

Secretary,

Local Electoral Boundary Committees 2017,

Room 1.67,

Custom House,

Dublin 1

Dear Secretary of Committee Number 2,

I would like to make the following submission in relation to the Local Electoral Boundaries relating to both South Dublin County Council and Dublin City Council.

### **Introduction**

In the programme for a partnership government, led by the current government parties Fine Gael and Fianna Fail, supported by some Independents, an undertaking was given to examine the current local electoral boundaries across the country. The rationale given for this is the fact that some of the larger rural local electoral areas are in fact larger than some Irish Counties, e.g the Connemara LEA is far larger than Counties Louth and Dublin. Such a large geographical size is difficult to represent in full for the locally elected representatives. However, the main difficulties City and County Councillors face in representing their areas is a lack of proper public transport (particularly in rural areas) and a lack of supports generally. So the programme for partnership government is using the fact central government does not give Councillors the supports they need to do their jobs in a more effective manner to reduce the size of council wards nationally.

However, the real reason for such a reduction is to gerrymander the Council wards in favour of Fine Gael and Fianna Fail and against Independents and smaller parties. In an 8 seat LEA as currently exists in some parts of the country a local election quota is approximately 11%. Between half a quota and three quarters of a quota is enough to be in with a shout of winning a seat, so in an 8 seat LEA a candidate on 7% of the vote should be elected. In a 3-5 seat LEA, which would be allowable in the Counties looked at in Committee 1, take a 3 seat LEA, the quota is 25% of the vote, so Fine Gael and Fianna Fail, which are on 36% and 25% respectively on current polling would be guaranteed at least a council seat each. The reality is they would probably win all 3 and receive a much larger seat bonus nationally as a result. Although this isn't as severe in urban areas that Committee 2 will look at, the same principles still apply.

In 2014 40% of the Independent Councillors were elected on the 5<sup>th</sup> seat or lower. The knock on effect was a swollen electorate for the Seanad elections for Independents and smaller party candidates. In the past many Independents would usually be gene-pool Fianna Failers or Fine Gaelers and vote accordingly on the vocational Seanad panels. The result was Independents were never elected to the Seanad on the vocational panels. But now, Independents were elected to all vocational panels except one and should have won 2 Seanators on 3 panels(they did not though). The Green Party, even though diminished in strength from their pre-2007 heyday managed to win a seat on the Agriculture panel and the AAA candidate was close to winning a seat on the Labour panel. Although unimportant to people's everyday lives, the Seanad does have an important role in governing our country and Fine Gael and Fianna Fail want to control the Seanad to the detriment of smaller parties and Independents. Fine Gael and Fianna Fail, as the political establishment don't want anything like this to happen ever again, so they are gerrymandering Local Electoral Areas under the pretence of 'reform'. I would ask the committee to tread very carefully in looking at the local electoral boundaries and to be as fair and impartial to Independents and smaller parties as possible, although this will be difficult considering the constraints you are under.

### **Dublin City Council**

### **Dublin South Central**

As a sitting Councillor in the Dublin South Central Area I am privileged to serve many great communities. I would be of the view that for democratic consistency there should be as little change as possible and that the 2 wards of Ballyfermot-Drimnagh and Crumlin-Kimmage remain unchanged.

However, if a change were to occur the commission should try and re-unite communities that have been split between 2 wards. Kilmainham is split between 2 wards and so too is Drimnagh. By adding Ushers A and Ushers F to Ballyfermot-Drimnagh this would see Kilmainham all in the one LEA. Additionally by adding Crumlin B to Ballyfermot-Drimnagh this would see Drimnagh unified in an enlarged Ballyfermot-Drimnagh ward that would elect 7 Councillors, with Crumlin-Kimmage losing a seat and electing 5.

I would like to point out the errors in the names of the District Electoral Divisions in Dublin South Central and in doing so propose alternatives. In doing so I am giving the commission some local context to the South Central Area when making their decision and if possible, they could request that they be re-named as appropriate.

Kilmainham A is entirely in Ballyfermot and should be renamed Lally after the road with the most residential dwellings entirely in its area.

Kilmainham B is made up of approximately 60% Kilmainham, 20% Inchicore and 20% Islandbridge. It should be renamed Kilmainham A.

Kilmainham C is over 95% made up of dwellings in Inchicore and should be renamed Inchicore B.

Inchicore B is entirely in Bluebell and should be renamed Bluebell.

Ushers A is about 70% Kilmainham and 30% Islandbridge. It should be renamed Kilmanham B

Ushers F is entirely made up of Kilmainham and Mount Brown and should be renamed Kilmainham C.

Crumlin A,B,E,F should be renamed Drimnagh A,B,C,D

Kimmage A and B are entirely in Crumlin and should be renamed accordingly

Kimmage E is mostly in Crumlin and should be renamed accordingly

### **Dublin Bay South**

Under the terms of reference an 8 and 6 seat LEA cannot exist side by side in the manner Pembroke South Dock and Rathmines-Rathgar do currently. So I propose that 2 7 seat wards be established with a modest transfer of the electoral districts making up Donnybrook be added to Rathmines-Rathgar.

### **Dublin Central**

The current 8 seat Inner City Ward faces abolition. However, this gives an opportunity to re-unify the parts of Dublin Central that have been outside the Dublin Central Area Committee for the past 4 years. So I would propose that a 5 seat Cabra-Phibsboro ward be established consisting of Cabra, Ashtown, The Navan Road, Phibsboro and Stoneybatter. The remaining area from Smithfield to the East Wall being a new 6 seater North Inner City Ward.

### **South Dublin County Council**

#### **Dublin Mid-West**

The difficulty with lowering the LEA's is most pronounced in this constituency made up of 2 8 seaters. For democratic fairness I would be of the view that the larger the LEA's the better. A 7 seat Lucan Ward (to include Palmerstown) and a 7 seat Clondalkin ward would be the best option for democratic fairness. The unfortunate thing with that is Rathcoole and Newcastle would probably be joined on to Tallaght South and not be represented fairly and consistently. The commission could

make up a 6 seat ward and 2 5 seat wards, but the wards would be all over the place geographically and would see communities divided.

As I did with the Dublin City Council part of Dublin South Central I would like to point out for the benefit of the commission the errors in the names of the District Electoral Divisions in the South Dublin County Council area. This isn't a complete list, but a list of the areas I would know best.

Terenure St. James is about 3 miles from Terenure and is in fact made up of Walkinstown/Greenhills. This ED should be renamed Walkinstown St. James.

Terenure Cherryfield should be renamed Walkinstown Cherryfield

Terenure Greentrees is made up mostly of Perrystown and should be renamed Perrystown Greentrees

Templeogue Limekiln should be renamed Greenhills Limekiln

Templeogue Kimmage Manor adjoins the DCC part of Terenure and is the only section of South County Dublin that is actually a part of Terenure. This ED should be renamed Terenure Kimmage Manor

I thank you for the time and consideration in examining my submission to the boundary commission.

Kind Regards,

Cllr Paul Hand

Ballyfermot-Drimnagh LEA

Dublin City Council