

# Hounslow

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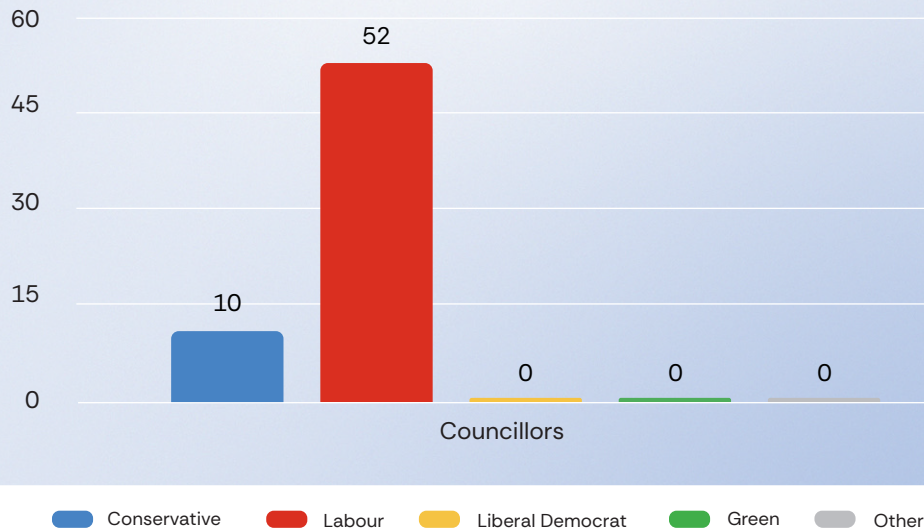
# Since 2022

## Labour Defence

Labour’s win by a large margin over the Conservatives last time, with no other party winning a seat, feels like a long time ago when compared with the range of affiliations Hounslow councillors now have – and the current line-up tells only part of the story of how that came to be.

Nothing changed until March 2024 when a long-serving Labour councillor defected to the Workers Party of Britain. Then, within a year or so, Labour had picked up two more councillors from the Tories, but lost a seat to an Independent in a by-election – the only one of six such contests in the past four years where the party has failed to defend successfully.

Hounslow Council result May 2022 | Total seats: 62



### By-elections since May 2022

08 MARCH 2023	HESTON WEST	LAB HOLD
02 MAY 2024	BRENTFORD WEST	LAB HOLD
04 JUNE 2024	HANWORTH VILLAGE	LAB HOLD
06 MARCH 2025	BRENTFORD EAST	LAB HOLD
06 MARCH 2025	SYON & BRENTFORD LOCK	IND GAIN FROM LAB
21 AUGUST 2025	CRANFORD	LAB HOLD

November 2025 was a particularly exciting month: it saw one Labour councillor join the Tories, three more go Independent and one join the Greens; it saw the Workers Party convert change allegiance again, joining the Independent group; it saw one of the ex-Labour Independents resign from the council, leaving his seat vacant; and it saw the death of a long-serving Tory councillor, creating another vacancy.

A second Labour councillor joined the Tories in January, thereby levelling up the earlier traffic in the opposite direction. But then, when candidate nominations were published in early April, it turned out that another Labour councillor, who had been deselected, had joined Reform. That meant Labour was down from its original 52 councillors to 42. The Tories were still on 10, there were six Independents, the single Green and now the late convert to Reform. In all, 12 Hounslow councillors of the 62 elected in May 2022 have abandoned their original party. The extent to which the current configuration reflects the sentiments of Hounslow residents will emerge in due course.

# Local landscape

Snaking all the way from an outer edge of Hammersmith & Fulham to a border beside Spelthorne in Surrey, the borough of Hounslow encompasses five quite different towns – Brentford, Isleworth, Feltham, Hounslow itself and Chiswick, only the last of which has a London postcode. Part of the borough's southside ends at the north bank of the Thames and the rest alongside Richmond. To its north lies Ealing, to its west, Hillingdon. Heathrow airport falls just within the territory of the latter next-door neighbour, but that doesn't lessen its economic importance to Hounslow. At the same time, about a quarter of the borough's 21.6 square miles is parkland, and includes Gunnersbury Park, Osterley Park and Syon House.

