

1 Overview and Summary

Background

The Committee was established by the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government to review and make recommendations regarding the boundaries and memberships of local electoral areas in eight local authority areas, i.e. Cork City, Dublin City, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, Fingal, Galway City, Limerick City, South Dublin and Waterford City.

The terms of reference of the Committee required it to recommend local electoral areas that would –

- have between four and seven members or, in very exceptional circumstances, three members
- ensure a reasonable relationship (desirably keeping variances from average to within + or -10%) between the population established by the 2006 Census and representation within each local authority.

The Committee was also required to take account of a number of factors, including the desirability of having electoral areas that –

- have urban or neighbourhood focal points
- preserve natural communities or the hinterlands of population centres
- are aligned, where possible, with Dáil constituency boundaries
- maintain continuity in relation to the arrangement of local electoral areas.

The terms of reference asked the Committee to assume that there should be no change in the number of members elected to each local authority.

At present, electoral areas in the local authorities under the Committee's remit are arranged as follows:

	Number of members	Number of electoral areas	Number of electoral areas of different size (i.e. number of members)				
			3	4	5	6	7
Cork City	31	6	-	-	5	1	-
Dublin City	52	13	5	3	5	-	-
Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown	28	6	2	1	-	3	-
Fingal	24	6	1	4	1	-	-
Galway City	15	3	-	2	-	-	1
Limerick City	17	4	-	3	1	-	-
South Dublin	26	5	-	1	3		1
Waterford City	15	3	-	1	1	1	-
Total	208	46	8	15	16	5	2

There has been a substantial increase in population since the last review of local electoral areas in 1998, with population growth of some 10.5% in the eight local authority areas under the Committee's remit. Among these, Fingal has experienced the most rapid rate of growth (+43%) and Galway City has also increased well beyond the national average. On the other hand, the population of Cork City has reduced by 6%. In addition to population changes and the development of new neighbourhoods, the Committee has also had to take account of considerable recent and prospective changes in the boundaries of Dáil constituencies.

The Committee invited submissions in relation to the review and 123 submissions were received, including from local authorities, political parties, public representatives, organisations and individuals. These were most helpful to the work of the Committee.

Recommendations

The electoral areas recommended by the Committee would establish a reasonable relationship between the current population and representation levels within each local authority. In the case of all electoral areas recommended, variations within + or -10% of the local authority average population per member are achieved; in many cases, these variations are minimal. In the case of some electoral areas, the scope

of the Committee to minimise variations has been limited by the need to take account of other considerations, including for example, neighbourhood focal points and population trends.

In summary, the Committee's recommendations in relation to each local authority are as follows:

Cork City

- There should be an increase in the number of members in the electoral areas of Cork South-East (from six at present to seven) and Cork South-West (from five at present to six)
- There should be a decrease in the number of members in each of the electoral areas of Cork North-East and Cork North-West from five at present to four
- There should be no change in the number of members in the electoral areas of Cork North-Central and Cork South-Central (i.e. five members each)
- There should be transfers of electoral divisions involving five electoral areas, mainly to improve the alignment between electoral areas and Dáil constituency boundaries
- All of the electoral areas should be renamed to include "Cork City" in their title.

Dublin City South

- The electoral areas of Pembroke and Rathmines should be merged and have six members
- The electoral areas of South-East Inner City (with the addition of some areas included in the former Pembroke electoral area) and South-West Inner City should each have one additional member (giving four members in each area)
- There should be a decrease in the number of members in an amended electoral area of Crumlin-Kimmage (from five at present to four) and a new electoral area of Ballyfermot-Drimnagh should have four members.

Dublin City North

- The electoral divisions in Ballymun-Whitehall electoral area should become part of two new enlarged electoral areas of Ballymun-Finglas and Artane-Whitehall, both having five members
- The number of members in North Inner City electoral area should be increased from five at present to six

- There should be a change to the boundaries of the electoral area of Donaghmede and a decrease in its number of members (from five at present to four)
- Minor changes should be made to the boundaries of the electoral area of Clontarf, while Cabra-Glasnevin area should remain unchanged.

Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown

- The electoral areas of Glencullen (to be renamed Glencullen-Sandyford) and Stillorgan should each have an increase in membership (from three at present to four)
- The number of members in each of the electoral areas of Ballybrack and Dundrum should be reduced from six at present to five
- Two electoral divisions should be transferred from Ballybrack electoral area, one each to the electoral areas of Glencullen-Sandyford and Stillorgan
- The electoral areas of Dún Laoghaire and Blackrock should remain unchanged.

