

### **Appendix 3: Comments Received by the (Acting) Returning Officer to the consultation.**

#### **1. Member of the public**

Brent Indian Community Center is a well established Community Centre at the junction of Willesden High Road, Willesden Bus Garage and Dollishill Station.

Our new Community Centre will be ready in March 2023, which is being built in conjunction with Brent Council, to rebuild a new hall for our Centre and affordable housing above the Community Centre, at 19 Duddenhill Lane, Willesden NW10 2ET.

With the expected increase in the number of residents in the area, we would like to have a discussion on using the new Community Centre for future elections.

The redevelopment is being Project Managed, working with Mr Tanvir Ghani at Brent Council.

#### **2. Cllr. Kanta Mistry (Queensbury Ward)**

I understand that Electoral Services are asking Councillors on Polling Station Review for the next forthcoming GLA elections in 2024 and I would you to take into account my following comments which residents in Queensbury NQY2 Polling District made on polling day and subsequently when we visited them after the May 2022 elections.

Also, survey forms were completed by residents on their views on the Hut Outside the Arch Climbing wall in Burnt Oak polling station which were submitted to Brent Council.

In May 2022 residents living in Dryburgh Gardens, Brinkburn Gardens, even Numbers of Wimborne Drive, part Beverley Drive, Girton Avenue, Holyrood Gardens, North Way, Tewkesbury Gardens and Waltham Drive were transferred from Queensbury Methodist Church on Beverley Drive to the Hut outside the Arch in Edgware.

Most residents used to walk over to their polling station from the above streets which is literally a short distance and forced to travel so much further where parking was a huge issue. Also, Brent incurred additional costs of having to set up a second Portacabin in Edgware with additional staff. Totally, a poor judgement.

- Many residents from the above roads were denied their right to vote as a result of the longer distance.
- Several residents returned back to their homes without voting due to lack of parking.
- Around 300-400 residents living in Dryburgh Gardens, Brinkburn Gardens, even Numbers of Wimborne Drive, part Beverley Drive, Girton Avenue,

Holyrood Gardens, North Way, Tewkesbury Gardens and Waltham Drive were inconvenienced and did not bother to vote because of the distance to travel to the Arch Climbing Wall.

- A possible alternate Polling booth for residents from above streets could be St Annes Church in Waltham Drive a few meters away.
- Many residents did not find it easy to find the Portacabin outside Arch Climbing Wall
- Elderly voters found the Hut not accessible and too far away to walk to, over  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile away
- Residents told us that moving the polling booth to The Arch Climbing Wall unfair and did not get the chance to vote.

As the local Councillor, I would like Brent Council to reassess the move and ensure that the streets mentioned above have their voting polling booth restored back to its original venue or nearby on Waltham Drive. Councillors should be consulted on such an important matter for future.

Please take my above comments and facts on board and ensure that Queensbury NQY2 Polling District residents have easy access to vote is restored.

### 3. **Cllr Paul Lorber (Sudbury Ward)**

1. I refer to the consultation.

During the local elections there was a great deal of confusion for people living in the District and Central Roads and Station Approach etc areas.

This area used to vote at the Sudbury Baptist Church in Station Approach.

If possible this polling station should be reinstated so it can serve:

Central Road  
District Road  
Station Approach  
station Crescent  
Barham Close  
Barham Court  
Fishers Way  
Williams Way  
Part of Harrow Road before the bridge

In due course the new block on the Keelers site will vote here too.

In total this would serve around 700 homes and around 1300 electors so would seem to be justified.

Not only were people confused as Sudbury Town often congested the journey for many residents to the Methodist Church some way away into Sudbury was difficult and many just simply gave up.

#### **4. Cllr Ajmal Akram (Wembley Hill Ward)**

Please may we look into having an additional polling station for Wembley Hill, the area and distance for the current locations need reviewing and should include a 4<sup>th</sup> location.

