Has the Time Come for Local Council Elections in Kuala Lumpur?

Danesh Prakash Chacko

Persatuan Bertindak Pilihan Raya Bebas dan Saksama

30th October 2026

Quick Pointers

- The democratic rationale for local elections and the problems they are intended to address.
- Electoral system and ward/boundary design.
- Political party participation and the question of local versus national politics.
- Accountability of elected councillors to residents
- Safeguards needed to ensure meaningful and representative local democracy

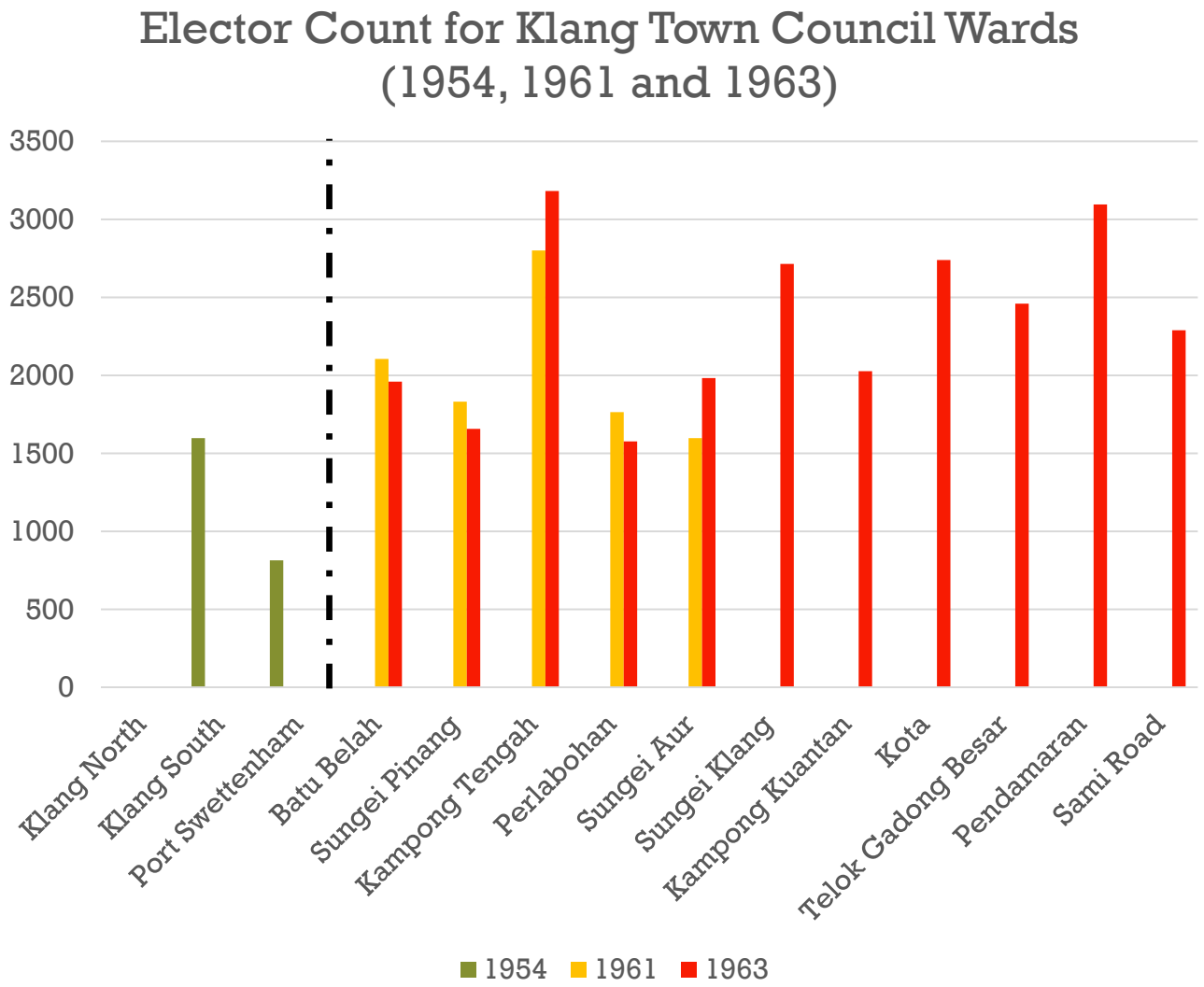
Rationale

- Local Elections is a tool to connect voters and elected mayor/councillors via representative democracy
- Hence, local elections provide direct or indirect channel of accountability of leaders of Kuala Lumpur to the voters
- Biggest problem in KL governance is lack of accountability, followed by lack of check and balance

Electoral System/Ward Design

- Our Local Government Elections Acts and regulations provide the opportunity to implement new electoral system. For Peninsular side, two options are presented: FPTP and Block Voting
- We are not tied to Federal Constitution when it comes to electoral system choice and ward design
- Should explore Mixed Member Proportional system
- Ward Design ideally
  - Should not too varied electorate count (+/-10% of Council EQ)
  - Representative of the area, not extremely irregular
  - Sufficient two or more accessible polling centres
  - Ward name reflect the area

