

From: Simon Pardoe [REDACTED]
Sent: 27 March 2017 15:56
To: reviews
Subject: Response to proposed boundary changes - Manchester, M14
Attachments: MossSideWardElecBoundary-UppingIt.pdf

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Consultation response.

FAO The Reviewing Officer
Local Government Boundary Commission for England

Please see our letter attached, identifying a serious problem in the local boundary changes in Manchester M14.

We were informed that this submission can be considered if received today.

Thank you

From:
Dr Simon Pardoe
For 'Upping It'

[REDACTED]

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The Reviewing Officer
Local Government Boundary Commission for England
14th Floor
Millbank Tower
London SW1P 4QP

Dear Sirs

**Electoral boundary change proposal
to remove Whitworth Park and Gallery from Moss Side ward, Manchester**

We have only today heard of the proposed boundary change, to move Whitworth Park and Gallery from Moss Side ward to Ardwick Ward. We write urgently to ask you to reconsider it.

I write on behalf of Upping It, an award-winning local group focussing on upping recycling and environmental quality within the east side of Moss Side and the west side of Rusholme.

As engaged locals, we were completely unaware of this change. Even today, a Google search for “moss side ward boundary changes” produces changes back to 1997, but nothing on these proposals.

This proposal has been put forward without local knowledge. Even the Chair of the Friends of Whitworth Park was unaware of it. We suggest it would be met with local despair and resentment if it went ahead.

The case against the change

- 1) **In terms of population per ward**, to remove Whitworth Park and Gallery from Moss Side ward would make no difference. So there is no justification there. But in terms of heritage, pride and democracy, it would be an unnecessary blow to the good people of Moss Side.
- 2) **Historically**, Whitworth Park was saved for local people, by the amazing Sir Joseph Whitworth. When the land was up for sale for development, he bought it and bequeathed it for local people. He wanted to create an institution to offer an understanding of art, and to meet the need for a public “pleasure ground”. The Whitworth Park and Institute were opened in 1890. It is surrounded on 3 sides by the terraced housing of Moss Side. Our street, Acomb St., used to go right through it.
- 3) **Geographically**, Whitworth Park and Gallery are, by contrast, separated from the population of Ardwick by three main roads, and by the whole of the Manchester Royal Infirmary complex. The Park and Gallery are not part of Ardwick by any bizarre stretch of the imagination. It would be administrative gobbledygook to make it part of Ardwick.
- 4) **In terms of daily use**, the people who walk across Whitworth Park are from Moss Side. We walk across it to the city centre, to the buses, to the shops, and to our places of work in the hospital and universities. The children of Moss Side mingle in the park after school. It is the people of Moss Side who fill the park on sunny evenings and weekends. It is culturally part of Moss Side, and a major part of the pleasure of living here.
- 5) **Democratically**, it is people in Moss Side who value it as a recreational asset. If there are practical problems with litter, vermin or dogs, it is local people in Moss Side who will know it, be concerned to report it, and help deal with it. To remedy future problems, or implement future improvements, the Council will need local people in Moss Side to be part of the solution. So it should remain democratically part of Moss Side.

- 6) **For Councillors**, to shift the electoral boundary would mean that our Moss Side Councillors who live here, would no longer regard the park as their remit, and would want to avoid 'stepping on the toes' of the Ardwick councillors, who don't live here or represent the people who live by it. It makes no sense.
- 7) **In terms of arts funding**, the Arts Council funding policy routinely emphasises a demand for local public engagement. The Gallery is in the early stages of trying to do so. So whatever the wishes of the current Gallery administrators, there can surely be no justification for administratively and democratically removing the Gallery from the area in which the local public live.
- 8) **For local pride in Moss Side**. This boundary change removes two major listed buildings that are part of the cultural heritage of the area. It would leave Moss Side with no major arts heritage. It would also remove the Park, as the key environmental asset for the quality of life in Moss Side.

The outrage for local people will of course be that Manchester City Council was seemingly happy to leave the park within Moss Side for the decades when they let the park become run down and dangerous. But as soon as there has been a multi-million pound national *public* investment in the Gallery, and local people have worked so hard to improve the area, suddenly the park is to be formally allocated to others.

Both Park and Gallery are vital elements in the work to change the uninformed stereotyped perceptions that so often malign this lovely Edwardian area of Manchester. We would suggest that keeping them both formally as part of Moss Side is crucial in sustaining pride in Moss Side, and in Manchester City Council's stated goal of sustaining it as a residential area of choice.

- 9) **Environmentally**, it would be a huge blow to all of us who have worked so hard over the years to improve the environmental quality of Moss Side. We in Moss Side won Manchester's Be Proud Award for clean city in 2016 for our innovative public engagement on recycling and waste.

Yet this apparently pointless administrative change removes the ward's most valuable environmental asset, and majorly undermines all of that local work.

We recognise that this submission is last minute, and regret that we didn't have time to inform local people, so that they too could express their wish for you to reconsider this proposed change.

We thank you for your attention.

Yours faithfully



Simon Pardoe (Dr)

On behalf of the Upping It Steering Group.