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Secretary,
Local Electoral Area Boundary Committee,
Room 1.67,
Custom House,
Dublin 1.

4th of May, 2018

Re: Cork City Council's Submission to the Local Area Boundary Committee

A Chara,

I refer to your invitation, published on the 11th of April 2018, inviting submissions in relation to the review of the Local Electoral Areas in Cork City for the 2019 Local Elections.

This invitation has been considered by the Members of Cork City Council at a special meeting of Council on the 30th of April 2018 and read in conjunction with the Committee's Terms of Reference published by the Minister for Local Government and Reform, Mr. John Paul Phelan, T.D..

As the Committee is aware a review of the Local Government arrangements in Cork was initiated in January 2015 and culminated in the new boundary line contained in the Committee's terms of Reference. This new City Boundary line represents a very significant expansion to the administrative area of Cork City Council. As a consequence the Local Electoral Areas (LEA's) within the extended City will have to fundamentally change. Given the scale of this change numerous options are possible with respect to the configuration of the new LEA's.

The City Council has spent some considerable time and effort examining the various configuration options which are feasible and deliverable within the parameters set out. The Council has used the vast experience, from both a political and administrative perspective, it possesses to put forward two different spatial configurations linked to different numbers of Members which it believes offer the best options going forward. The City Council would however recommend that given the scale of change and the possibilities of unintended consequences these boundaries would again be reviewed before the 2024 Local Elections.

Evaluation and Analysis Process:

Please find below a list of the key constraints, considerations and parameters used by the City Council to reach our conclusions:

- 1) Where possible existing Local Electoral Area (LEA) or Electoral Division (ED) boundaries were used to create the new 2019 LEA boundaries. Where this was not possible the Central Statistics Office (CSO) Small Area Population Statistics (SAP5) boundaries or road alignments were used instead.
- 2) It is important that the new communities that are becoming part of Cork City Council going forward are fully integrated into the City Council and its structures (political and service delivery) and that connectivity between new and old is established. As such a decision was taken to ensure that the new City LEA's had elements of both the new and old city combined into single LEA's. This approach will foster a progressive approach to engaging with the new communities and integrating them into the new City.
- 3) As per the Committees Terms of Reference (TOR) the City Council was very cognisant of the need to keep communities together and ensure, as much as possible, the communities of place and interest were not split between different LEA's. This is however particularly challenging in urban areas where distinct boundaries between different communities are blurred and difficult to ascertain with precision.
- 4) The LEA boundaries proposed take into account the service delivery needs of the Council with regards to transportation, housing, planning and quality of life services.
- 5) All of the population figures used in the analysis by Cork City Council are the 2016 Census figures.
- 6) The constraints/parameters as set out in the Committees Terms of reference limit the consideration of viable options with regards to the configuration of potential future LEA boundaries. Some discretion to consider alternative proposals would have been welcome.

The maps in Appendices 1, 2 and 3 detail the existing boundaries described above that were used to create the new LEA boundaries as proposed in this submission.

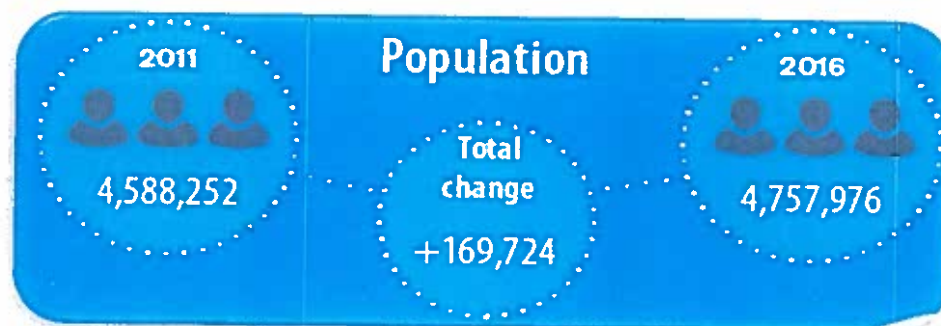
Number of Elected Members:

While the City Council understands that the Committees TOR is very clear that the number of Members in the Council should not change the Council is of the opinion that other options which include small increases in the number of Councillors should be considered. The Council is of the view that alterations to the number of Members is justified based on:

- 1) The very significant increase in population in the new City (210,000 versus 125,500). The population will increase by 85,000 people and it is important that during this very significant change process consideration is given to ensuring that adequate democratic representation is provided to guarantee that no communities are disadvantaged or left behind in the transition process. During the transition period, which will run in parallel to the term of the Council taking office in May 2019, it is important that there is sufficient members to represent the wide ranging views of both the new and existing communities. The workload

of Members during this Council term is likely to be significantly higher than a normal Council for this reason. As such it is important that sufficient members are assigned to the new City to ensure that the resources exist to support and facilitate the smooth transition to the new City configuration.

