

Greenwich

01

SINCE 2022 115

02

LOCAL LANDSCAPE 116

03

ELECTORAL PROSPECTS 118

↗	GREENWICH	119
↗	CHARLTON	120
↗	WOOLWICH	121
↗	THAMESMEAD	122
↗	ELTHAM	123

04

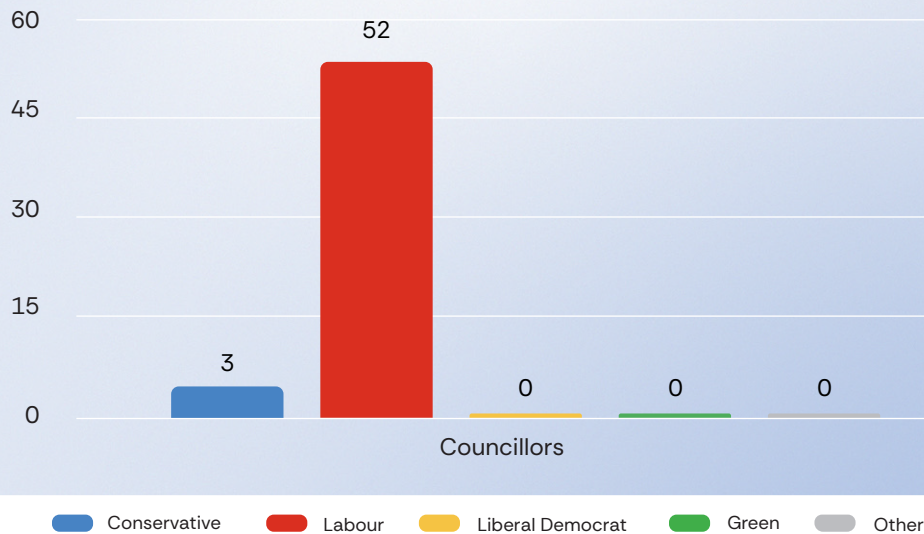
WHAT TO WATCH FOR 124

Since 2022

Labour Defence

Labour forever, except in the Conservatives' glory year of 1968, Greenwich came within three seats of giving the party a full house in 2022, winning 52 seats to the Tories' three. It was the latter's lowest score in the borough's history and their vote share was just 23 per cent compared with Labour's 58. Of the other parties, only the Greens made it into double figures.

Greenwich Council result May 2022 | Total seats: 55



By-elections since May 2022

13 JUNE 2024	MOTTINGHAM, COLDHARBOUR & NEW ELTHAM	CON HOLD
17 OCTOBER 2024	ELTHAM TOWN & AVERY HILL	CON GAIN FROM LAB
14 NOVEMBER 2024	SHOOTERS HILL	LAB HOLD
19 DECEMBER 2024	WEST THAMESMEAD	LAB HOLD
26 JUNE 2025	SHOOTERS HILL	GREEN GAIN FROM LAB

How much might the picture change this time? There have been a couple of by-election reverses for Labour, with one seat lost to the Conservatives and another to the Greens, though the party has held a couple of others. The Tories have retained one.

Labour's numbers have been further depleted by two of their group opting to become Independents, though reportedly only after being deselected. One has since joined the Greens. The conditions don't seem to exist for a spectacular Labour collapse, so the main interest lies in which parties make gains, where and why.

Local landscape

Greenwich stretches from its long, curving Thames riverfront in the north down to Eltham in the south. It shares borders with inner city Lewisham to the west, thoroughly suburban Bromley to the south and a very long one with equally resolutely Outer London Bexley to the east.

These neighbours indicate the profound sense in which Greenwich straddles Inner London and those parts of the metropolis where feelings of connection to the capital can be far more ambivalent. As if to underline this, it is sometimes defined as an Inner London borough and sometimes as an Outer London one: the London Government Act of 1963, which created the boroughs, placed it in Inner London; the Office for National Statistics defines it as an Outer London borough (and, unlike the Act, calls Newham and Haringey Inner London areas).

Consistent with this, Greenwich encompasses many geographical and cultural variations. Woolwich, where the Town Hall and council offices are, can feel a bit like a northern town that has somehow drifted up the estuary. Its history, like those of industrial towns elsewhere that were early adopters of the Labour cause, is defined by a skilled, unionised working-class population employed by large companies – in Woolwich’s case the dockyard and the historic Woolwich Arsenal.

Greenwich Council elections since 2002						
Year	Con	Lab	LD	UKIP/Ref	Green	Other
2002	9	38	4	-	-	-
2006	13	36	2	-	-	-
2010	11	40	-	-	-	-
2014	8	43	-	-	-	-
2018	9	42	-	-	-	-
2022	3	52	-	-	-	-

Other parts of the borough range from the green lungs of Greenwich Park and Blackheath – famous for their views across the capital and as the starting place for the London Marathon – to Greenwich town centre, with its village and open market, to the O2 Arena, to the restored

Cutty Sark, to the estates and other residential quarters of Kidbrooke, Charlton, and Shooters Hill, to the town centre of Eltham and to Plumstead and Abbey Wood, the latter opened up by the arrival of the Elizabeth line.

