

**Smith, Andrew**

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**From:** McNamara, Katherine  
**Sent:** 01 May 2007 13:26  
**To:** Smith, Andrew  
**Subject:** Review of Polling Districts and Places

Dear Andrew

Further to your letter to Cllr Kempton dated 25 April, Cllr Kempton suggests moving Polling District A from Laycock School into St Mary Magdalene Academy which would mean that Laycock School would not have to close. SMMA has more space available as it will not be full of pupils until 2013.

Kind regards.

Katherine

**Katherine Mc Namara**  
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**Councillor Lucy Watt**  
**Joint Deputy Leader of the Council &**  
**Executive Member for the Environment**

Liberal Democrat Member for Canonbury

10 May 2007

Andrew Smith  
Electoral Services Manager  
London Borough of Islington  
Town Hall  
Upper Street  
London  
N1 2UD

Dear Andrew

Formal Representation to the Review of Polling Districts and Places

The Canonbury ward councillors would like to make a formal representation to Electoral Services' review of polling districts and places.

There is currently only one venue available for use as a Polling Station in Canonbury ward Polling Districts B and C. This is the Almorah Centre. Polling District C currently votes at the Almorah Centre, however, this is in Polling District B and is difficult for a lot of people, particularly elderly residents, who live in Polling District C to get to in order for them to cast their vote.

The councillors would like to suggest that Rotherfield School is used as the Polling Station for Polling District B.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Lucy Watt

cc: Councillor Paula Belford  
Councillor Barbara Smith

## Smith, Andrew

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**From:** Cornwell, Andrew  
**Sent:** 23 July 2007 17:03  
**To:** Smith, Andrew  
**Subject:** Polling stations review

Mr Andrew Smith  
Electoral Services Manager  
London Borough of Islington

Dear Andrew

### **Review of polling districts and polling places**

Please find below a list of changes which the Islington Council Liberal Democrat Group would like to see addressed in the review. This list has been compiled following consultation with the local Liberal Democrat party in Islington.

#### **1. Barnsbury ward**

We request that Richmond Avenue, Richmond Crescent, Hemingford Road, Ripplevale Grove, Malvern Terrace and Barnsbury Road are moved from polling district C to polling district A, as these are the streets furthest from the current polling station at Half Moon Crescent.

#### **2. Canonbury ward**

Currently there is no polling station in district C and this presents difficulties for voters in the north of that district who must travel to the Almorah Centre in district B. We request that either a suitable venue be found in district C, or a mobile polling station be deployed in the area.

We request that consideration be given to using Rotherfield School as the polling station for polling district B.

#### **3. Mildmay ward**

We request that the polling district boundaries be reviewed so as to address the current configuration of polling district B, which is extremely long and narrow.

#### **4. St Mary's ward**

We request that the polling station in district A be moved to the new St Mary Magdalene Academy, as this is a more convenient location within the district.

## 5. Use of school premises

Although schooling can be disrupted, we accept that it is often necessary to use educational premises for polling purposes. However we would ask that where this is done, consideration be given to only using part of school premises, such that complete closure of the school for the day can be avoided. Obviously this will vary on a case by case basis, and we are happy to comment on any specific proposals arising from this review and from any subsequent discussions with schools.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Andrew Cornwell

# Submission to the review of Polling places by Islington Labour Group

## *Overview*

This submission is based on the principle that the location of polling places and polling district boundaries should maximise the participation of voters in election by making voting easy for most residents.

## *Barriers to Participation*

There are a number of objective barriers to participation that should be avoided when choosing the location of polling places and polling district boundaries.

These are

- **1) Distance from population centre.** Polling place location should be central to largest population concentrations in polling districts. The smaller the distance that majority of electors have to walk, the greater the likelihood of participation.
- **2) People not able to vote at the closest polling station.** People are less likely to vote if the closest polling station is not the one they are allowed to vote as this is seen as frustrating, illogical and inconvenient from the voters point of view. Large populations of residents should not have to pass a polling station to go and vote at another polling station because of polling district boundaries do not take account of where large numbers of people live.
- **3) Major roads separating the majority of voters from polling place:** Location of polling station should avoid the majority of electors having to cross a major thoroughfare where the district is divided by a major road. Elderly and disabled residents without transport find this a particular barrier.

It is impossible to locate polling stations to ensure every voter does not have one of these barriers. The principle should be to ensure that the greatest number of people possible should not have one of these three barriers to participation where it can be avoided by the sensible location of polling places and polling district boundaries.

## *Proposed Changes*

We submit that the following changes to polling station location and polling district boundaries will remove barriers to participation.

### **Recommendation 1: SSPA Polling place to be New North School**

The polling station used to be the old Popham School, but this was not available for the 2005 general election and 2006 council election, due the rebuilding program for the school. The polling location for 2005 general election and 2006 council election was Rotherfield School. This school on the very edge of the ward is the most distant point possible for a polling station from the Popham Estate, Popham Rd Estate and Peabody estate, the three largest concentrations of housing in the polling district. The

Rotherfield School polling station forces the majority of the population to cross the New North Rd. The present location contravenes principle 1 and 3 and was the subject of a formal complaint in the 2005 General elections to the returning officer, due to the large number of people who found it to difficult to cross the road and walk the distance to the current polling station. We recommend that the polling station for SSPA be made the New North School. If this is not available, we recommend the Popham community centre in Popham Street.

