



HIGHGATE SOCIETY

Response to Boundary Commission for England

2023 Constituency Boundary Review proposals for London

This submission argues for revision of the parliamentary boundary proposals as they affect the Highgate wards of Haringey and Camden and the proposed Kentish Town & Bloomsbury and Finchley & Muswell Hill parliamentary constituencies.

We first set out the reasons why Highgate is a single community and should be in one constituency. We then present a possible alternative proposal which we believe would meet our objectives within the constraints of electoral numbers which apply.

The Highgate Society

The Highgate Society was founded in 1966 by local people who had successfully fought government plans to route heavy traffic through the heart of Highgate. The Society has continued to work for Highgate, its residents and visitors and its businesses. It works closely with local planning authorities and other London bodies and has earned a reputation for well-founded views and a determination to succeed.

We are a voluntary organisation with over 1200 members. There are no paid staff, and the organisation is run by an elected Council who serve for 3 years and deal with different aspects of the Society's activities.

The Highgate Society's reputation makes it the first port of call for anyone seeking to develop, conserve or interpret the quality and character of Highgate. It is a source of civic pride and people will know it for its independence of thought, challenging perspective and positive outlook.

We listen, advise, support and act on behalf of all residents across Highgate.

Background and historical context

Highgate has been a community and a geographical entity since the 14th century. Its existence as a distinct and separate community is attested by numerous historical maps.

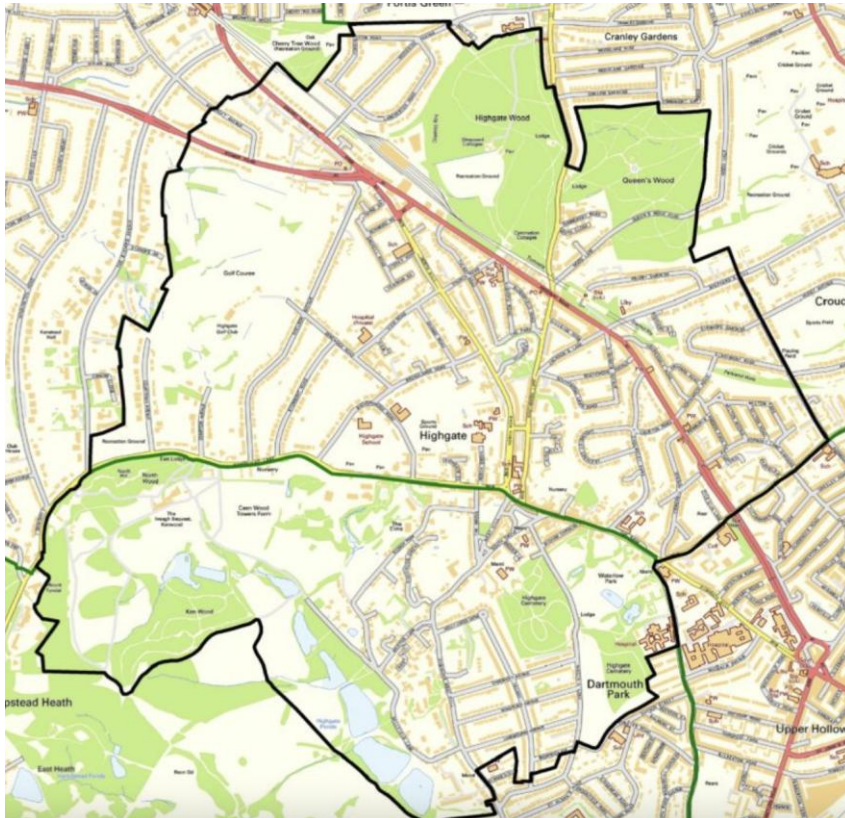
The people of Highgate have been campaigning to be treated as one community for many years – most notably since the formation of The Highgate Society and, more recently, with the designation of the Highgate Neighbourhood Forum supported by both Camden and Haringey boroughs in 2012.

The Highgate Neighbourhood Plan

The Highgate Neighbourhood Plan made in 2017 has as part of its Vision:

“For many years Highgate has been divided by the Camden/Haringey Borough boundary. Our Vision is to unite the community across this artificial administrative border to deliver a more cohesive and joined up approach on planning and transport policies.”

