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February 18th, 2018

BY EMAIL TO: boundarycommittee@housing.gov.ie

The Secretary
Local Electoral Area Boundary Committees,
Room 1.67,
Custom House
Dublin 1
D01 W6X0

Dear Sirs,

This is a submission to the review of the local election area boundaries in relation to the **North Inner City** ward of Dublin City.

Following the 2017 review of general election boundaries, the Dublin Central constituency now has a population of 113,765 people. However, in considering the optimal boundary structure for local election areas within Dublin Central, the areas of Ashtown A, Ashtown B and Phoenix Park (which are located in Dublin West and Dublin South Central for Dail purposes) should be grouped with Dublin Central. These districts combined have a population of 14,743, which brings the aggregate area with which this submission deals to 128,508. At an average of 8,802 population per member, this aggregate area is entitled to 14.6 seats.

We are cognisant of the terms of reference of the boundary commission, so far as it concerns keeping communities together. We would strongly urge that the North Inner City is a coherent community and should be preserved as one ward. The North Inner City has been a separate electoral area for elections since at least 1985. If it were to be split at this stage, it is likely that its representation will be heavily diluted by the other areas with which it is associated.

The area is the subject of special government attention and is probably the greatest concentration of deprivation in Ireland.

Trutz Haase's (2009) report "The Changing Face of Dublin's Inner City" provides a very useful overview of the area including the socioeconomic disparities and challenges that exist. Some of the features highlighted include a high proportion of lone parents, very high unemployment and low educational achievement in some parts of the area, with a higher percentage of the secondary school population not completing their education to Leaving Cert than in the remainder of Dublin City.

The Trutz Haase report also highlighted the economic variances in the district with professionals in some areas, particularly around the IFSC, and a high proportion of unskilled and unclassified people in other areas. The number of non-Irish nationals in parts of the north inner city has seen the growth of clusters of ethnic minorities. The north-inner city also has a diverse range of living accommodation, with a high proportion of local authority housing, as well as private rented housing with a transient and non-Irish national population, and ‘gated’ apartment blocks rented by young professionals.

We feel it is particularly important because of the challenges faced by the North Inner City, that the community have seven locally based councillors, advocating on their behalf.

The classic north inner city is defined by the North Circular Road line (R101). We ask that the North Inner City ward be preserved as the area between the North Circular Road and the Liffey to include electoral divisions Arran Quay, Inns Quay, Rotunda, North City, Mountjoy and North Dock C.

Electoral Division	Seats	Population
Arran Quay divisions (5)	1.91	16,824
Inns Quay divisions (3)	1.17	10,342
Rotunda divisions (2)	0.96	8,423
North City	0.64	5,654
Mountjoy divisions (2)	1.06	9,352
North Dock C	0.48	4,214

These areas merit 6.22 seats.

Within the terms of reference of the commission it is stated that the number of councillors assigned to a local electoral area shall be not less than 5 and not more than 7; as the North Inner City area has a population justifying 8.29 seats, it is clear that part of the existing area has to be allocated elsewhere. We are suggesting that this should be North Dock A (pop 1,365) and North Dock B (pop 7,695). These areas are largely the other side of the Dublin Belfast railway line.

We would also propose the following:

- The Ballybough divisions which merit 0.84 seats and have a population of 7,416, although located entirely on the northern side of the North Circular Road, are an intrinsic part of the north inner city community. Therefore the electoral division of Ballybough should certainly be included in the local election area.
- There is also merit, for reasons of most appropriate fit, to include the division of Drumcondra South B, which has 1,697 people.

- We recommend that the North Docks A & B electoral divisions which we propose to exclude be associated with Clontarf. There is precedent for the constituency of Dublin North Central including this area from the 1990s general elections.

Please contact me if you have any queries.

Yours faithfully,

Fiona O'Connor
Chairperson, Dublin Central Fine Gael