

**From:** "Gerry Horkan" <ghorkan@cllr.dlrcco.ie>  
**To:** <electoralareacommittees@environ.ie>  
**Date:** 14/03/2008 16:26  
**Subject:** Dublin and Cities Electoral Area Boundary Committee

Dear Committee members,

I am writing to you as a councillor for the Stillorgan Area within Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council.

I would at the outset like to express my reservations to the terms of reference you have been given. I currently represent a 3 seat ward area in a county that contains 3 6 seaters 1 4 seater and 2 three seat areas. I know from my own experience and in talking to other councillors that smaller wards are more manageable and councillors can provide a better service to the constituents of same. Councillors in larger areas in both DLRCC and South Dublin which has a 7 seat constantly refer to the fact that 6/7 seat areas are both unwieldy and unserviceable. In fact you can argue they are less representative because 1000 voters in an area with an issue is less relevant in a 7 seater than in a 3 seater. Within your terms of reference I would ask you to consider more 4/5 seaters and less 6/7 seaters. While popular comment is that larger areas are better for small parties, it is not usually the case that small parties with lower numbers of activists will find it as easy to canvass a 7 seat area as they would a 3 seater. In my own area an independent topped the poll at the last election and Deputy Paul Gogarty secured his seat in a 3 seat area in 2002 proving that smaller areas can and do elect people from smaller parties and none.

That said I will reserve my comments to talking about Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council only as I feel it inappropriate to be making comments about areas outside my county. I think when examining submissions in general I would ask you to take more cognisance of local submissions than those from people who merely see areas as lines on maps and who have little understanding of local issues and areas.

Currently Dun Laoghaire Rathdown has 2 area committees Dun Laoghaire Area made up of Dun Laoghaire (6) Ballybrack(6) and Blackrock (4) and the Dundrum Area which contains Dundrum (6) Stillorgan (3) and Glencullen (3). This means the council has 2 area committees with 16 councillors in one and 12 councillors in the other. With the moving of approx 11000 people to Dublin South Dail Constituency from Dun Laoghaire Dail constituency I would suggest that this creates an opportunity to create 2 14 seat area committees made up of

Dun Laoghaire Area Committee Dun Laoghaire (5) Ballybrack (5) and Blackrock (4)  
Dundrum Area Committee Dundrum (5) Glencullen/Cherrywood(5 or 4) and Stillorgan/Foxrock (4 or 5)

To achieve this would mean moving the western side of the Ballybrack ward (now already moved to Dublin South for Dail purposes) to Stillorgan/Foxrock and Glencullen/Rathmichael, to compensate the Ballybrack ward could then take some area from the existing Dun Laoghaire 6 seat area possibly around Foxrock-Bechpark or Deansgrange.

I would recommend keeping all 6 electoral areas as each has a major focus point with 5 of the 6 areas now having either a Town or District Centre in their area.

The retail hierarchy of the county is supposed to be (1)Dun Laoghare Major Town Centre (2)Dundrum Major Town Centre (3)Cherrywood is to become a town centre with (4) Stillorgan the largest of the district centres and (5) Blackrock following in after that. Any suggestion that the Stillorgan Area which is currently the third largest retail area in the county being split and merged with other areas is in my view mischevious.

In the terms of reference provided you are asked to maintain the boundaries as close to existing boundaries as possible to provide continuity. In terms of Stillorgan I would suggest that the Stillorgan electoral area is maintained as is and extended to enable it to become a 4/5 seater by extending south into Foxrock/Carrickmines/Cabinteely and west into either or both of Dundrum Taney or Dundrum

Kilmacud. This would have the added benefit that the two villages (Neighbourhood Centres) of Foxrock and Goatstown are no longer split down their centres.

I make these suggestions as I feel a county that has balance in size of area committees and balance in similar size of electoral area size is fairer and will lead to better representation amongst all the electoral areas. Ideally the county would have 30 seats with 3 5 seaters in each area committee but I appreciate that within your terms of reference you are bound to maintain the existing number of seats per county.

I feel that these recommendations are positive in terms of your terms of reference re (1) maintaining existing areas in so far as possible and providing each with a major focal point (2) recognising that 3 seaters in urban areas are unlikely in the current regime (3) it would also comply with the areas being within 10% +/- of the county average and (4) would realign the local electoral area and dail boundaries to a greater degree than before.

Thank you for your time in considering this submission.

Kind Regards,

Cllr Gerry Horkan  
Stillorgan Electoral Area  
Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council