## **Recommendation 2: Adjust Boundary of SSPB/SSPC**

Currently hundreds of voters in Cluse court can see Noel Rd School Polling station when they walk out their front door, but can't vote there. A small change in the polling district boundary by making the boundary follow St Peter's street until Frome street and then follow Dame street to the Grand Canal would allow Cluse Court residents to vote at the polling station nearest them. This polling district boundary would be in accordance with principle 2 in ensuring that a large group of people don't have to pass a polling station in order to vote.

## **Change SHYA Polling Place to City and Islington College**

Current location of polling place at Williamson Street community centre is at the edge of the polling district and forces majority of polling district to cross Camden Road, a major road. City and Islington college building at the corner of Caledonian Rd and Camden Rd would be more central. If this venue is not available then the Lorraine estate community centre would be the second choice, As this venue is not as central as City Islington College, it avoid crossing of main roads.

Islington North Labour considers that reviews should be undertaken in three of the Wards in the constituency – Finsbury Park, St George's, and Hillrise.

### FINSBURY PARK

This Ward gives considerable cause for concern in view of the comments of electors and the experiences of Labour Party activists seeking to encourage voting. The dissecting of the Ward by Seven Sisters Road, a main artery leading from central London with a heavy traffic flow, is one of the significant factors causing difficulty for the electorate.

We wish to put forward the following proposals on which the working group might focus.

Finsbury Park Ward should continue to be made up of three electoral districts but the current boundaries of these be re-aligned to provide a more sensible route for electors.

Polling District A - would consist of all the area south of Seven Sisters Road from the Nags Head (ie junction of Seven Sisters Road and Holloway Road) to Finsbury Park. The polling place for this district should remain at Pakeman School, Pakeman Street, N7

Reason for change

Polling district A at present includes areas north of Seven Sisters Road including Six Acres Estate, Haden and Clifton Courts and part of Fonthill and Moray Roads and Stroud Green Road. Seven Sisters Road is the busiest road through the Ward and a barrier to voters going to Pakeman School. Polling district A at present excludes Pakeman Street and the surrounding area although one entrance to the polling station is in Pakeman Street, causing confusion. Some voters arriving at the polling station have to be directed to Bennett Court, so crossing Seven Sisters Road in the opposite direction to reach the correct polling place for their address.

Polling District B - would be bounded by Seven Sisters Road, Hornsey Road, Tollington Way and Holloway Road. The polling station would remain at Bennett Court. This is a self-contained area and voters would not need to cross any major roads. As it would lose the area south of Seven Sisters Road this polling district would be smaller. The working group might consider however whether the new development on the Hornsey Road baths site might be added – that is all new housing between Newington Barrow Way and Seven Sisters Road/Hornsey Road.

Polling District C - would consist of the remainder of the Ward, that is, bounded by Seven Sisters Road, Stroud Green Road (up to but not including Tollington Park which is in Tollington Ward) following the Ward boundary to include Charteris Road, Moray Road, Birnam Road to Hornsey Road.

#### Reason for change

This would remove the need for voters from Six Acres and Haden Court to cross Seven Sisters Road and walk the fairly long distance to Pakeman School as at present. The current polling station is in Montem School. This is seen as unsatisfactory as it requires present District C voters (which excludes Six Acres, Haden and Clifton Courts residents) to walk across the polling district to the polling place.

It is suggested that the working group considers alternative venues for the polling place for District C. Suggestions include Durham Road Community Room (which has the advantage of being directly on Durham Road and thus obvious and accessible for voters not living on the estates); Pooles Park School; Andover Community Centre.

#### ST GEORGE'S

There is concern about Polling Districts A and B. Firstly there seems to be some imbalance in the number of voters – A has 1527 (electoral register as at the Borough election, 4 May 2006) while B has 3113. All of these vote at St George's Church Centre, Crayford Road N7 and while the return to this venue was welcomed after the unavoidable use of the unsatisfactory TA centre on Camden Road, this also means three polling stations in this venue with some voters having to travel about three quarters of a mile, the second issue that might be examined.

It is suggested in any case that St George's merits some review simply in terms of it being one of the largest geographical Ward areas in the borough. The working group might consider the issue of voters making their vote outside the boundary of their

Ward where the large area and the availability of premises seems to cause difficulties. There is some precedent for this in that Highbury Quadrant School, Highbury New Park N5 is the polling place for voters in both Highbury East and Mildmay Wards, serving polling districts C in each.

In St George's , some present Polling District A residents might be better served by being able to vote at Whittington Park Community Centre nearby but in Junction Ward. Those voters in Beversbrook Road (part), Tytherton Road (part), Yerbury Road (part), Tavistock Terrace, Fairmead Road, Mercers Road (part) might vote here and would then not have to cross Tufnell Park Road.

### HILLRISE

It is the impact of the geographical nature of the Ward and the location of polling stations which might be examined in Hillrise. Despite vigorous campaigns to promote postal voting, the anecdotal evidence from residents who wish to vote in person is that the hill causes problems for many.

This is particularly noted in Polling District A where it is recalled (though the date not certain) that it was once possible to vote without the exertion of the walk down and up the hill. This problem might be alleviated by locating a polling station at 'the top of the hill', say on Hornsey Lane Estate where there is a community centre and offices of the Estate Management Board, to serve part of the current Polling Districts A and B affected by the geographical nature of the Ward.