

## Report of: (Acting) Returning Officer

Meeting of:	Date:	Ward(s):
Audit	26 October 2023	Laycock

<b>Delete as appropriate</b>	Exempt	Non-exempt	
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## **SUBJECT: Review of Polling Districts and Polling Places**

### **1. Synopsis**

- 1.1 This report sets out proposed changes to polling districts and polling places in Laycock ward.
- 1.2 This change will take effect with the publication of the revised Register of Electors on 1 December 2023 and for all elections for four years thereafter.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 To agree the changes set out in the report in relation to Laycock Ward.
- 2.2 To note the comments/representations received by Councillors and residents

### **3. Background**

- 3.1 The Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013 introduced a change to the timing of compulsory reviews of UK parliamentary polling districts and polling places. The last compulsory review had to be started and completed between 1 October 2018 and 31 January 2020 inclusive.
- 3.2 In 2019 the Local Government Boundary Commission reviewed all the wards within the London Borough of Islington and concluded that the number of wards should increase from 16 to 17 wards.

3.3 These changes resulted in the need to undertake a review for all the polling districts and polling places in the borough and these changes then came into effect in May 2022.

3.4 Following changes to building availability within Laycock ward we have undertaken a review to find a suitable replacement within the SLAC polling District.

3.5 The steps required for the review have been undertaken, including publication of the proposals and consultation on them. The Returning Officer will seek approval from the Audit Committee of the Council, which has delegated powers to designate polling places, at a meeting of the committee on 20 November 2023.

## **4. Laycock Ward**

### **4.1 Proposed polling districts and polling stations**

4.1.1 As Laycock PDC is going to be used by Childrens Services and the layout of the building is to be changed it is no longer suitable to be used as a polling station.

4.1.2 As part of the review, we visited several venues within the polling district but found that most were unsuitable or not accessible. The polling place will comprise of two polling stations, the proposed venue provides sufficient space for this.

### **4.2 Existing Polling Places for Laycock ward**

<b>Polling District</b>	<b>Current Polling Place</b>	<b>Polling Stations</b>
SLAA	Ringcross Community Centre, 60 Lough Road, London, N7 8RH	2
SLAB	Westbourne Community Centre, 43 Roman Way, London, N7 8XF	1
SLAC	Laycock PDC, Laycock Street, London, N1 1TH	2

### **4.3 Proposed Changes**

4.3.1 It is proposed that the polling station in Laycock PDC is moved to 222 Upper Street to accommodate those residents living in properties in the SLAC polling district. The proposed venue for the new district is on the main road with good transport links and is near to the previous polling place.

4.3.2 222 Upper Street is also a Council building so it will be ideal in terms of awareness of the new location and as the building is a council building, we have more control over availability for future elections. The new venue was visited and assessed in August 2023 and is entirely suitable for polling, has level access throughout and all the necessary facilities for electors and staff. Other potential venues included an annex of Laycock PDC, however we were informed this building

would also be part of building works and it would not be able to be used.

#### **4.4 Proposed new Polling Districts and Polling Places for Laycock ward**

<b>Polling District</b>	<b>Current Polling Place</b>	<b>Polling Stations</b>
SLAA	Ringcross Community Centre, 60 Lough Road, London, N7 8RH	2
SLAB	Westbourne Community Centre, 43 Roman Way, London, N7 8XF	1
SLAC	Islington Customer Centre, 222 Upper Street, London, N1 1XR	2

### **5. Representations**

5.1 Two comments/representations have been received as a result of the review consultation. Both representations are in support of the proposed changes and excerpts are included below.

Email from Cllr Staff 10 September 2023

“Agree this seems the nearest most accessible place for a polling station”.

Email from Cllr Turan 10 September 2023

“222 does seem to be the most suitable alternative”.

### **6. Implications**

#### **6.1 Financial Implications:**

The costs of the polling districts and polling places review will be met from within existing budgets.

#### **6.2 Legal Implications**

6.2.1 The Representation of the People Act 1983 section 18B requires that local authorities designate the polling places within their Parliamentary constituencies. Under the Representation of the People Act 1983, Returning Officers have the right to use certain public buildings (including a room in a school that receives public funds) for use as polling stations at elections [Chapter 2, Schedule 1, Part III, paragraph 22].

Section 18B (4) of the RPA 1983 states that in conducting a review of polling places the authority must:

- A) seek to ensure that all the electors in the constituency have such reasonable facilities for voting as are practicable in the circumstances.
- B) seek to ensure that so far as is reasonable and practicable, the polling places they are responsible for are accessible to all electors, including those who

are disabled, and when considering the designation of a polling place, must have regard to the accessibility needs of disabled persons.

6.2.2 In addition, the polling place for a polling district must be within the area of the district unless special circumstances make it desirable to designate an area either wholly or partly outside of the polling district.

### **6.3 Environmental Implications and contribution to achieving a net zero carbon Islington by 2030:**

No implications

## **7. Resident Impact Assessment:**

7.1 The council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it (section 149 Equality Act 2010). The council has a duty to have due regard to the need to remove or minimise disadvantages, take steps to meet needs, in particular steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, and encourage people to participate in public life. The council must have due regard to the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding.

7.2 Electoral Services considered a review of all possible polling places and used a suitability and access checklist. This was drawn largely from the recommendations in Scope's Poll Report 4 published following the 2005 General Election. One checklist has been completed for each existing poll place and all proposed new polling places.

7.3 All polling staff receives equalities training as part of the induction for working on the election.

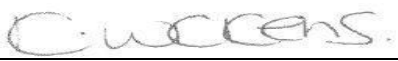
## **8. Reason for recommendations**

8.1 The building that was used for the last election in the polling district is no longer suitable and will be unable to be used for any future elections. There are no other suitable venues in the polling district.

## **9. Appendices**

9.1 Appendix 1 – Map of Laycock Ward with new previous and proposed polling station location highlighted

## **10. Background papers:** None.

<b>Signed by:</b>		
	Kerry Wickens, Assistant Director of Elections and Corporate Support Services	Date 26 October 2023

Report Author:	Georgia Kinsella
Tel:	020 7527 3085
Email:	Georgia.kinsella@islington.gov.uk

Legal Implications Author:	Sonal Mistry
Tel:	020 7527 3833
Email:	sonal.mistry@islington.gov.uk