

Local Elections – May 2026

Candidates and Agents Briefing



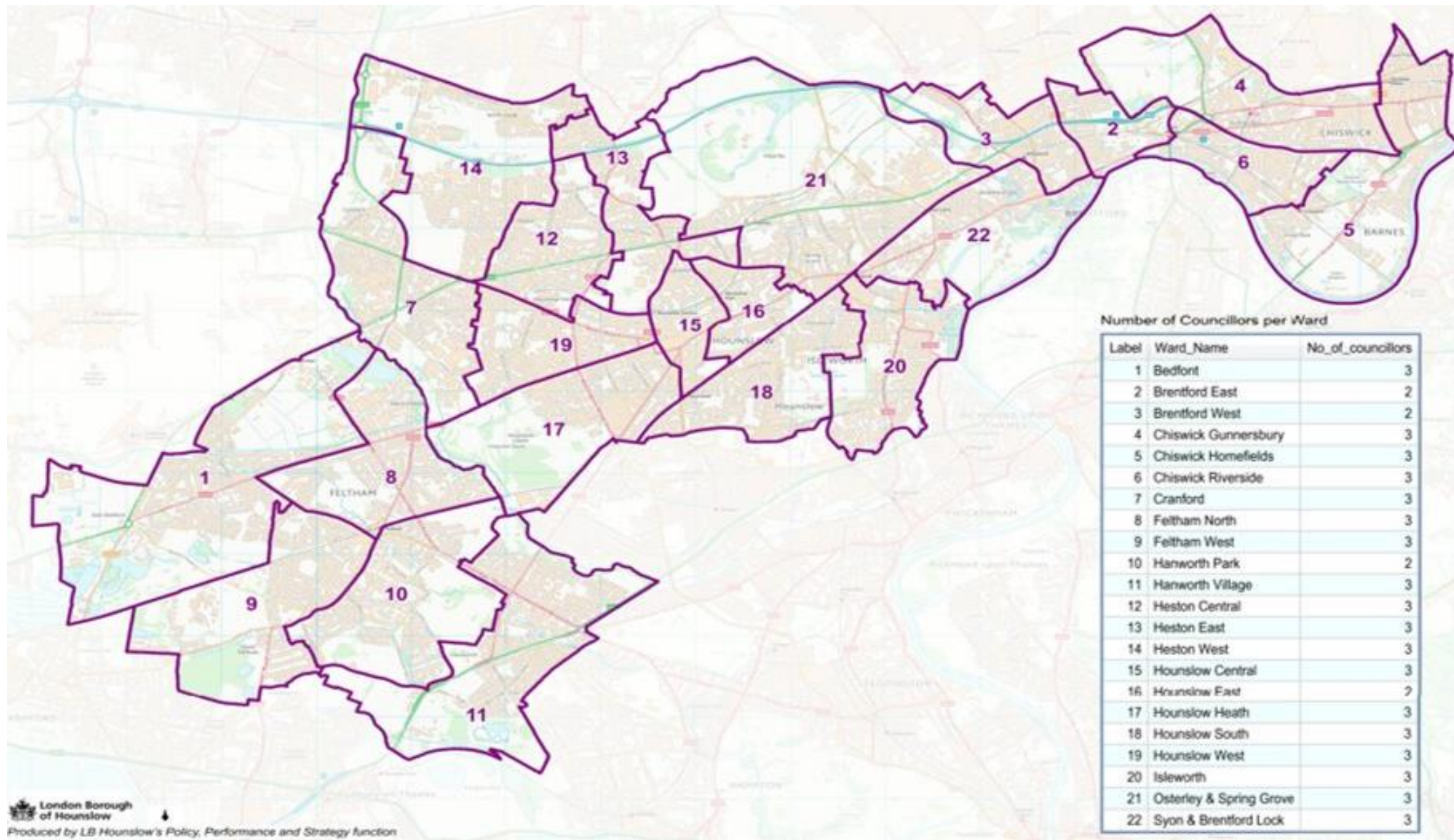
14 APRIL 2026

What we are going to cover:

- Police briefing
- The election timetable
- Campaigning do's and don'ts
- Tellers
- Polling day
- Count
- Candidates expenses
- Contacts



- 22 Wards
- 62 seats
- 200,534 electors
- 23,432 postal voters
- 104 polling stations



