

14 Reasons for 14 Wards

Here are fourteen reasons why Londoners and London city council should support the recent OMB decision to redraw London' ward boundaries into 14 single-member wards and not try to kill it by further delay or appeal:

- 1) A new ward map that better respects London's many communities will result in local government that is better able to address the long-term interests of Londoners.
- 2) The OMB decision is well reasoned, well written and will address the concerns of many Londoners, concerns that have not been addressed by this or previous councils.
- 3) It was London city council that chose to ignore the expressed wishes of its citizens by not enacting the results of the 2003 plebiscite. This same council summarily dismissed a petition of almost 1,000 voters who called for the adoption of the Imagine London ward map and the elimination of the Board of Control.
- 4) The OMB is the prescribed and official body to hear appeals on ward boundary issues. There is no one else to appeal to.
- 5) Rather than impose an outside solution, the OMB ordered that the city's map, created by the city's experts, form the basis of new ward boundaries in London. This is to be modified to include the best aspects of the Imagine London map.
- 6) The ruling allows us to develop a made-in-London solution (to a made-in-London problem).
- 7) Public participation took place throughout this process. The public was invited to participate during the city's own governance review; during the drafting, circulating, discussing & approving of the Imagine London petition, and during the OMB hearing to consider the Imagine London map.
- 8) People cannot be forced to participate in these processes - they can only be asked.
- 9) Listening to the people and doing what they want is one way to increase the level and quality of that participation. It might also help reduce voter cynicism about politics and politicians and raise the dismal level of voter turnout during election time.
- 10) Those who say that fourteen single-member wards will result in more squabbling than is seen now, need to consider this: Winning approval (i.e. a vote) at city hall will continue to require that councillors work together on issues of mutual concern. Many, if not most issues that come up at council are of concern to more than one area in the city.
- 11) The best councilors will always recognize that there are more issues that unite them than divide them. Councilors who consistently fail to act as good local representatives will soon be out of a job.
- 12) Smaller wards will make it easier for members of council to provide good service to their constituents. They will have half the phone calls, half the meetings to attend, etc.
- 13) Accountability will be more direct / more obvious because you will know who your councilor is.
- 14) Reducing ward size will make it less expensive to run for office; more candidates will appear; donated money will become less of a factor.

There are at least fourteen good reasons to come to the city council meeting on Monday December 5th at 2PM and witness which members of council are concerned with the best long-term interest of all Londoners - and which are not. PLEASE PHONE OR EMAIL YOUR COUNCILLORS AND URGE THEM NOT TO APPEAL THIS DECISION.

George Sinclair

Chair, The Urban League of London