- 2) To ensure proper representation of both the new and existing City communities. As can be seen in the Appendix 7 map, which depicts the Pobal Deprivation Index data at ED level, the city Council has significant areas of disadvantage. There are also areas classified as disadvantaged which are presently in the County which will move into the new City. It is important that these hard to reach communities are adequately represented. There are specific challenges associated with representing these communities which involve significant time commitments which might be negatively affected if adequate Members are not assigned to the expanded City.
- 3) The MacKinnon Report, which was adopted and approved by Government, recommended an increase in the number of Members to 39. This report was based on an independent evaluation and analysis of the representational needs of the new City by an internationally renowned expert in the field of Local Government.
- 4) The Implementation Oversight Group's (IOG) report to the Minister, which was adopted by the Minister, also recommended an increase in the number of Councillors. This was an evidence based report that took cognisance of the needs and composition of the new and old communities in the expanded City.
- 5) The 2013 Local Electoral Area Boundary Committee Report set the population/Councillor ratio at 4,830. This will likely increase in 2019 to 5,018 due to the limit on increasing the number of Members Nationally coupled with the population increase between the 2011 and 2016 Census (169,724 – see diagram below). If this "National Ratio" were applied to the new Cork City Council (as it will be to most of the other Local Authorities in the State) following the next Local Elections then the City Council should be assigned 42 Councillors (which like some of the other large Dublin Councils might be artificially limited to 40 Members to ensure that the Council remains at a manageable size from an operational perspective).



- 6) As per the table below the City would go from 3,846 electors per Councillor to 6,774 (75% increase). Cork County will go from 7,269 to 6,049 (representing a 15% decrease). Such a significant change in one step in the City Council area would have negative effects on democratic representation in the City. It would be more appropriate to increase the representational ratio more slowly over a number of years (i.e. over two Council terms).

	No. of Councillors	2014		2019	
		Population	Persons per Cllr	Population	Persons per Cllr
City	31	119,230	3,846	210,000	6,774
County	55	399,802	7,269	332,868	6,049

- 7) If the 2013 LEA Boundary Committee ratio (4,830) was used then the City should have had 25 Councillors based on a population of 119,230 after the 2014 elections and 43 councillors after the 2019 elections based on a population of 210,000. Even based on the predicted ratio of 5,018 the City Council in 2019 should comprise 42 members (although based on the 2013 Committee TOR this would be capped at a maximum of 40 like other Local Authorities). The proposal as it stands at present would leave the City Council with 31 members, far short of comparable other Local Authorities. The table below shows the representational ratio figure for a number of different scenarios with regards to the number of Council Members based on a City population of 210,000 persons. For comparison purposes the 2014 national ratio was 4,835 with the 2019 ratio likely to be 5,018

Number of Councillors:	Representational Ratio:
31	6,774
32	6,563
33	6,364
34	6,176
35	6,000
36	5,833
37	5,676
38	5,526
39	5,385
40	5,250

- 8) The City Council would submit that the number of City Councillors should be increased for the 2019 Local Elections to take cognisance of the significant changes being implemented to the LEA's. This increase would facilitate and support the democratic process through this very significant change process. Something similar was put in place by the last Boundary Committee in 2013 for Local Authorities that were losing Town Councils (they were allocated extra Councillors to compensate for the change & increased work load). This increase could be reviewed for the 2024 elections and altered/reduced if deemed appropriate at that time.

- 9) In 2014 many Local Authorities in the State received a significant increase in their number of Members due to the introduction of Municipal Districts, merging of Authorities and the abolishment of Town Councils. At this time Cork City Council was the only Local Authority excluded from any such considerations due to the review which was signalled in the 2012 Putting People First Government Policy Document. It is now thus appropriate that we receive the same considerations as all other Local Authorities enjoyed 5 years ago and that we have the number of our members reviewed and altered using the same or similar parameters as was afforded to all other Local Authorities. If this were not permitted to occur we would be disadvantaged and left lagging behind other Local Authorities with regards the democratic representation of the citizens and communities in the new City.
- 10) The table below shows that with a restriction to 31 Members Cork City Council would have the 4th highest ration from 2019 onwards, a change from position 24 in the 2014 table. This level of change is too severe to be implemented all in one go and should be delivered in phases.