The Borough of Hounslow

**ONE
HOUNSLOW**

10 April
Candidates for all 22
wards published

21 April
Postal vote
deadline

Postal packs sent
out 1st class

29 April
Agent appointment
deadline

First postal vote
opening session

7 May
Polls open

12 June
Return of election
expenses

April

May

June

20 April
Register to vote
deadline

28 April
Proxy vote deadline
VAC deadline

8 May
Count and result
declarations

- Campaigners play an important role in supporting democratic engagement.
- Electors have raised concerns about approaching polling stations.
 - Groups standing too close to entrance.
 - Feel intimidated and anxious.
 - Confusion - electors felt they had to speak to people outside the polling station.
- Returning Officer has a duty to provide a calm and non-intimidating environment.
 - 50 metre no campaigning zone around polling place.
 - The zone is not physically marked - campaigners expected to use their judgement.
- All candidates and agents to sign up to the Code of Conduct - supporting a free, fair and safe election
 - Provides electors assurance they can vote in calm environment.
 - Details shared with Police – who has / not signed up to Code of Conduct.

Do

- ✓ Comply with the Code of Conduct
- ✓ Use imprints on all printed and digital campaign material
- ✓ Ensure the imprint is clear and visible
- ✓ Comply with planning rules relating to advertising boards and large banners
- ✓ Ensure that outdoor posters are removed promptly after the election and no later than 2 weeks after the day of poll

Don't

- ✗ Produce material that looks like poll cards
- ✗ Pay people to display adverts, unless they display adverts as part of their normal business
- ✗ Handle any postal voting documents that candidates/agents are not entitled to

Campaign material must have the name and address of:

- The printer
- The promoter
- Who it is being promoted for (e.g. party or candidate)

- Polls are open from 7 AM to 10 PM
- Turnout figures provided during the day
 - Mid morning, afternoon and evening.
- Candidates, agents and campaigners must abide by the code of conduct

Breaches may result in:

- Tellers being instructed to stop collecting numbers.
 - Individuals being required to move beyond the polling place boundary (onto the public highway)
 - Serious or repeated breaches being referred to the Police.
- Follow appropriate reporting procedures:
 - 999 in an emergency
 - Force elected official adviser – Oliver Price oliver.price@met.police.uk
 - Single point of contact – Insp Javid Khan Javid.Khan@met.police.uk
 - Ballot boxes delivered to Allianz Stadium once polls close at 10pm

