

Guide to the review of parliamentary and local government polling districts and polling places in Royal Borough of Greenwich 2019.

Introduction

We are undertaking a full review of polling districts and polling places as required by law. This law, Section 18C of the Representation of the People Act 1983 requires a periodic review and Schedule A1 of that Act provides the framework of the review.

Scope

The local authority has the duty to maintain the division of polling districts and polling places and may alter them from time to time. It must undertake a full review periodically and this is a period review. The polling districts are a division of each parliamentary constituency into smaller areas. The polling places are the areas, such as buildings, particular land or addresses where electors within the polling district must go to vote if they are voting in person. This review cannot change any parliamentary constituency or ward boundary or any other electoral arrangement.

The decision on the location of polling stations, that is the exact place where voting happens, is for the Returning Officer of the election who must usually choose somewhere within the polling place that is designated as part of this review. The Acting Returning Officer will, as part of this review, indicate if they are content that a suitable place for a polling station can be found within the proposed polling places. This report will be published along with the proposals after the proposals have been reviewed by the Acting Returning Officer and will be shortly after the review has begun.

The designation of local government polling districts and polling places is separate from that of parliamentary ones. However, if they were not coterminous (identically the same) then electors may have to go to different polling places for different types of election and so therefore this review will make all the same changes to both types of arrangements.

The local authority will consider the proposals and make a decision on them with the accepted proposals being implemented for future elections.

The proposals and report of the Acting Returning Officer

A set of proposals for changes and retention of existing arrangements has been produced and will be published so that any representations can be made. The initial proposals have been produced based on a review of each current arrangement (polling district and polling place) based on feedback at recent elections from staff and electors. The Acting Returning Officer for the three parliamentary constituencies within the Royal Borough will give a report on the polling stations that they are minded to choose if the proposed polling places are chosen and will report if they think the probable stations would be suitable for polling. This report will be published. For the Royal Borough, this will be a report from the Acting Returning Officer appointed by the Royal Borough of Greenwich for Greenwich and Woolwich and Eltham Constituencies and the Acting Returning Officer appointed by the London Borough of Bexley for the part of the Erith and Thamesmead Constituency that is

within the Borough boundaries as that Officer is responsible for polling stations in that area in the case of a parliamentary election.

Representations

Royal Borough of Greenwich welcome representations from residents on the proposals, the Acting Returning Officer's representation or any other matters. We also welcome any representations from any person or body with expertise in access for persons with any type of disability to comment on the proposals, the Acting Returning Officer's representation or any other matters.

Any person or body making representations should, if possible, give alternative places that may be used as polling places.

The notice of the review has the email and postal address for emailed and posted representations. All representations will be published along with the other documents as part of the review.

Decisions

It is highly unlikely that we could find perfectly accessible polling places within easy reach of every elector in the borough and therefore compromise must be made. In each case, the choice of polling places will be a balance between the quality of a building (access, facilities, etc.) and the proximity of the building to the electors. When making a decision, all these factors will be considered and a reasonable decision made in accordance with law and guidance.

Once the proposals have received public scrutiny (by being published with the option to make public representations) and any representations considered, the Council will consider the proposals and decide on them. It is likely that any changes will be made on 1 December 2019 when the revised register is published. In any case, a notice of the end of the review will be made when the review is completed and the final decisions made be published along with the other documents and representations.