Local landscape

Greenwich's international claim to fame is being the location of Prime Meridian, the line of longitude on which all Coordinated Universal Time is based, marked by the Greenwich Observatory. In that sense too, Greenwich sits across a borderline, in its case between global east and west.

The council has experienced very little of the turbulence that has hit a lot of other strongly Labour boroughs in the past. It has been keen on redevelopment, both of ex-industrial land and council housing that fell into disrepair and disrepute, such as the Ferrier estate in Kidbrooke.

The huge redevelopment of the Greenwich Peninsula has not been without controversy or opposition, but is still just about ongoing.

The borough has received a large if, some might say, overdue boost in the form of the government backing for a long asked-for extension of the Dockland Light Railway under the river into Thamesmead, where the huge regeneration of a large postwar housing scheme has long been underway. It will be the vital infrastructure underpinning the planned New Town in the area.

Labour's big win in 2022 did not generate universal gratitude for the Labour group leader of the time from within his own ranks. Danny Thorpe, who grew up on the Kidbrooke estate, was narrowly ousted by challenger Anthony Okereke, a councillor since 2018. He is particularly proud of the borough's handling of its responsibilities for its homeless. The borough's biggest new social housing development has been shortlisted for a Royal Institute of British Architects award. Okereke's administration will have things to boast about. Its opponents have got their work cut out.

 GREENWICH

Electoral prospects

Greenwich's varied political terrain can best be understood by breaking down its 23 electoral wards into five geographical sub-categories.

Greenwich

13 seats

Greenwich town contains most of the features for which the Royal Borough is well-known to the outsider – the Meridian, the Cutty Sark, the University and the O2 Arena at the end of the Peninsula. These wards, except for Peninsula, are to the west of the A102 Blackwall Tunnel Approach road. For all the pageantry, Greenwich is a lot like the rest of inner London in being a mixture of ethnicities, tenure and social status. It is, Peninsula aside, a bit more white and White British than usual and it has a high proportion of graduates (somewhat contrary to its white working-class reputation).

The areas around Blackheath and Greenwich Park have long been favoured by professional middle-class Londoners. The population has grown substantially with new development in several wards. Peninsula added over 7,000 residents in 2011–21, and East Greenwich (nearly 5,000) and Greenwich Creekside (3,500) have also seen major change.

Ward-level results (2022)	Councillors 2022			Vote share percentage 2022				
	1	2	3	Con	Lab	LD	Green	Other
Blackheath Westcombe	Lab	Lab	Lab	26.5	46.1	11.0	14.3	2.0
East Greenwich	Lab	Lab	Lab	11.8	46.2	2.0	40.0	-
Greenwich Creekside	Lab	Lab	x	12.6	55.6	13.1	18.6	-
Greenwich Park	Lab	Lab	x	12.1	49.4	9.6	28.9	-
Greenwich Peninsula	Lab	Lab	Lab	15.5	51.1	15.0	16.0	2.4

Politically, Greenwich is Labour but not monolithically so. The Conservatives were represented in Blackheath Westcombe all the way through from 2002 to 2022 when Labour finally overcame the personal vote for Tory incumbent Geoff Brighty.

He is still active locally (he chairs the Westcombe Society) and is bidding to regain the seat this time. In the other wards, the Greens are more of a threat. They were only 68 votes off in East Greenwich in 2022.

Charlton

6 seats

Charlton is the intermediate territory between Greenwich and Woolwich. As with much of Greenwich it is whiter than most comparable neighbourhoods in London but still fairly diverse. It is attractive for professional commuters, though they are a minority.

Ward-level results (2022)	Councillors 2022			Vote share percentage 2022				
	1	2	3	Con	Lab	LD	Green	Other
Charlton Hornfair	Lab	Lab	x	17.0	59.4	8.7	14.9	-
Charlton Village & Riverside	Lab	Lab	x	12.3	62.4	8.0	17.2	-
Kidbrooke Park	Lab	Lab	x	20.8	50.3	8.6	15.3	5.0

Charlton Village & Riverside is the second most social renting ward in Greenwich (42 per cent, after Thamesmead Moorings). Politically, Charlton has been solidly Labour for a long time. The Conservatives won narrowly there in 1968, their landslide year, but it has

been all Labour since 1971. Charlton Hornfair will be defended by incumbent Lakshan Saldin, the councillor elected there for Labour in 2022 before sitting for a while as an Independent and then joining the Greens.

Woolwich

15 seats

Woolwich is a traditional Labour stronghold, particularly associated with the Co-operative movement. Its council first went Labour in 1903. Woolwich has experienced deindustrialisation with the closure of the Royal Arsenal in 1994 and the loss of associated ordnance factories.