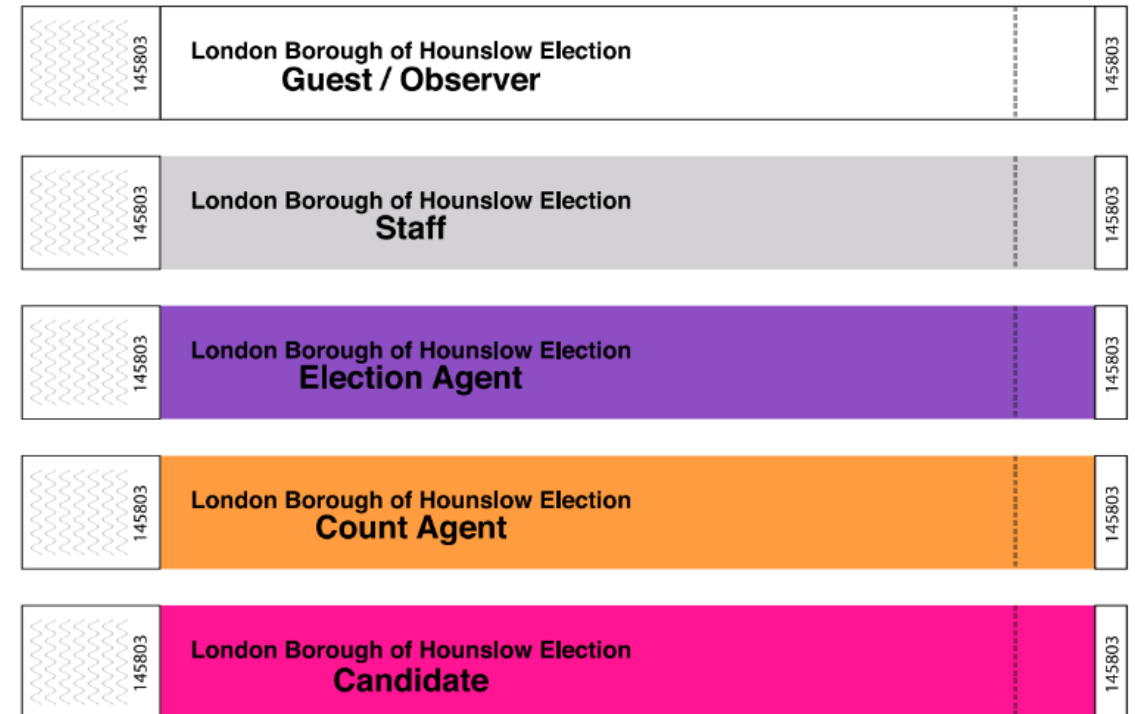


The Count – Friday 8 May

Allianz Stadium, 200 Whitton Road, TW2 7BA



- Verification will commence at 9:00 AM
- Those in attendance will be able to sign in from 8:45 AM and will be presented with a wristband (must be worn at all time)
- A count ticket must be shown either on a phone or printed to gain admission
- Entrance to the count halls will be from 9:00 AM
- Only those with a ticket will be permitted access
- Each candidate is permitted one count agent and one count guest **ONLY**
 - **Deadline to appoint count agents/guests is Wednesday 29 April**



Public Transport

Twickenham Rail Station (South West Railway) is a 10 minute walk away.

Buses 281, 481, 681 are available and take you directly to the Allianz Stadium. The H20 and 267 routes are also available and take you within 5–10-minute walk from the venue.

Please check the TFL website (www.tfl.gov.uk) for the latest travel information.