The area covered by the Highgate Neighbourhood plan is shown below. It includes part of the Camden Highgate ward and nearly all of the Haringey Highgate ward. This area was recognised by both boroughs through their approval of the neighbourhood plan as forming the community of Highgate.



The black line shows the Neighbourhood plan area and the green line shows the borough boundary.

The N6 postal area

Highgate is a single postal district – N6. The N6 postal district includes the Highgate wards of both Camden and Haringey and provides further evidence of the existence and coherence of a single Highgate community.

Shopping and cultural centre

Highgate High Street, together with Archway Road, is the main shopping area in Highgate. Highgate High Street is a unifying feature and should never have been used as a boundary dividing line on a map. An onsite visit to the area or even a review on Google streetview would make this abundantly clear.

Alternatives

We recognise that your mandate is to determine electoral constituencies which have a similar electorate. Consequently we recognise that changing the boundary line between the Finchley & Muswell Hill and Kentish Town & Bloomsbury would alter

the size of the electorates. At present F&MH is shown as having 76,351 electors and KT&B as having 74,997 electors. The Highgate ward of Haringey is shown as having 9,817 electors. Consequently moving the Highgate ward of Haringey from the F&MH constituency to the KT&B constituency without a compensating change would result in too few electors in F&MH and too many in KT&B. The similar problems would occur from moving the Camden Highgate ward into F&MH constituency.

Potential solution

In the transition from the old Holborn & St Pancras constituency into KT&B, the Islington Tufnell Park ward has been brought into KT&B. Tufnell Park has an electorate of 8,506. One option would therefore be to include the Haringey Highgate ward into KT&B but exclude Tufnell Park. This change would give a net increase of 1,311 electors giving a total of 76,308 for KT&B.

Tufnell Park is a different postcode and is not part of the Kentish Town Neighbourhood Forum. For these reasons we believe it has weaker connections with the adjoining areas of the KT&B constituency than does the Highgate ward of Haringey.

One possible solution is set out in the table below:

Potential realignment to unify Highgate in a single constituency							
	Ward	Borough	Kentish Town & Bloomsbury	Finchley & Muswell Hill	Islington North	Hornsey & Wood Green	Rationale
Starting proposed electorates			74,997	76,351	71,924	74,201	
Move	Highgate	Haringey	9,817	(9,817)			To unify Highgate
Move	Tufnell Park	Islington	(8,506)		8,506		To avoid bringing part of Islington borough into a mainly Camden constituency
Move	Crouch End	Haringey		9,987		(9,987)	Crouch End is adjacent and culturally similar to Muswell Hill
Move	Hillrise	Islington			(10,288)	10,288	
Revised electorates			76,308	76,521	70,142	74,502	
Number of boroughs included in each constituency							
Before revisions			2	2	2	1	
After revisions			2	2	2	2	

In the above table specific wards are indentified which could be moved between the constituencies indicated. Figures in brackets show the number of electors moved out, and positive figures the number of electors moved in to each constituency.

As an alternative, it may be possible to separate the N6 portion of the Camden Highgate ward and include it into either the Finchley & Muswell Hill constituency or the Camden Town & St John's Wood constituency. We do not have data on the number of electors in the Camden N6 area to assess the numerical impact.

A missed opportunity

We are disappointed that your Review recommendations has divided our neighbourhood along this anachronistic, artificial and illogical boundary which runs down Highgate High Street. The whole of Highgate belongs in one constituency.

Despite our unifying Neighbourhood Plan, we still find it difficult to persuade our two Councils (Camden and Haringey) to work together on important planning and transport issues and – as we are on the edge of both - they still ‘forget’ us when making cross borough plans for matters like cycling, traffic, transport and shopping.

While we understand that the present review does not affect the boundary of Camden and Haringey boroughs, we urge you to reconsider and find a way to include the whole of Highgate in one parliamentary constituency. This will continue the momentum towards unification established with the formation of the single neighbourhood forum planning area.

We request that you re-assess your Boundary Review to include the whole of Highgate in one constituency.