Please see attached map with the current 3 and the star for the 4<sup>th</sup> location, Some roads result in over 1 mile from the closest location, for example Meadow Way or parts of St Johns Road?

We need to look at more schools and other locations to ensure the distance is within walking distance to all, at the moment the distance does not work for the ward.

#### **5. Cllr Jayanti Patel (Queensbury Ward)**

Further to an email from Natalie Zara last week that Brent Electron services are reviewing the polling station for the coming GLA election in May 2024. Please find below comments we received from resident in Queensbury Ward on polling day in May 2022. A survey was also carried out by Brent Council that residents were asked to fill in, on their views at the Hut Outside the Arch Climbing wall in Burnt Oak polling station.

Voting should be as easy and accessible as possible, and in many cases it is. But in the election on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2022 unnecessary barriers were erected for people to register vote in person. The result is a severely compromised democracy that did not reflect the will of the people. Our democracy works best when all eligible voters can participate and have their voices heard.

Queensbury Methodist Church always had two polling Booths for over 10 years inside the church hall. Most of the residents walked over to their polling stations from nearby streets, and if they can by car there was ample parking spaces outside and in the Church car park.

Hut Outside the Arch climbing wall always had one cabin to vote for over 10 years, so there was no need for Brent council have to have two Cabins at additional costs.

A lot of residents in QY2 polling district were denied their voting right due to no parking availability at the Hut Outside the Arch Climbing Wall, they returned back to their homes and did not vote. Also, the distance to travel disenfranchised a lot of residents denying them their democratic right to vote.

Around 300 to 400 residents living in streets near Queensbury Methodist Church did not bother to vote because of the distance to travel from Dryburgh Gardens, Brink burn Gardens, Wimborne Drive, Beverley Drive, Girton Avenue, Holyrood Gardens, North Way, Tewkesbury Gardens, Waltham Drive. A possible alternate Polling booth for residents from these streets could be St Annes Church in Waltham Drive a few meters away.

Please find attached a report we prepared after the May 2022 election that we want electoral services to consider so we do not disfranchise residents from voting in Queensbury Ward.

6. **Cllr Janice Long (Willesden Green Ward)**

According to the street index Geary Road is in WN2 apart from 153-155 which are in WN3. More logical for them to be in WN2 so the whole of Geary Road is in one polling district.

Park Avenue North.

> 111-121 are in WN2

> 69 - 109 and 38 - 122 are in WN3.

It would be more logical for 111 - 121 to be in WN3 so the whole of Park Avenue North is in one polling district.

WN1

Two community centres are opening soon on Dudden Hill Lane, the Learie Constantine Centre and Brent Indian Community Centre. Several years ago the WN1 area was split in two down Belton Road and votes in the western half voted at the Learie Constantine Centre. Now voters use St Andrews & St Francis Primary school. Originally the polling station was via the Belton Road entrance but now it is in Villiers Road, quite a distance. So consideration should be given to the use of one of the new community centres as a polling station.

7. **Sent on behalf of Stuart Love, CEX of Westminster Council**

Thank you for sending us details of your review, the content of which is noted.

On the basis that Stuart will be the (Acting) Returning Officer for the Queen's Park and Maida Vale constituency which includes 3 LB Brent wards (Harlesden & Kensal Green, Kilburn, Queens Park ) we kindly ask that you notify us if any changes are made to the designated polling places within the 3 wards before the next general election takes place or if any other issues arise upon which you believe Stuart should be sighted.

8. **Sent on behalf of Alex Dewsnap, Head of Paid Service (Managing Director), London Borough of Harrow**

Thank you for getting in touch and providing us with information regarding your Polling District and Polling Places review.

As Alex Dewsnap will be the Acting Returning Officer for the Harrow East Constituency which includes the LB Brent Ward of Queensbury, we would be grateful if you could notify us if any changes are made to the designated Polling Places of the ward ahead of the next UK Parliamentary General Election.

Please could you also let us know if there are any other issues which arise that should be brought to Alex's attention.