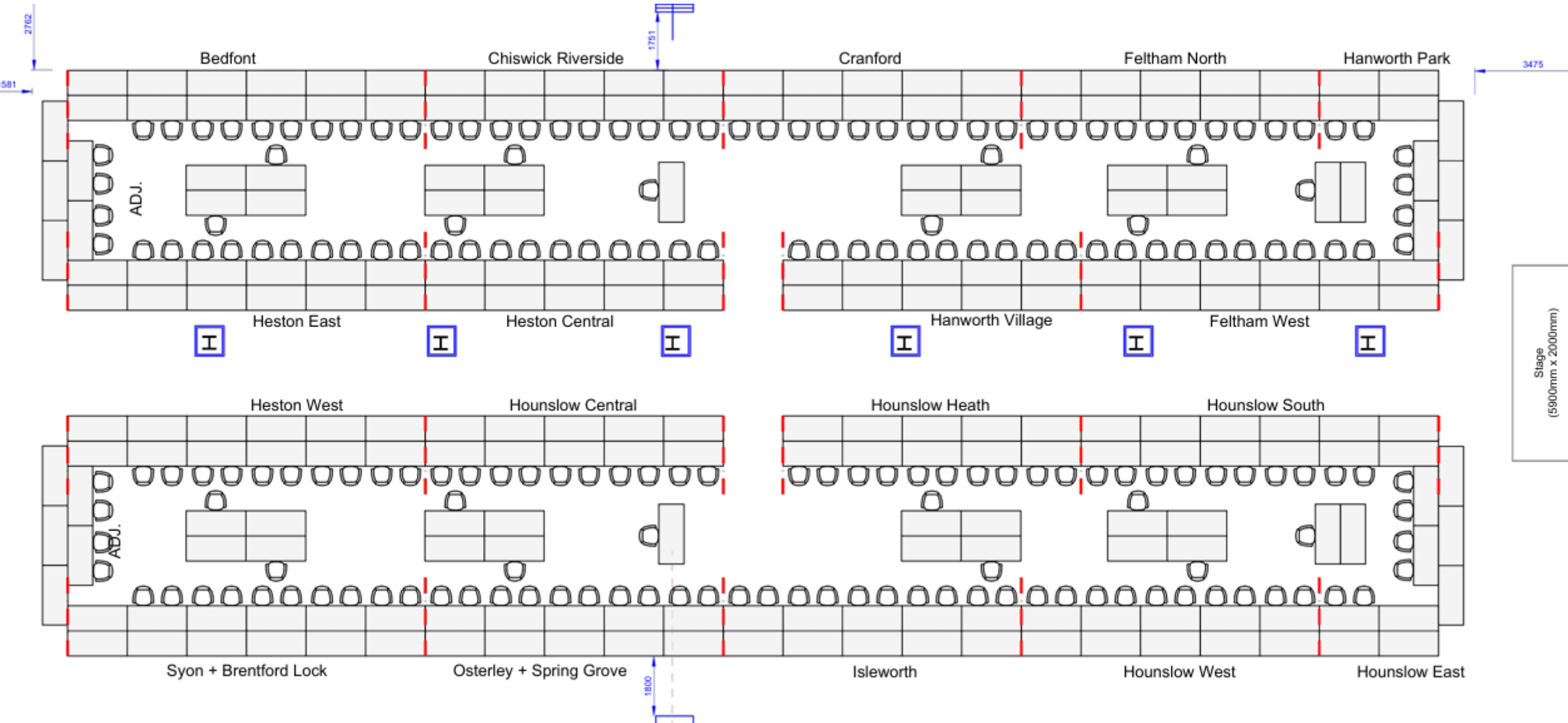
Parking

You will be required to register your car details in advance, failure to do so will result in a penalty charge. Allianz Stadium have granted access to the West Car Park and North Car Park.

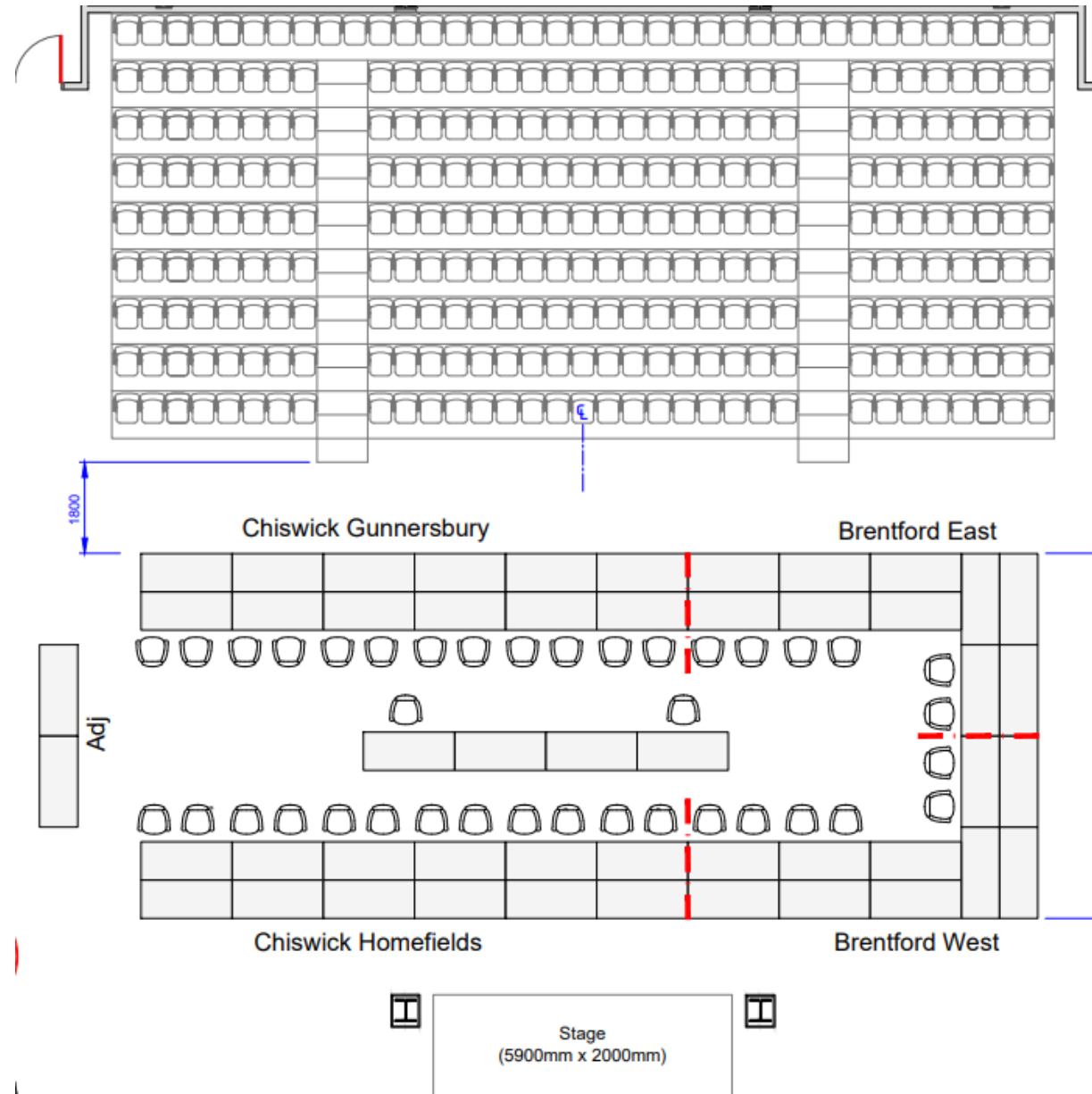
Details of how to do this will be available at the count venue.

