

DUBLIN AND CITIES ELECTORAL AREA BOUNDARY COMMITTEE CONSULTATION

Fingal has the largest growth in population in Ireland, with growth in all areas and massive expansion and Local Area Plans being prepared throughout the County. The number of Councillors should be increased to take into account not just the growth that has already taken place, but to fulfil the requirement for proper planning and development of the County. Any reduction of representation in any current electoral area would be an injustice to the electorate.

In reviewing the electoral areas and boundaries, it is strongly recommended that the Committee totally ignore the proposed new Constituency boundaries. In the Constituency boundaries review a 'top-down' approach was taken. Populations were put together to ensure that the numbers were correct in the first place. No account was taken of the desirability of preserving natural communities or the hinterlands of population centres. Accordingly communities and parishes like Swords and Portmarnock were split and put into different constituencies. Arguably that may be okay for a national election, where deputies are involved primarily with national issues and national legislation. However to try and continue these boundaries into local elections would be a total mess and not do justice to Local Government.

A fundamental problem is that the DED boundaries are now totally out of date.

Taking the case of Portmarnock, the current DED boundary has Torcaill estate in Malahide East (CM) and Dublin North constituency. The residents here are part of the Portmarnock community and parish, attend local schools, and vote in Portmarnock. Likewise the new developments west of the railway line, including Seabrook Manor and the Council's new social houses (under construction) are likewise in the Portmarnock parish and community. However it is included in Kinsaley (CG) and Dublin North constituency. The rest of Portmarnock is being designated to be included in the Dublin North East constituency.

The Committee should concentrate on keeping communities together for representation. The Fingal Co Council planning boundaries are more relevant and appropriate than the DED boundaries.

It is recommended that a bottom-up approach be taken.

Account should be taken of future planning for the County to ensure fair and realistic representation. Some people may argue that Howth and Malahide should lose representation, given 2006 census figures. However those figures are already out of date. The Dublin North City Fringe area (which includes South Portmarnock, Baldoyle racecourse lands, Balgriffin, future developments at Belcamp marrying in with Dublin City's Clongriffin and Belmayne high density developments) have already a notable impact since 2006. Inter authority co-operation needs to continue and even be strengthened for this major area. Retention of a strong representation from the Malahide and Howth electoral areas is needed not only to contribute to Fingal planning, but also to work closely with Dublin City Council for the benefit of the whole of Dublin North City Fringe.

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