At the last Census, 44 per cent of Hounslow's 300,000 residents described themselves as white, of which about two-thirds or 82,000 were UK white and the rest, about 40,000, "other" white. Around 61,000 identified as

Indian and 17,000 as Pakistani. Nearly 200 languages are spoken by borough residents, including Romanian and Urdu, though English is the first language of 72 per cent. Hounslow is, in short, varied and variegated in a whole range of ways.

It has, nonetheless, consistently favoured Labour through this century, except for the party's bad election year of 2006 and even then it won more seats than any other. Labour's survival hopes this time depend significantly on opposition to it being uneven and undersized.

# Local landscape

Labour has lost vote share in every one of its five winning by-elections since May 2022. Ironically, its sole defeat, in Syon & Brentford Lock ward in March 2025, saw its smallest fall in support. The winner by 12 votes was a former Labour councillor, political consultant Theo Dennison, who had represented the previous Syon ward. The Brentford East by-election held on the same day was noteworthy for Reform finishing second to Labour, polling 22 per cent – their best in a London by-election up to that point, albeit turnout was a very low 15 per cent.

The large number of councillors to abandon Labour in Hounslow in an assortment of ways does not point to a united local party. That wouldn't bode well for the campaign. Neither will the revelation that, last year, a member of the Labour group parked his Lamborghini in a disabled bay. Despite that, he is standing again. Another worry for Hounslow Labour is that there are signs that local Hindus in line with an established, nationwide trend, have been leaning more towards the Conservatives. All that said, the Labour edifice is still formidable. Hounslow's response to that could be as diverse and therefore diluted as the borough itself.

Hounslow Council elections since 2022						
Year	Con	Lab	LD	UKIP/Ref	Green	Other
2002	15	36	5	-	-	4
2006	23	24	5	-	-	8
2010	25	35	-	-	-	-
2014	11	49	-	-	-	-
2018	9	51	-	-	-	-
2022	10	52	-	-	-	-

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# Electoral prospects

Although Hounslow looks like one of Labour's less difficult defences in 2026, support could flow away from it in various directions, depending on the social characteristics of wards. At the same time, Conservatives could be at risk in areas they currently hold that look receptive to Reform.

# Chiswick

9 seats

Chiswick is the small, innermost point of Hounslow, the stretch of the A4 through the Hogarth Roundabout to the start of the M4. It is part of a genteel middle-class district that straddles Hounslow’s borders with Hammersmith & Fulham (Ravenscourt) and Ealing (Southfield).

The three Chiswick wards are majority professional-managerial. Homefields and Riverside, at 54 per cent, are more upper middle-class by this measure than all but two wards of Kensington & Chelsea. All three are over 60 per cent graduate. Homefields and Riverside are majority owner-occupied while Gunnersbury has a large private rented component (38 per cent). Chiswick, in a word, is posh.

Ward-level results (2022)	Councillors 2022			Vote share percentage 2022				
	1	2	3	Con	Lab	LD	Green	Other
Chiswick Gunnersbury	Con	Con	Con	41.6	36.3	22.1	-	-
Chiswick Homefields	Con	Con	Con	43.4	29.6	14.7	12.2	-
Chiswick Riverside	Con	Con	Lab	36.4	32.9	15.8	14.9	-

Labour and the Lib Dems have won wards like this in other boroughs, and Chiswick must have voted Labour in the last three general elections, but only Amy Croft (now ceremonial Mayor of Hounslow) was elected for Labour there in 2022.

Chiswick’s loyalty to the Conservatives at council level must come from community politics – a sense that the Tories operate in the council chamber mostly as the Chiswick Party and protect its interests in a borough whose political centre of gravity is further west. They are well dug-in and should ride out the 2026 elections.

# Brentford & Isleworth

13 seats

Brentford is an older town where the River Brent and the Grand Union Canal join the River Thames. The 1930s shaped this area’s landscape with the industrial Golden Mile and the suburban development around Osterley. The 1960s modified it with the M4 Elevated Section flying over the Brentford streets. This is the easternmost part of the Office for National Statistics’ Slough and Heathrow Travel To Work Area (TTWA), so in one economic sense it is outside London’s orbit.