Fingal

- Mulhuddart electoral area should have a small boundary change and an increase in its number of members from four at present to five
- Swords electoral area should have a small boundary change in the north of the area and retain five members
- The number of members in Balbriggan electoral area should be increased by one to five
- The electoral areas of Howth and Malahide should be merged into a five-member area
- Castleknock electoral area should have a small boundary change and retain its four members.

Galway City

- Galway No. 3 electoral area, with a slight change of boundary, should have an increase in membership (from four at present to five) and be renamed Galway City West
- Galway No. 2 electoral area should be extended to take-in some centre-city areas, retain its four members and be renamed Galway City Central
- Galway No. 1 electoral area should have a slight change of boundary and a reduced membership (from seven at present to six), and be renamed Galway City East.

Limerick City

- The number of members in Limerick No. 1 electoral area (renamed as Limerick City North) should be increased from five at present to six
- Limerick No. 2 electoral area (renamed as Limerick City East) should remain as it is (i.e. with a membership of four)
- The electoral areas of Limerick No. 3 and No. 4 should be merged to become Limerick City South and have a membership of seven.

South Dublin County

- There should be an increase in membership of Lucan electoral area from four at present to five
- Clondalkin electoral area should be extended, principally to take-in the electoral divisions of Rathcoole and Saggart, and have an increase in membership from five at present to six
- A new electoral area of Rathfarnham with four members should be created
- Tallaght Central and Tallaght South electoral areas (both of which have five members at present) should be reconfigured, with Tallaght Central becoming a six-member area and Tallaght South retaining five members.

Waterford City

- Waterford No. 1 electoral area (renamed as Waterford City North) should have a slight change of boundary and retain four members
- Waterford No. 2 electoral area (renamed as Waterford City East) should have a slight change of boundary and an increase in membership from five at present to six
- The number of members in Waterford No. 3 electoral area (renamed as Waterford City South) should be decreased from six at present to five.

The following summarises the Committee's recommended arrangement of new electoral areas:

	Number of members	Number of electoral areas	Number of electoral areas of different size (i.e. number of members)				
			3	4	5	6	7
Cork City	31	6	-	2	2	1	1
Dublin City	52	11	-	5	4	2	-
Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown	28	6	-	3	2	1	-
Fingal	24	5	-	1	4	-	-
Galway	15	3	-	1	1	1	-
Limerick	17	3	-	1	-	1	1
South Dublin	26	5	-	1	2	2	-
Waterford	15	3	-	1	1	1	-
Total	208	42	0	15	16	9	2

2 Appointment of the Committee and Terms of Reference

Appointment of the Committee

The Committee was appointed by the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government to review and make recommendations on the electoral areas in Cork City, Dublin City, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, Fingal, Galway City, Limerick City, South Dublin and Waterford City.

At the same time, the Minister established another boundary committee, known as the Electoral Area Boundary Committee, to review and make recommendations on the electoral areas in each county (other than Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, Fingal and South Dublin), the boroughs of Drogheda and Sligo, and the towns of Bray and Dundalk.

Terms of Reference

The Committee's terms of reference were as follows:

- 1. To review and to make recommendations, subject to paragraph 2, on the division of the cities of Dublin, Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford and the counties of Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, Fingal and South Dublin into local electoral areas and the number of members of the councils to be assigned to each such area, with a view to ensuring a reasonable relationship between the 2006 population and representation within each local authority. For this purpose, the Committee is to assume no change in the total membership of each local authority and to endeavour, as far as practicable, to achieve variance from individual average local authority representation within the range of + or – 10%.*
- 2. In carrying out its review, 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).*

3. *In recommending changes to local electoral areas, the Committee should, subject to paragraph 2, take due account first of the desirability of preserving natural communities or the hinterlands of population centres, and secondly of the desirability, where it may be possible to do so, of aligning local electoral area boundaries with Dáil constituency boundaries.*

4. *The number of councillors representing an area as determined above should not be less than 4 or more than 7, provided that in very exceptional circumstances 3 seat local electoral areas may be recommended where otherwise the geographic size of the area would be disproportionately large.*

5. *Subject to the above, the Committee shall endeavour to maintain continuity in relation to the arrangement of local electoral areas.*

6. *The Committee shall submit its report as soon as possible and, in any event, not later than 20 June 2008.*

Membership

The following persons were appointed as members of the Committee:

Niall Callan	Former Secretary General, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (Chairman)
Kevin Dowling	Former Executive Manager, Dublin City Council
Adrian Kavanagh	Department of Geography/National Institute for Regional and Spatial Analysis, NUI Maynooth
Willie Soffe	Former County Manager, Fingal County Council
Theresa White	Assistant County Manager, Cork County Council