

# THE ISLINGTON SOCIETY

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## Boundary commission review of Ward boundaries within Islington

Islington Society response to consultation

June 2019

### A. General

Background to boundaries, population numbers and projections

#### 1. The current Parliamentary Constituencies.

If the distinction between the two constituencies is maintained, the 17th ward would now be in the South. The average size of wards in the North would then be 10,176. This is above the cross Borough average of 9,900.

#### 2. Three members per ward.

There are real, significant advantages in keeping to the principle of three members in every ward. It provides cover if one member falls ill or has to work away from London. There are occasions when it is necessary for two councillors to represent competing interests within their ward.

### B. Recommendations in Principle

Islington Society Recommendations

#### 1. Numbers, growth and occupancy

i. The population numbers should be based on predicted population figures beyond the 2019 predictions for 2024, to take account of future, anticipated growth otherwise it will soon be necessary to re-assess ward boundaries afresh.

*Example : The Holloway Prison site cannot be ignored. We recommend that St. George's should be kept at a minimum in order to accommodate the anticipated growth when the Holloway Prison site is developed.*

ii. If the phenomenon of 'Buy to Leave' persists, this will produce an imbalance in the workload of councillors, and some account of this should be taken in setting ward boundaries.

#### 2. Wards should reflect the underlying communities

Wards are supposed to reflect communities. The guidelines are that there should be at least one primary school in each ward.

*Example : Canonbury Ward has currently has no primary schools. Rotherfield School could be restored to Canonbury.*

#### 3. Rational Boundaries

Boundaries should be rational and should, wherever possible, follow natural, clearly defined and readily described boundaries. The rational boundaries are railway lines (North London, Gospel Oak to Barking and East Coast Lines) and main arterial roads that present natural boundaries.

This is not just neatness; it is necessary for the sake of the ordinary people of Islington who generally haven't a clue where irrational ward boundaries are, especially when they dodge about along obscure streets.

*Example : re-aligning the Canonbury Ward boundary along New North Road (an arterial road and natural boundary) would restore Canonbury and / or Rotherfield Schools to Canonbury Ward.*

#### 4. Strategic centres.

Ward boundaries should take account of the borough's strategic centres\*, providing rational ward councillor ownership and scrutiny to them.

At present, Nag's Head (where four wards come together) and Angel (which has three) are split up into pie-pieces while Archway is in just one ward.

We recommend that the main strategic centres\* should be included always in two, and only two, Wards This would provide three councillors in each of two adjacent wards straddling a strategic centre\* so that both sets of three councillors had an clear interest in and provided cross-check scrutiny/accountability

\* Strategic Centres are : Archway, Nag's Head, Highbury Corner, Angel. The two on the borough boundary, Finsbury Park and Old Street (Bunhill), each in just one ward, have cross-borough ownership, scrutiny and accountability.

### C. Summary

The Islington Society recommends :

- a. maintaining the principle of three member wards,
- b. restoring natural and some historic boundaries,
- c. recognising and incorporating in boundary changes the importance of strategic centres in the borough and
- d. restoring the principle of reflecting the communities within wards, including a primary school in every ward.

*Andrew Bosi & David Gibson*