

A Submission to The Dublin and Cities Electoral Area Boundary Committee

Submitted by

The Fingal Greens

Comprising the Green Party / Comhaontas Glas constituency
groups of **Dublin North & Dublin East**
Prepared in collaboration with **Dublin West Greens**

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**Submission to
The Dublin and Cities Electoral Area Boundary Committee
From Fingal Greens**

Taking into account the existing natural population centres and incorporating the population figures from the 2006 census, reproduced below, we would like to make some observations.

Current (2006) Population and Representation					Variance from average	
Area	Population	Councillors	Representation			
Balbriggan	40,415	4	10,104	+ 238	+ 2%	
Castleknock	37,123	4	9,281	- 585	- 6%	
Howth	19,723	3	6,574	- 3,291	- 33%	
Malahide	29,168	4	7,292	- 2,574	- 26%	
Mulhuddart	52,920	4	13,230	+ 3,364	+ 34%	
Swords	57,425	5	11,485	+ 1,619	+ 16%	
TOTAL	236,774	24				
Overall Average			9,866			

Table 1 - Current situation

Clearly, there is considerable variation from the average, with only two areas, Balbriggan and Castleknock, coming close to the overall average.

Balbriggan

This area has a population of 40,415 and 4 council seats. This gives an average of 10,104 head of population per councillor. This is close to the overall Fingal average of 9,866. As such there would seem no justification in proposing any change for this area.

Castleknock

With a population of 37,123 and 4 council seats, an average of 9,281 head of population per seat, this area also comes close to the overall Fingal average. Again, we submit that this area's representation should remain unchanged.

Howth

Howth has a representation figure of only 6,574 per councillor. This is significantly below the overall average. Only three councillors are provided for the area.

Malahide

With a representation of 7,292 per councillor, Malahide is also well below the Fingal average.

Swords

Swords currently shows a population of 11,485 per seat, significantly above the Fingal average.

Proposed changes:

There is a strong case for combining Howth, Malahide, Portmarnock and Donabate to form a coastal electoral district. We have provisionally proposed a working name of “Fingal East” for this new electoral area.

These towns share a common coastline and common issues. Equally significantly, they are linked by a single railway line. Each town acts as a dormitory village for Dublin. Local issues are likely to be similar in each of these towns. Logically, these are very similar areas with a great deal in common.

The resulting population of this area would be 56,491, suggesting a representation of six seats at a rate of 9,415 head of population per councillor.

Moving Donabate from the Swords electoral district to the proposed new Coastal electoral district will reduce the population of Swords by 7,600 to 49,825. With 5 seats, this gives a rate of 9,965 head of population per councillor, very close to the overall average.

Mulhuddart

With a population of 52,920 represented by only five seats, Mulhuddart has 13,230 head of population per councillor. It is thus the Fingal area most out of line with the overall average. Increasing the number of seats to five will achieve a representation of 10,584 per councillor. While this will still be relatively high, it will be only 7% away from the overall average.

Overall

The following table shows the situation that would be achieved by implementing the changes described above. Note that the overall number of councillors remains unchanged (24) while the imbalances in representation are almost eliminated.

Proposed Areas and Representation				Variance from average	
Area	Population	Councillors	Representation		
Balbriggan	40,415	4	10,104	+ 238	+ 2%
Castleknock	37,123	4	9,281	- 585	- 6%
Coastal towns	56,491	6	9,415	- 450	- 5%
Mulhuddart	52,920	5	10,584	+ 718	+ 7%
Swords	49,825	5	9,965	+ 99	+ 1%
TOTAL	236,774	24			
Overall Average			9,866		

Table 2 - Proposed distribution

Summary

We submit that the above proposals meet all of the terms of reference of the Committee and are both logical and natural. The overall number of councillors in the Fingal area will remain unchanged while ensuring that the level of representation is consistent throughout the Fingal area. There is no splitting of natural population centres. We would thus urge the Committee to give this proposal earnest consideration.