Please ensure your vehicle is correctly parked and not obstructing any, roadways, failure to do so will result in a penalty charge.





Count Layout – Live Room



Code of Conduct

All count attendees are expected to adhere to the Code of Conduct to ensure that the count process is accessible, transparent and efficient.

Secrecy of Proceedings Act

Everybody attending the count must abide by the Secrecy of Proceedings (Section 66 of the Representation of the People Act 1983), which ensures that the secrecy of the ballot is maintained.

Maintaining a Quiet Environment

With potentially over 400 people present, please keep noise levels low. Refrain from loud conversation near the counting area to allow staff and attendees to focus on the count.

Mobile Phones, Photos and Social Media

Mobile phone usage is not permitted within the count area.

Taking photos during the count is strictly prohibited.

Photos of the declaration of results is permitted.

Food and Drink

Food and drink are not allowed in the counting halls.

Tea and coffee will be available in the foyer.

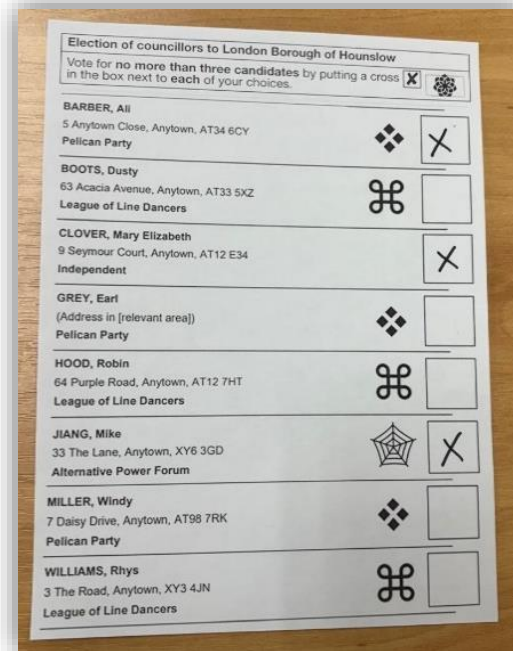
- Verification ensures the number of ballot papers received matches the expected number of ballot papers issued at polling stations and the number of postal ballot papers received.
- Begins at 9 AM.
- Each ward will have a count team with 2 supervisors.
- Each team has between 6 and 12 counters.
- Verification for all wards will take place simultaneously.
- Ballot papers are counted face up and clipped into 10s and bundled into 100s.
- A verification statement will be produced confirming the number of ballot papers issued and turnout for each ward.



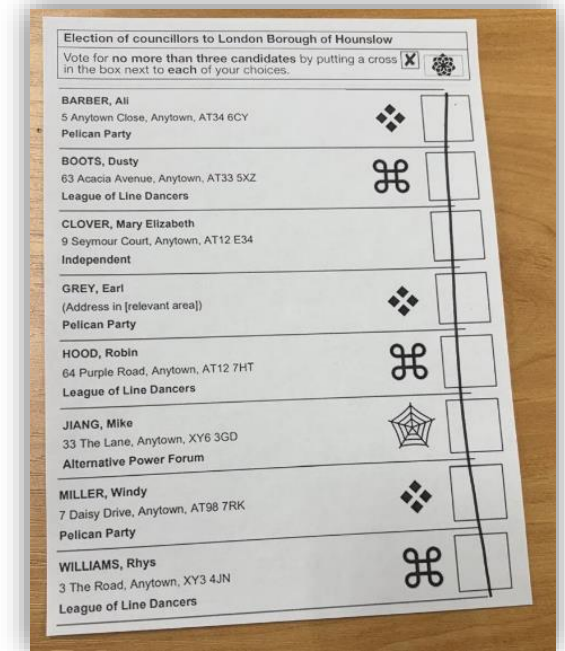
- Before counting can begin, the ballot papers must be sorted
- Ballot papers are sorted into three categories:



Block votes - all votes for candidates from the same party. These papers will be put into trays for each party



Mixed votes - votes for candidates from more than one party, or fewer votes than seats. These papers will be put into trays marked 'Mixed votes'



Bad and doubtful - Unclear or questionable marks. These papers will be put into trays marked 'doubtful ballot papers'

Block votes

- Counted into 10s then bundled into 100s and placed back into the respective trays.
- The number of votes are tallied up and attributed to the relevant candidates.

