

**Submission by Swords Community Council (“SCC”)  
in relation to the  
Dublin and Cities Electoral Area Committee (“the Committee”)**

SCC advocates that Swords and its environs continue to be within a single ward for the purposes of local authority elections and should not be split along the lines of the proposed Dail boundary changes for the following reasons.

**Uncertainty of Boundary Change**

The Boundary Commission on Dail Constituencies in its recent report has recommended that part of Dublin North constituency, including a large part of Swords, be transferred to Dublin West constituency. The changes proposed have not been enacted by the Oireachtas as yet and may not be enacted by the time the Committee publishes its report.

It is possible that there may be another census in three years time and that, as a result, there will likely be another Dail boundary review before the next general election due around 2012. Even if the proposed Dail boundary change is enacted, it is possible that the next Dail boundary review might recommend reversing that change. In light of this uncertainty, SCC recommends that the Committee ignore the proposed Dail boundaries when undertaking any review of the boundaries of the Swords ward.

**Growth**

Swords is one of Ireland's fastest growing towns with the current population of 34,000 projected to increase to 100,000 within the next two decades. There is great fear that the serious planning issues which have adversely affected other towns might happen to Swords during this high growth phase. In the view of SCC, it is imperative that the future growth of Swords is conducted in a coordinated and coherent manner to benefit both the present and future residents of Swords. SCC believes that the only way to ensure this is for residents of Swords to be represented by Councillors who represent the whole of Swords. If Swords is split over more than one ward then many of the Councillors who have part of Swords in their ward may not be from Swords and may have split loyalties. Splitting Swords into more than one ward will greatly increase the chances that it will be developed in a disjointed manner. In this event, the real losers will be the residents of Swords. If Swords ward is split in two and does not have councillors that represent it (and other parts of the existing ward) only, then there is a fear that Swords may not get the facilities to which a city of 100,000 people will be entitled.

**Representation**

There are a number of councils which represent a lower number of people than is the case in Fingal but have a higher number of councillors. In addition to having the one of the highest people to councillor ratios, Swords is the largest town in Ireland without a town council of its own. Thus, in needing to represent such a high number of people and without any Town Councillors to assist them in their work, Councillors in the Swords ward have a higher workload than county councillors from other large towns such as Navan and Sligo, which have town councils.

If Swords ward is split along the lines of the proposed revised Dail boundaries, then councillors for the western part of Swords will also have represent Mulhuddart, while

councillors for the eastern part will also have to represent Malahide. This will greatly increase their workload as they will have to meet with residents and community groups in two large urban areas, rather than one. If Swords ward is split, then except for the councillors who are from Swords, there is a chance that residents and community groups in Swords will receive less attention and ultimately Swords itself will receive less attention. While the Committee cannot increase the number of councillors, it can ensure that the workload for Swords councillors is not raised any further and that residents and community groups do not receive less attention, by ensuring that Swords remains within one ward.

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