1, ET5	Egham Youth and Community Centre, 185 High Street, TW20 9DY	1595	Unchanged	Runnymede & Weybridge	Runnymede
ET2	Egham Youth and Community Centre, 185 High Street, TW20 9DY	1493	Unchanged	Runnymede & Weybridge	Runnymede
ET3, ET4	Egham Youth and Community Centre, 185 High Street, TW20 9DY	877	Unchanged	Runnymede & Weybridge	Runnymede
LLC1	Lyne Village Hall, Lyne Lane, Lyne, KT16 0AN	1384	Unchanged	Runnymede & Weybridge	Runnymede
LLC2	Meadowcroft Community Infant School, Little Green Lane, KT16 9PT	1085	Unchanged	Runnymede & Weybridge	Runnymede
NH1	New Haw Community Centre, 65 Woodham Lane, New Haw, KT15 3ND	1339	Unchanged	Runnymede & Weybridge	Runnymede
NH1	New Haw Community Centre, 65 Woodham Lane, New Haw, KT15 3ND	1422	Unchanged	Runnymede & Weybridge	Runnymede
NH1	New Haw Community Centre, 65 Woodham Lane, New Haw, KT15 3ND	1265	Unchanged	Runnymede & Weybridge	Runnymede
OS1	Ottershaw Village Hall, Brox Road, KT16 0HG	1306	Unchanged	Runnymede & Weybridge	Runnymede
OS1	Ottershaw Village Hall, Brox Road, KT16 0HG	1233	Unchanged	Runnymede & Weybridge	Runnymede

OS2, OS3, OS4	Addlestone Youth Centre, Church Road, Addlestone, KT15 1SH	1574	Unchanged	Runnymede & Weybridge	Runnymede
TH1	Thorpe Village Hall, Coldharbour Lane, Thorpe, TW20 8TE	774	Unchanged	Runnymede & Weybridge	Runnymede
TH2	Mobile Unit - Truss`'s Island, Chertsey Lane, Staines	942	Unchanged	Runnymede & Weybridge	Runnymede
TH3	Mobile Unit - Ashleigh Avenue, (Off Warwick Avenue), Thorpe, TW20 8LB	1391	Unchanged	Runnymede & Weybridge	Runnymede
TH4	Penton Community & Social Centre, The Lane, Penton Park, KT16 8QP	529	Unchanged	Runnymede & Weybridge	Runnymede
VW1	Old Church Hall, Rear of Station Parade, GU25 4AB	1144	Unchanged	Windsor	RBWM
VW2, VW4	Old Church Hall, Rear of Station Parade, GU25 4AB	1133	Unchanged	Windsor	RBWM
VW3	Virginia Water Community Centre, Beechmont Avenue, Virginia Water, GU25 4EY	1105	Unchanged	Windsor	RBWM
WR1	Woodham & New Haw Day Centre, Amis Avenue, KT15 3ET	2,125	Create an additional polling station in the day centre	Runnymede & Weybridge	Runnymede
WR1	Woodham & New Haw Day Centre, Amis Avenue, KT15 3ET				
WR3	Holy Family Parish Centre, Spinney Oak, Ongar Hill, KT15 1BP	1881	Unchanged	Runnymede & Weybridge	Runnymede

Polling Districts Amendments

- Rename AS3 to AS2 and AS4 to AS3
- Move OS4 polling district into WR3 which is the nearest polling district - There is only one property on Ongar Hill in this polling district and it makes sense to add this to another one instead of being a standalone.
- WR3 Polling District - rename this to WR2

The final recommendations are reflected in the table below:

Polling District	Polling Place	Polling Station Electors 2 May 2024	Recommendations	Constituency	Managing Authority
AS3 AS2	Addlestone Community Centre, Garfield Road, KT15 2NJ	1216	Polling District Change	Runnymede & Weybridge	Runnymede
AS3 AS2	Addlestone Community Centre, Garfield Road, KT15 2NJ	1312	Polling District Change	Runnymede & Weybridge	Runnymede
AS4-AS3	Sayes Court School, Sayes Court Farm Drive, KT15 1NB	800	Polling District Change	Runnymede & Weybridge	Runnymede
OS2, OS3	Addlestone Youth Centre, Church Road, Addlestone, KT15 1SH	1574	Polling District Change	Runnymede & Weybridge	Runnymede
WR1	Woodham & New Haw Day Centre, Amis Avenue, KT15 3ET	1,125	Unchanged	Runnymede & Weybridge	Runnymede
WR1	Woodham & New Haw Day Centre, Amis Avenue, KT15 3ET	1000	New Polling Station	Runnymede & Weybridge	Runnymede
WR3 WR2	Holy Family Parish Centre, Spinney Oak, Ongar Hill, KT15 1BP	1881	Polling District Change	Runnymede & Weybridge	Runnymede

Representations received

Councillor Isabel Mullens

With regard to the Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places, I would like to recommend that Polling District ET5 be merged with ET4, since ET5 is so small, having only 19 dwellings in it.

Response

Officers acknowledge that it would make sense for them to vote in the same polling station for all elections and recommend that this suggestion is taken forward.

XX – Resident

Egham Youth Centre is not suitable as a polling station. There is insufficient parking available. Quite a stressful experience.>

Why it was changed from the Band Hall, Waspe Farm Car park is a complete mystery to me.

It has easy parking available, and the time taken to park and vote is reduced. Please reconsider the above.

Response

As a bit of background, the Band Hall was too small for the three polling stations that were agreed at the last review, plus officer had received complaints about the disabled access at the premises. The only thing it had in its favour was the parking. So it was agreed to look for an alternative venue. At the May and June elections the staff who manned the Youth Centre parked in the car park there, in future we will only allow our Presiding Officers to park in the car park and this will free up the other spaces for electors. It is recommended to remain at the Youth Centre as a polling station with staff parking at a minimum.

Governors from Pycroft School

We, the Governors of Pycroft Primary School, are writing to express our concerns and formally object to the continued use of our school as a polling station during elections. While we Understand the importance of providing accessible voting facilities to the local community, we strongly believe that the current arrangement is having a significant and detrimental impact on our students' education, which far outweighs the benefits of using our site as a polling venue. The closure of the school on election days disrupts the educational continuity and routine that our students depend on. With increasing pressure on academic performance, attendance, and safeguarding requirements, every day in school is vital to our

pupils' learning and development. The school closures caused by elections have led to a loss of teaching time that cannot be easily recovered, causing setbacks that affect our students' progress and overall well-being.

Furthermore, the impact of these closures extends beyond our students, significantly affecting parents and families in our school community. Many parents are unable to find or afford alternative childcare arrangements during school closures, often placing them in difficult positions where they have to take time off work. This can lead to financial strain, particularly for those in hourly or shift-based employment, where taking leave means lost income or even jeopardizing their job security. For families already managing tight budgets, these unexpected disruptions create additional stress and anxiety, compounding the negative impact of school closures.

Moreover, our observations and records show that voter turnout at our location has been relatively low in recent elections, raising questions about whether the use of our school as a polling station is justified in terms of public benefit. The low number of voters using the school site does not seem to balance against the educational disruption and inconvenience caused to our pupils, staff, and parents.

We urge the Council to explore alternative polling stations that do not involve educational settings, such as local community centres, village halls, or other public buildings that would better serve the purpose without impacting school operations. Many other local authorities have successfully implemented such arrangements and have demonstrated that it is possible to maintain both accessible voting and uninterrupted education. As a governing body we are open to discussions about how the site can be used successfully without the need for closure.

We kindly request the Council to reconsider the decision to use Pycroft Primary School as a polling station and to engage in discussions with us to find a more suitable venue/solution that accommodates the needs of both the community and our school.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to your response and to working together to find a resolution that prioritizes our students' education while supporting democratic participation in our community.

Response

Officers have worked hard to minimise the use of schools and in instances where there is no other alternative do, we use school premises. We completely understand about the disruption that this causes the school and sympathise with the Governors but, sadly as there is no alternative venue within the polling district, we will have to continue to use the school as a polling station as there are no alternatives.