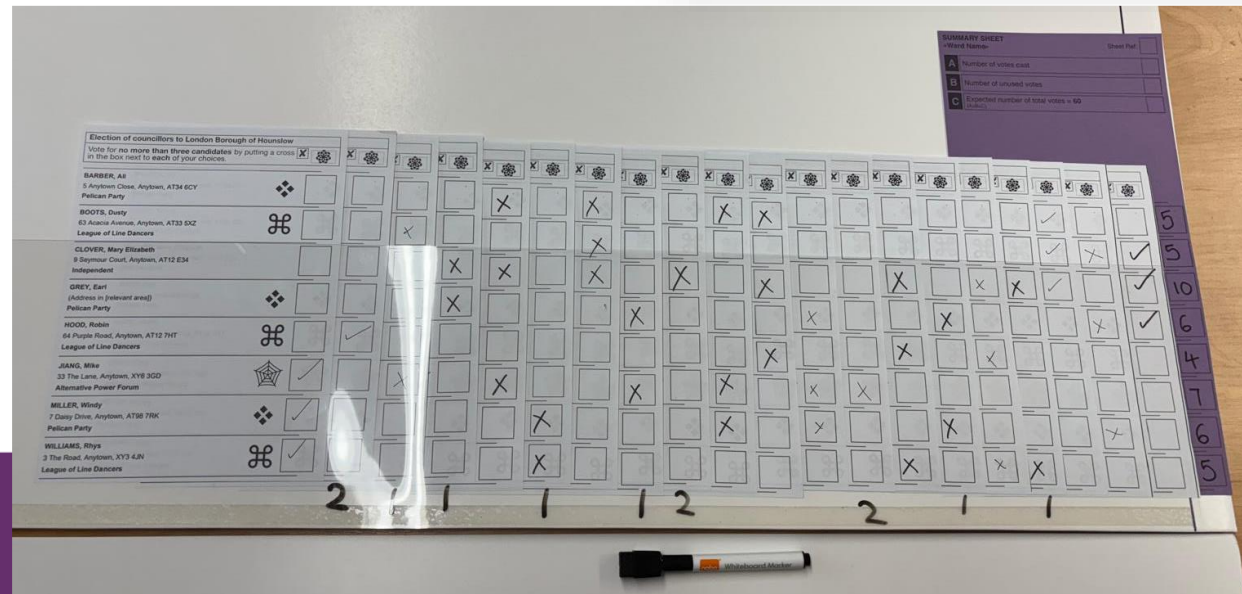


Mixed votes

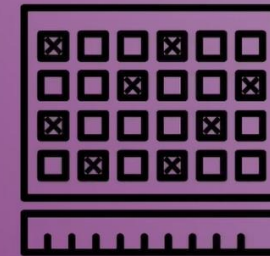
- Counting boards are used to ensure votes are attributed to the right candidate.
- Mixed vote ballot papers are placed onto the counting board in batches of 20.
- The votes are tallied and recorded on a summary sheet.



- Any unused votes are tallied and recorded on a summary sheet.
- Ballot papers are removed from the counting board, and the summary sheet is attached to the ballot papers.
- The votes from the summary sheet are transferred to a master spreadsheet.