Local Authority	No. of Councillors	2011		2016	
		Population	Ratio	Population	Ratio
Dublin City	63	527,612	8,375	554,554	8,802
Fingal	40	273,991	6,850	296,020	7,401
South Dublin	40	265,205	6,630	278,767	6,969
Cork City	31	119,230	3,846	210,000	6,774
Cork County	55	399,802	7,269	332,686	6,049
Kildare	40	210,312	5,258	222,504	5,563
Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown	40	206,261	5,157	218,018	5,450
Meath	40	184,135	4,603	195,044	4,876
Limerick City and County	40	191,809	4,795	194,899	4,872
Galway County	39	175,124	4,490	179,390	4,600
Kerry	33	145,502	4,409	147,707	4,476
Laois	19	80,559	4,240	84,697	4,458
Wicklow	32	136,640	4,270	142,425	4,451
Louth	29	122,897	4,238	128,884	4,444
Westmeath	20	86,164	4,308	88,770	4,439
Wexford	34	145,320	4,274	149,722	4,404
Galway City	18	75,529	4,196	78,668	4,370
Mayo	30	130,638	4,355	130,507	4,350
Donegal	37	161,137	4,355	159,192	4,302
Clare	28	117,196	4,186	118,817	4,243
Cavan	18	73,183	4,066	76,176	4,232
Kilkenny	24	95,419	3,976	99,232	4,135
Offaly	19	76,687	4,036	77,961	4,103
Tipperary	40	158,754	3,969	159,553	3,989
Sligo	18	65,393	3,633	65,535	3,641
Waterford City and County	32	113,795	3,556	116,176	3,631
Roscommon	18	64,065	3,559	64,544	3,586
Monaghan	18	60,483	3,360	61,386	3,410
Carlow	18	54,612	3,034	56,932	3,163
Longford	18	39,000	2,167	40,873	2,271
Leitrim	18	31,798	1,767	32,044	1,780
State	949	4,588,252	4,835	4,761,865	5,018

Cork City Council Proposals:

LEA Configuration Option 1:

This option is designed to meet the following parameters:

- 1) Use the existing City and County LEA/ED boundaries to create the new LEA's. The only exception to this is in the South Central LEA whereby the existing boundary to the east of the airport was modified.
- 2) This option delivers five LEA's which is the number as prescribed in the Committees Terms of Reference.
- 3) Due to the restriction of only using existing LEA boundaries some of the new LEA's as oddly shaped and do not respect the natural boundaries between communities. This however could be easily rectified by implementing slight modifications to the boundaries representing the existing LEA extents.

The table below gives details of the populations associated with the option 1 geographic LEA boundaries given two different scenarios with regards to the numbers of Councillors permitted in the new Council.

LEA Name:	2016 Population	31 Councillors	36 Councillors
Cork City North West	49,441	7	8
Cork City North East	33,215	5	6
Cork City South West	48,101	7	8
Cork City South Centre	32,849	5	6
Cork City South East	47,638	7	8

It should be noted that the move from 31 to 36 Councillors would change the democratic representation ratio from 6,774 to 5,833 (which would make a very significant positive impact on the communities in the City) but when compared to other Local Authorities in the State would only move the City Council for having the 4th highest ratio to having the 5th highest ratio i.e. still significantly higher than the vast majority of the other Local Authorities in the State.

The Map in Appendix 4 shows the boundaries associates with this option (black lines).

LEA Configuration Option 2:

Option 2 is designed to provide a solution taking the following factors into consideration:

- 1) It provides for communities of place and interest to be retained together in single LEA's
- 2) It does not take cognisance of existing LEA boundaries. In fact all existing City and County LEA's are significantly modified under this option.
- 3) As per the Committees Terms of Reference it provides for a City Centre LEA but in order to achieve this it proposes an extra LEA i.e. 6 in total rather than the 5 provided for in the Committees Terms of Reference.

- 4) It is important that the City Centre LEA (as is the case in this option) is limited in size so that it does not unduly separate the suburban communities living in the areas around the City Centre Zone from their natural suburban hinterland.
- 5) Care needs to be taken when designing the boundaries of the City Centre LEA. This area is very diverse in nature and all effort must be made to ensure that the boundary proposed make this LEA as cohesive as possible.

The table below gives details of the populations associated with this LEA's configuration with two different scenarios with regards to the numbers of Councillors in the new Council.

LEA Name:	2016 Population	31 Councillors:	37 Councillors:
Cork City North West	33,780	5	6
Cork City North East	33,132	5	6
Cork City Centre	33,592	5	6
Cork City South West	33,266	5	6
Cork City South Centre	42,175	6	7
Cork City South East	34,540	5	6

It should be noted that the move from 31 to 37 Councillors would change the democratic representation ratio from 6,774 to 5,676 (which would make a very significant positive impact on the communities in the City) but when compared to other Local Authorities in the State would only move the City Council for having the 4th highest ratio to having the 5th highest ratio i.e. still significantly higher than the vast majority of the other Local Authorities in the State.

The Maps in Appendix 5 and 6 show the boundaries associates with this option (blue lines).

Conclusion:

The Council would ask that the Committee take the above submission into consideration during its deliberations on the formation of the new LEA boundaries.

If at any stage the Committee requires clarification on any of the points raised above please do not hesitate to contact either myself or David Joyce, Director of the Transition Directorate.

Yours sincerely,



CLLR. TONY FITZGERALD
ARDMHEARA CHORCA
LORD MAYOR OF CORK