

Draft Submissions to the Dublin and Cities Area Boundary Committee

Introduction

The Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, John Gormley, T.D., has established two Committees under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1991 to review local electoral areas in-

- (a) Dublin and the cities of Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford
- (b) each county outside Dublin, the boroughs of Drogheda and Sligo and the towns of Bray and Dundalk.

These submissions are addressed to the Dublin Committee proposing the merging of the South West Inner City LEA and the Ballyfermot LEA.

South West Inner City Local Electoral Area

The local electoral area of the South West Inner City is one of the thirteen local electoral areas in Dublin City. The South West Inner City takes in the neighbourhoods of Kilmainham, Inchicore, Islandbridge, Liberties/Coombe, Dolphin's Barn, Heuston, the South Circular Road and the South West Quays. The area stretches from the Liffey in the north to Davitt Road in the south and from Tyrconnell Road in the west to Clanbrassil Street in the east. The total population of the South West Inner City LEA as per Census 2006 is approximately 34,733. At present there are 3 Councillors representing the area with the population per Councillor at 11,578. The variation from council average within the Inner City is currently 19.93%.

Ballyfermot Local Electoral Area

The Ballyfermot area takes in the neighbourhood of Ballyfermot, Chapelizod and Bluebell. The area stretches from the Liffey in the north to the Naas Road in the south and from St. Oliver's Park in the west to in Tyrconnell Road in the east. The total population of the Ballyfermot LEA as per Census 2006 is approximately 27,301. At present there are 3 Councillors representing the area with the population per Councillor at 9,226. The variation from council average within the Ballyfermot LEA is currently -5.23%.

Proposal:

It is my submission that the Ballyfermot LEA and the South West Inner City LEA be merged whereupon 6 Councillors will represent the new proposed area.

Agreed Facts including the Terms of Reference of the Committee:

1. The Terms of Reference of the Dublin and Cities Area Boundary Committee (the Committee),

"...is to endeavour, as far as practicable, to achieve variance from individual average local authority representation within the range of + or – 10%."

By merging the two LEAs above, the individual local authority representation would be at 6.2% above the Council average. This is within the range of + or – 10% required by the Terms of Reference of the Committee.

2. The Committee, *"...shall have as an objective the drawing up of electoral areas which (alone or in combination) would, as far as practicable, have an urban or neighbourhood focal point (or points)."*

Dublin City Council operates an efficient Local Area Meeting system based on Dail Constituency Boundaries. The Council's local area offices strategically scattered around the constituency provide focal points where interaction takes place with the local communities. At present there are three local area offices in the proposed new LEA – Ballyfermot/Chapelizod, Inchicore/Kilmainham and the Inner City Area. All of these areas could continue their work on a subsidiarity basis yet could work in an integrated fashion on issues that affect the overall area.

3. The Committee should in conjunction with preserving natural communities, *"...where it may be possible to do so, of aligning local electoral area boundaries with Dail constituency boundaries."*

By merging the two LEAs the new larger LEA would remain aligned with the Dail constituency boundary of Dublin South Central.

4. The number of councillors representing an area should not be less than 4 or more than 7 except in exceptional circumstances where the geographic size of the area would be exceptionally large.

In accordance with the Terms of Reference the size of the new constituency would be 6.

5. That the Committee shall maintain continuity in relation to the arrangement of the local electoral areas.

In conclusion, by merging the two LEAs, this would effect the changes that the Committee require and also minimize any disturbance to the administrative work on-going within the Council.