Ward-level results (2022)	Councillors 2022			Vote share percentage 2022				
	1	2	3	Con	Lab	LD	Green	Other
Brentford East	Lab	Lab	x	17.9	62.9	-	19.1	-
Brentford West	Lab	Lab	x	17.5	50.1	-	22.6	9.8
Isleworth	Lab	Lab	Lab	15.4	47.6	19.3	17.7	-
Osterley & Spring Grove	Lab	Lab	Lab	26.0	45.8	14.1	14.1	-
Syon & Brentford Lock	Lab	Lab	Lab	15.2	35.6	9.7	17.1	22.4

The Brentford and Isleworth wards are less professional-managerial middle-class than Chiswick – 40 per cent rather than 50 per cent – but more so than the rest of Hounslow to their west. There is significant social housing in several wards, particularly Brentford East (43 per cent).

Labour won every seat here in the 2018 and 2022 elections, but before that the Conservatives were usually on top in Osterley and Spring Grove, and it is still their

best target in the centre of the borough. In 2006, the last time Labour lost control of Hounslow, Independent community candidates won the old Syon and Isleworth. An independent presence in Syon was re-established with Theo Dennison’s win in the March 2025 by-election.

Other than in Brentford East, Labour’s 2022 shares were not overwhelming. The party therefore faces challenges from several directions: Dennison and any allies he might

recruit, Greens, Conservatives and even Reform, who put down a marker in the Brentford East by-election.

As in a lot of London, the question is whether Labour can prevail against divided opposition despite falling support, or whether they are caught in a pincer movement as different parties target different wards.

# Hounslow

14 seats

As anyone who has taken the Piccadilly line to Heathrow can testify, there is a lot of Hounslow. The town itself is the geographical and administrative centre of the borough. It has been a Mayoral Housing Zone since 2015, and new homes have appeared among the terraces of the older town and the interwar suburban avenues. All the wards except Hounslow South saw significant population growth between 2011 and 2021.

Hounslow as whole has a strongly South Asian character and was one of the earliest places in London to have a large community of Indian origin. Central, Heath and West wards are majority Asian and East is not far short. There are slightly more Muslims than Hindus, although both faiths are at around 20 per cent and even here the plurality faith is Christian.

There are only six wards in London with a higher proportion of private renters than Hounslow Central's 56 per cent and those are either new-build communities or wealthy areas of Westminster. Hounslow South, abutting

Ward-level results (2022)	Councillors 2022			Vote share percentage 2022				
	1	2	3	Con	Lab	LD	Green	Other
Hounslow Central	Lab	Lab	Lab	27.0	55.0	-	18.0	-
Hounslow East	Lab	Lab	x	30.9	51.0	-	18.1	-
Hounslow Heath	Lab	Lab	Lab	20.8	49.3	15.5	14.3	-
Hounslow South	Lab	Lab	Lab	23.2	48.3	12.4	16.1	-
Hounslow West	Lab	Lab	Lab	20.0	53.4	13.3	13.2	-

Twickenham, is a bit different, being mostly white and owner-occupied.

Politically, the Hounslow town wards favour Labour and have done for a long time, except for South which has a marginal history. Labour gained all three seats in 2014. But although South seemed to still be moving Labour's way in 2022, the majorities in the other wards could have

been bigger. The Conservatives breaking 30 per cent in the new Hounslow East ward was a surprise.

Hounslow town has largely been spared the borough's political party musical chairs act, with only one councillor (for Hounslow Heath) going from Labour to Independent. But the 2026 results could be messy.

# Heston

12 seats

The Heston wards are in the north west of the borough, lying between Hounslow town and Southall. They resemble both areas in their social and ethnic composition and – usually – their electoral behaviour.

Heston was one of many parts of outer London to be built in the interwar period, the suburban avenues providing low-cost owner-occupied homes for commuters and workers in the new industries that were springing up.

Heathrow Airport’s proximity has meant that, for London, the proportion of people in routine employment is high. Heston proper is still more owner-occupied than Hounslow town, although Cranford has a significant amount of social housing. All the wards are majority-Asian. Heston is one of the centres of London’s Sikh community (24 per cent), although it has a mixture of religions.