Electoral System/Ward Design

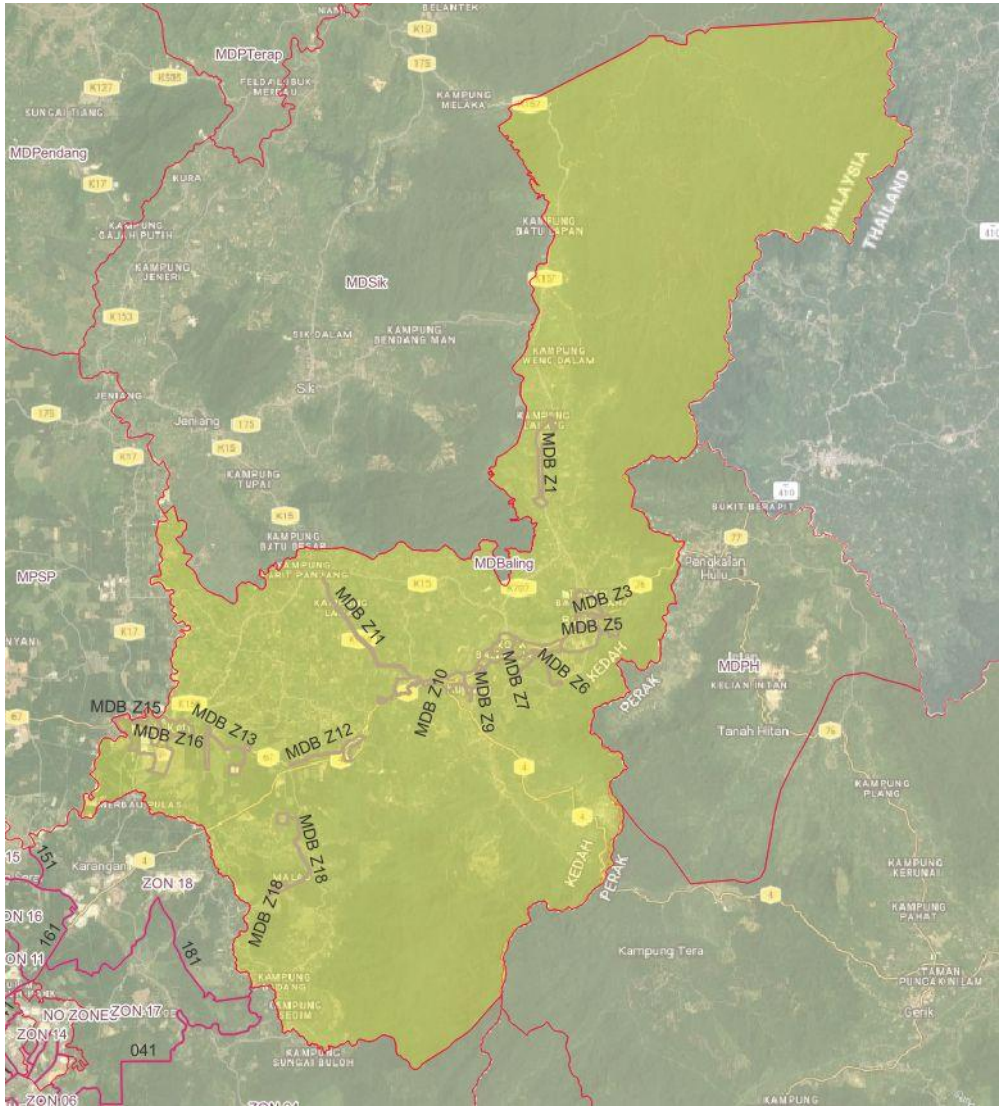


In 1954, Klang North was an uncontested ward (hence no elector count). For 1961, EC has taken over the formation of drawing of wards. In 1963, new wards were drawn by EC

Source: TindakMalaysia GitHub on Local Government Elections (https://github.com/TindakMalaysia/LOCAL-GOVERNMENT-ELECTIONS)

Special thanks to Alex Woon (member of Tindak Society) for compiling Pre 1960s information)

Electoral System/Ward Design



Council Zones of Majlis Daerah Baling are islands in the vast Majlis Daerah Baling
Drawn by : SM Sabri (member of Tindak Society)

Political Party Representation

- Must allow all political parties who are registered with ROS should be allowed to contest. Political party symbols should be allowed.
- Amend the Councillor qualification age from 21 to 18.
- Since local government elections historically has been out of sync with state and national elections (i.e., 1959 GE, 1961 LGE, 1962 LGE, 1963 LGE, 1964 GE), the discourse would be naturally different.

Accountability/ Safeguards

- For Kuala Lumpur, you must introduce a councillor system.
- Federal Act 1960/ Kuala Lumpur Act 1971 should be amended about the nature of the appointment for Mayor.
- Mayor could be appointed among councillors (parliamentary system) or directly elected by people (presidential).
- The right to recall for councillors and Mayors should be introduced even though their term may be two years or three years.
- Safeguards: Extension of Election Offences Act for all elections. Future Political Financing Act to be extended for local elections.