

POLLING DISTRICT & POLLING PLACES REVIEW 2018

FAQs

1) What is the polling district and polling places review?

The Royal Borough is responsible for maintaining its polling districts and polling places and has a duty to review its electoral arrangements every four years. Following the outcome of the electoral review this summer which determined the new ward boundaries in place from next May, the Royal Borough now needs to look at how to draw the internal polling district boundaries within the wards and what buildings will be used for voting on polling day.

The polling district and polling places review looks at two things:

- 1) The boundaries for the polling districts.
- 2) The designation of the polling places (the polling station buildings within the polling district where electors will go to cast their vote).

2) Why is the council holding a polling district and polling places review?

It is good practice for local authorities to periodically review their polling districts and designated polling places. For the Royal Borough specifically, a review has to take place before the next local elections in 2019, as the changes to the new ward boundaries will come into effect for this set of elections. Changes to some of the polling district boundaries are inevitable because of the changes to the wards. As the polling district boundaries are being re-drawn, it is a good opportunity to review the polling places where electors will vote to ensure that they remain convenient and accessible to electors.

3) What is a polling district?

A polling district is a geographical area created by the sub-division of a UK Parliamentary constituency. The polling districts used at parliamentary elections are the same polling districts used for all types of elections within the Royal Borough.

4) What is a polling place?

A polling place is the building or area in which polling stations are selected. Each polling district must have its own designated polling place. The polling place must be an area inside the polling district, unless special circumstances make it desirable to designate an area wholly or partly outside the polling district (for example, if no accessibly polling place can be identified in the district).

5) What is a polling station?

A polling station is the room or area within the polling place where voting takes place.

6) How will the review be conducted?

The Royal Borough has already devised a provisional polling district and polling places scheme. The scheme proposes new polling district boundaries for each of the Borough's 19 wards and a suitable polling place for each polling district.

Stage 1:

The first stage of the review will be the public consultation on the council's provisional scheme. The public consultation will run for six weeks from Monday 1 October to Friday 9 November. Residents are encouraged to get involved with the review and to make comments on the proposed polling districts and polling station buildings.

Stage 2:

Following feedback to the first consultation, the provisional scheme may be amended. Where changes are made to the scheme, a further, shorter consultation will take place for three weeks from Friday 23 November to Friday 14 December. Residents are encouraged to respond to the review with their comments on revised arrangements.

The final decision on the scheme will be made by the end of December and the scheme will be discussed at a meeting of Full Council in January for adoption at the local elections on 2 May 2019.

An outline of the review timetable is below:

Timetable for review

Consultation 1 on provisional scheme	Friday 1 October – Friday 9 November
Consideration of consultation comments	Monday 12 November – Thursday 22 November
Consultation 2 on revised scheme	Friday 23 November – Friday 14 December
Consideration of consultation comments	Monday 17 December – Friday 28 December
Council meeting	January 2019

7) Where can I see what the council is proposing?

You can view the provisional polling district and polling places scheme and the maps for each polling district on Electoral Services' webpages at <https://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/elections>

Paper copies of the maps can also be inspected at the public libraries at Maidenhead, Windsor and Ascot.

8) What are the rules to follow when deciding polling district and polling places?

The local authority has a duty to draw well-defined polling district boundaries and to designate polling places that are accessible to electors within the polling district. There can be multiple polling districts within a ward; with a minimum of two per ward. Polling district boundaries cannot cross ward boundaries.

Polling places must be small enough to indicate to electors in different parts of the polling district how they will be able to reach the polling station. The council must have regard to the accessibility to disabled persons of potential polling stations in any place which it is considering designating as a polling place. The council must also have regard to the availability of buildings it selects as polling stations, and the facilities for voting at the building.

When putting together the provisional polling district scheme, the council has tried to keep change to the minimum and has only changed the polling district boundaries where necessary, for example, where the external ward boundaries have changed as a result of the electoral review. The same approach has been taken for the designation of polling places. It is only proposed to change polling station buildings where it has been deemed that the current arrangements do not best meet the need of electors and better arrangements can be found at another building.

9) How can I get involved in the polling district review?

The Royal Borough is keen to hear the views of as many residents as possible regarding its proposed polling district scheme. Political parties and community groups are also encouraged to engage in the review. Comments from individuals with disabilities are welcomed in particular.

Comments on the suitability of polling districts and polling places should be made in writing to pd.review@rbwm.gov.uk, preferably using the questionnaire template found on the consultation web pages. Comments can also be made in writing to Electoral Services, Town Hall, St Ives Road, Maidenhead.

Where proposed polling district boundaries and polling places are not supported, residents are encouraged to provide alternative options which can be investigated. It is also useful to understand the reasons why a proposed polling place is not supported, so comprehensive submissions which set out a clear evidence base for opinion are encouraged.

10) When will I know the outcome of the review?

The final decision on the polling district and polling places scheme to be used at the local elections in May 2019 will be made at the end of December. Elected members will vote on whether the scheme should be adopted for the elections at a Full Council meeting in January 2019.

The outcome of the review will be published on Electoral Services web pages at <https://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/elections>

For more information about the review, please contact Electoral Services at pd.review@rbwm.gov.uk or ring 01628 682937 or 796306.