Ward-level results (2022)	Councillors 2022			Vote share percentage 2022				
	1	2	3	Con	Lab	LD	Green	Other
Cranford	Lab	Lab	Lab	18.6	53.3	-	14.5	13.6
Heston Central	Lab	Lab	Lab	16.6	55.1	13.8	14.5	-
Heston East	Lab	Lab	Lab	28.1	57.9	-	14.1	-
Heston West	Lab	Lab	Lab	19.7	64.2	-	16.1	-

Heston has been solidly Labour in recent borough elections – the last time a Conservative won in the area was 1990. But there are cracks in the party’s hegemony. Labour has lost five councillors here through defections.

The Conservatives polled 29 per cent, not that far behind Labour’s 41 per cent, in the August 2025 Cranford by-election, a sign of local trouble for Labour as well as the shifting Hindu vote. Reform polled 17 per cent.

The latter party’s recent recruit from Labour, Bandra Chopra, is standing in Heston East. Her competition will not include Umesh Kumar, who was officially “validly nominated” to stand there for the Lib Dems, but also, coincidentally, for Reform in Chopra’s current ward, Hounslow West. The upshot is that he is no longer nominated in either.

# Feltham, Bedfont & Hanworth

14 seats

Feltham, including the adjacent smaller neighbourhoods of Bedfont and Hanworth, is the part of Hounslow to the south west of the River Crane, between Heathrow and Kempton Park near the start of the M3. It has historically been the white working-class end of the borough, and to some extent that still holds.

The ward average of 32 per cent graduates is the lowest among the sub-areas of Hounslow, and 26 per cent of residents live in social housing. Comparison of the 2011 and 2021 Censuses in most of Hounslow shows only gradual or even slight ethnic population change, but in these five wards there was been a sharp fall in the White British proportion – it fell by between 14 percentage points in Feltham West and 18 in Hanworth Park. Even so, four out of five wards are majority white, Feltham North being the exception.

The minority population is diverse and more Muslim than Hindu. Feltham used to be more reliably Labour than it is now, with Feltham North even electing three Labour councillors in the 1968 Tory wipeout. But it has been marginal for 20 years. When Labour lost its majority

Ward-level results (2022)	Councillors 2022			Vote share percentage 2022				
	1	2	3	Con	Lab	LD	Green	Other
Bedfont	Lab	Lab	Lab	34.9	51.9	-	13.2	-
Feltham North	Lab	Con	Lab	42.3	42.8	-	14.9	-
Feltham West	Lab	Lab	Lab	31.8	52.1	-	16.1	-
Hanworth Park	Lab	Lab	x	30.6	43.6	12.2	13.7	-
Hanworth Village	Lab	Lab	Con	38.9	43.9	-	17.2	-

in Hounslow in 2006, there were eight Conservative councillors here, four Lib Dems, two Labour and an Independent. UKIP polled well in this area at its high point in 2014, ranging from 25 per cent in Hanworth to 32 per cent in Feltham West, where their candidate was incumbent ex-Tory candidate Colin Botterill.

In the great Hounslow seat swap, the Conservative councillor for Feltham North was the one who defected

to Labour in May 2024, but two of those who left Labour to go Independent were elected for these wards too (one in Bedfont, one in Feltham West). The UKIP vote in 2014 – even if Feltham was a lot whiter than it is now – and the low proportion of graduates suggest that Reform has potential in Feltham, but the party would have to overtake the local Conservatives who have done well to remain as viable as they are.



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## What to watch for

Labour has to lose a lot of seats to lose control of Hounslow – 21 of those it won in May 2022. There is probably no one party that can overhaul them. Defeat would entail Reform knocking out multiple seats in Feltham, the Tories doing some serious business in Heston and maybe Osterley & Spring Grove, and Greens and Independents making progress in Brentford and perhaps Hounslow town. Even if all that happens the chances of a coherent non-Labour administration emerging seem remote: rough-edged Feltham Reformers and smooth Chiswick liberal Tories are not an obviously natural mix.