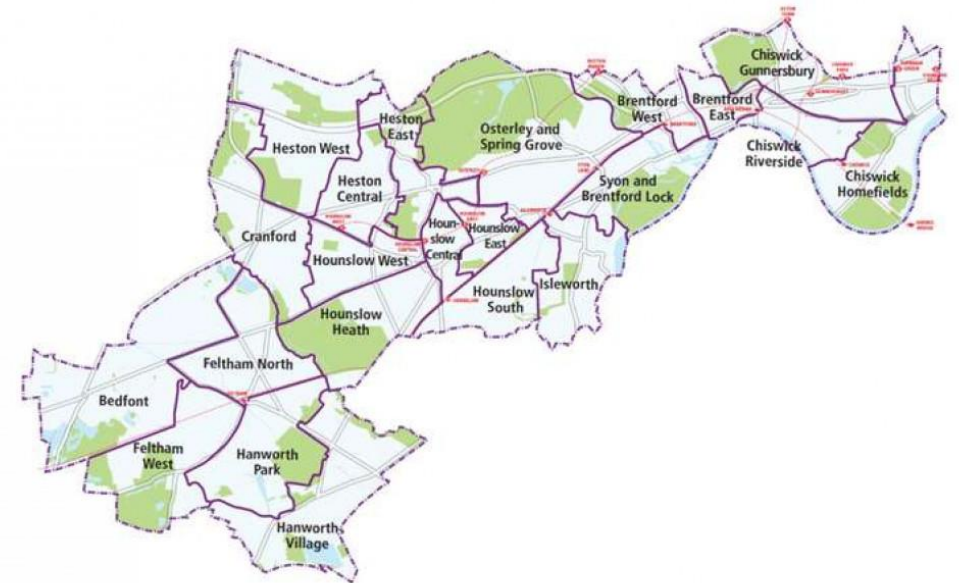
How to record votes using a counting board



- Bad and doubtful ballot papers are instances where it will not be immediately clear which candidate the voters has chosen
- These will be separated out for each ward by count assistants
- Once all ballot papers have been sorted, the bad and doubtful papers will go for adjudication
- Election agents and candidates ONLY are permitted to observe the adjudication process



- The Returning Officer will continually monitor the progress of the count on a centralised dashboard. This includes:
 - Monitoring for accuracy and efficiency
 - Monitoring how close the result is for each ward
- If the Returning Officer observes that the result is close in a particular ward, then a recount consisting of a bundle flick will be instructed.
- Ensure to listen out for any relevant announcements.
- Once a result is close to being declared, the Returning Officer will share this to candidates and election agents ONLY before the official declaration.



- Once the provisional result has been shared for a ward, the Returning Officer will officially declare the result.
- The declarations will take place in the foyer and will be announced before each declaration.
- Those present at the count are permitted to take photographs during the declaration of results.
- Once the results have been declared, elected candidates will have the opportunity to take photographs using the backdrop.
- There will be no speeches by candidates.
- Results will continue to be declared for wards as they are counted until all 22 wards are completed.
- When a ward result is declared, candidates and count agents must leave the counting halls.



7 May
Polls open



11 May – 18 May (elected Cllrs only)

- Official photographs
- Signing acceptance of office
- ID security pass
- Guide to being a Councillor



May

June

8 May
Count and result
declarations



12 June
Return of Expenses
deadline



- The Election Agent is responsible for the financial conduct of the election and the return of election expenses.
- You must ensure to keep a record of all spending including receipts.
- Consult the Electoral Commission guidance on any queries regarding expenditure.

<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance-candidates-and-agents-local-government-elections-england/candidate-spending>

- The election expenses return and declarations by the candidate and agent must be returned by no later than:

Friday 12 June 2026

- This can be returned by post to the Returning Officer, Electoral Services, Hounslow House, 7 Bath Road, Hounslow, TW3 3EB
- Note: even if you do not spend any money, you must still submit the return and declarations.

The spending limit for this election is £960 plus 8p per local government elector in the ward registered to vote on the last day for publication in the ward

Single candidate:

$$£960 + (7,500 \times 0.08) = £1,560$$

Two candidates:

Two candidates standing in the same ward decide to issue joint campaign material. This makes them joint candidates. There are 7,500 electors in the ward in which they are standing.

To calculate each joint candidate's spending limit, first calculate the spending limit for a single candidate:

$$£960 + (7,500 \times 0.08) = £1,560$$

$$\text{Then calculate 25\% of this amount: } £1,560 \times (25 \div 100) = £390$$

$$\text{Take this amount off the spending limit for a single candidate: } £1,560 - £390 = £1170$$

This is the spending limit for each of the two joint candidates.

Three candidates:

$$\text{33\% reduction for 3 or more candidates. } £1560 \times (33 \div 100) = £514.80.$$

$$£1560 - £514.80 = £1045.20 \text{ for each of the three or more joint candidates}$$



Any Questions?

Key Contacts

Elections Office

 020 8583 2840 (candidates and agents)

 020 8583 2828 (public enquiries)

 www.hounslow.gov.uk/elections

Kully Tumber

 020 8583 2095

kully.tumber@hounslow.gov.uk

Electoral Commission

London Team

 020 7271 0567

 www.electoralcommission.org.uk

london@electoralcommission.org.uk