The barracks is due to close in 2028. The Arsenal has been redeveloped for mixed use and a new commuting population has been attracted to Woolwich by the Elizabeth line and DLR. Woolwich in general has a high proportion of social housing and an unusual ethnic make-up. Thanks to its association with the army, there is a large Nepalese community in Woolwich and Plumstead.

With a couple of exceptions, it is hard to see where a challenge to Labour might emerge. The Greens won Shooters Hill, one of Woolwich's more suburban wards, in the June 2025 by-election, though they were helped by local issues that might not be quite as hot anymore. Woolwich Arsenal holds some potential for the Greens as well. It is less promising for the Tories, but that hasn't deterred one Hugh O'Leary from standing in their name. He, by the way, is the husband of former Prime Minister Liz Truss.

Ward-level results (2022)	Councillors 2022			Vote share percentage 2022				
	1	2	3	Con	Lab	LD	Green	Other
Plumstead & Glyndon	Lab	Lab	Lab	13.3	65.7	8.2	12.8	-
Plumstead Common	Lab	Lab	Lab	16.6	58.0	9.2	16.2	-
Shooters Hill	Lab	Lab	x	13.8	59.0	8.9	15.4	2.9
Woolwich Arsenal	Lab	Lab	Lab	10.5	50.6	12.8	19.8	6.3
Woolwich Common	Lab	Lab	x	15.5	70.3	14.3	-	-
Woolwich Dockyard	Lab	Lab	x	17.1	70.9	12.0	-	-

Thamesmead

7 seats

Greenwich's share of the old, regenerating Thamesmead estate is solidly Labour with some disobliging demographics for challengers – a high share of social renting, a large black population, a medium-sized proportion of graduates.

The Lib Dems did respectably in a by-election in West Thamesmead in December 2024 thanks to local issues and they may yet advance. There are not many alternative targets for them in Greenwich, so it would make sense for them to concentrate their efforts there.

Ward-level results (2022)	Councillors 2022			Vote share percentage 2022				
	1	2	3	Con	Lab	LD	Green	Other
Abbey Wood	Lab	Lab	Lab	16.9	63.0	6.8	13.3	-
Thamesmead Moorings	Lab	Lab	x	18.5	71.0	10.5	-	-
West Thamesmead	Lab	Lab	x	14.0	61.4	8.9	15.7	-

Eltham

14 seats

Eltham is the suburb located – if you’re travelling out from central London – around where the A2 and the A20 start being serious trunk roads and diverge from each other. For these purposes we are including some smaller areas, such as Kidbrooke Village and Middle Park, that border Lewisham.

Eltham is a traditional parliamentary marginal gained by Labour’s Clive Efford in 1997 and held ever since, not because of demographic change but through a personal vote and strong organisation.

At local level, the Conservatives have been a dwindling force in Eltham and had a shocking set of elections in 2022, but they clung on and remain viable in the eastern three wards at least. They did well in the two by-elections in split wards in 2024, holding Mottingham, Coldharbour & New Eltham – it’s the name of just one ward in a borough where many have ridiculously long names – and gaining a seat from Labour in Eltham Town & Avery Hill.

However, the Conservatives will have to defend hard against Reform, because their vote has come from the

Ward-level results (2022)	Councillors 2022			Vote share percentage 2022				
	1	2	3	Con	Lab	LD	Green	Other
Eltham Page	Lab	Lab	x	23.2	46.6	8.0	11.3	10.9
Eltham Park & Progress	Lab	Lab	x	36.0	44.3	5.6	11.7	2.4
Eltham Town & Avery Hill	Lab	Lab	Con	36.8	40.0	7.1	12.6	3.6
Kidbrooke Village & Sutcliffe	Lab	Lab	x	16.3	52.2	11.6	19.9	-
Middle Park & Horn Park	Lab	Lab	x	22.3	58.4	8.5	10.8	-
Mottingham, Coldharbour & New Eltham	Lab	Con	Con	43.5	43.5	9.5	-	3.5

same sort of social base that has supported it over the border in Bexley, which Reform expects to win.

UKIP polled 20 to 24 per cent across this area at their high point in 2014. By London standards, Eltham has a white, car-driving and non-graduate population. All the wards except Kidbrooke Village & Sutcliffe are majority White British.

The western wards of Eltham have more social housing (40 per cent in Eltham Page and Middle Park & Horn Park) or new development (Kidbrooke Village & Sutcliffe) and look rather safer for Labour, though a very high Reform tide might get this far into inner London.



GREENWICH

What to watch for

Labour has been formidably strong in Greenwich throughout the borough's history, making it arguably more faithful to the party than any other except Newham and Barking & Dagenham. Of the three, Greenwich looks the most probable Labour hold in 2026. It is too inner urban, except in Eltham, to be good ground for Reform, and not Muslim or liberal enough outside a few enclaves for the Labour vote to collapse to the Left.