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**Submission to Committee 2 re Dublin City Council LEAs**

**Constituency: Dublin Bay South**

**Local Electoral Area: Rathgar-Rathmines**

Currently the Rathgar Rathmines LEA is a 6 seater area and Pembroke South Dock an 8 seater. My submission to the Committee is based on the following three proposals:

1. In keeping with the Terms of Reference (point 3) of the Review of Local Electoral Areas 2018 that in general “the number of councillors assigned to a local electoral area shall be not less than 5 and no more than 7”, **I believe that both these LEAs should have 7 councillors representing them albeit with a rebalancing of some of the population in each of the two LEAs. The review and rebalancing should ensure that the overall boundaries of both LEAs remain within the constituency boundary of Dublin Bay South.**

2. In keeping with the Terms of Reference (point 6) that “other local electoral areas should be designed as far as possible around urban centers, taking due account of local and community identities and linkages as well as natural boundaries and the need to facilitate the effectiveness of the governance and representational roles of elected members”, **I firmly believe that in so far as possible boundaries should not cut through urban villages in the LEA of Rathgar-Rathmines and in particular the following villages of:**

**Terenure** - which was only reunited in LEA terms 5 years ago and has a strong vision for development in its plan ‘Terenure 2030’; has four residents associations who work well together in developing a shared sense of identity and pride in Terenure; a Terenure Business Network group ‘Nurenet’ and has a number of other local community groups Evergreen Club, Men’s Sheds, Tidy Towns, etc. who this year have had significant achievement in the ‘Pride of Place’ awards. **All of these groups, together with individual residents and the local schools and the Terenure Enterprise Centre, are best served by being part of one LEA served by one Council Area Management Team and one set of Councillors representing the whole area of Terenure. It would be extremely divisive locally and administratively ineffective to split Terenure again.**

**Rathgar** - is a well established urban community and village supported by the residents associations, local business network and also by Councillors and the South East Area Committee of Dublin City Council through the ‘Rathgar Village Improvement Programme’. It would make no sense to divide this village in the heart of the current LEA of Rathgar-Rathmines. The area of Dartry is closely linked to Rathgar Village.

**Harold’s Cross** - This fast growing urban village and surrounding area also needs to be kept in the one LEA administrative area to ensure the growth and development of the area in a co-ordinated and administratively effective way (preferably with a LAP). The area is well served by the Harold’s Cross Village Community Council who are an umbrella Council for residents/residents associations,

business networks and community groups and work closely with Councillors to deliver on a vision for Harold's Cross and surrounding neighbourhoods e.g. Mount Argus, Kenilworth, Church Park, etc.

**Ranelagh** - Ranelagh village (albeit not all of Ranelagh) is in Rathgar Rathmines LEA together with nearby neighborhoods of Dartmouth Square, Northbrook, Leeson Street and Morehampton Road from Grand Canal to Marlborough Road (one side of the road only) and on the other side of the village, Beechwood, Dunville and surrounding roads are also in the Rathgar Rathmines LEA. Once again, this urban village is thriving with a real sense of identity. It's a village which is cosmopolitan and thanks to many of its local activists has a distinct identity with its cafe culture, Ranelagh Arts Festival, Ranelagh Players, etc. together with yoga and environmental events in Dartmouth Square during the Spring and Summer seasons. Ranelagh has an established rental sector, social housing and a growing owner occupier/family population. Keeping it intact under one LEA is very important in terms of effective Council administration and representation.

**Rathmines** - Rathmines village is a village which has and is undergoing a lot of change over the years. It's proximity to the city center and its mix of flat dwellers, social housing and owner occupiers, reflects how sought after it is as a place to live and commute from, particularly for older people and young working people and students. Rathmines has seen a revitalization of the Swan Shopping Center and a few years ago the opening of the City Council Swan Leisure Centre and development of Rathmines Library, bringing people into Rathmines village on a regular basis as well as it being a main arterial route for buses and cars into the City. **Portobello is often regarded by many as being part of Rathmines, albeit currently in a different LEA (Pembroke South Dock). Consideration by the Review Committee for the inclusion of the Portobello area into the Rathgar Rathmines local electoral area would make sense.**

In relation to other areas in the westerly part of Rathgar Rathmines LEA e.g. , Rutland Grove, part of Sundrive Road, Clogher Road and Parnell Road. These areas should also continue to remain in the Rathgar Rathmines LEA as they are part of the Dublin Bay South constituency, albeit they are on the boundary with Dublin South Central constituency.

### **3. NAMES OF LOCAL ELECTORAL AREAS**

Finally, I would ask the review Committees to seriously consider changing the names of the Local Electoral Areas, particularly in Dublin as they do not reflect the areas covered by most elected representatives, rather they cause confusion as to which electoral area they are in and which Councillors represent them (based on the name of the LEA on the Council websites).

Currently Dail constituencies are labeled in such a way that they make reasonable geographic sense, as do many local authority areas outside of Dublin. However, for Councillors and people living in Dublin LEAs, the labeling/titles of these areas makes little sense e.g.

**Rathgar Rathmines LEA** - Currently covers Rathgar, Rathmines, Terenure, Ranelagh, Harold's Cross, Dartry, Palmerston as well as parts of other areas i.e. Milltown, Sundrive, Crumlin. Lesson Street, etc. In labeling it just two areas within a much wider geography in the south east of the city, it is extremely difficult for people to know whether they are part of this Council administrative area and also leads them to believe their urban village is not significant in Council terms. For Councillors, we are regularly trying to explain that our area of representation goes far beyond the two urban areas.

**Pembroke South Dock** - I am fairly sure that many residents of the LEA would not readily identify with living in Pembroke South Dock, but rather identify themselves with specific areas such as Irishtown, Ringsend, Ballsbridge, Donnybrook, Sandymount, etc.

While I have given the examples of the two LEAs in Dublin Bay South, these ambiguous LEA labels equally apply to other LEAs in the City and possibly other Dublin Councils also.

I am not sure what the answer is, but the following are some suggestions:

Option 1 - Leave as is

Option 2 - Change LEA labels to Area A, Area L, Area K, etc. (definitions of what Area L covers to be reflected in a directory on each Dublin Council website and other appropriate websites) or instead of Area A, it could reflect the constituency initials first and then a LEA letter i.e. DBSA, DBSK, etc.

Option 3 - in the case of the two LEAs in Dublin Bay South, they could be renamed as follows:

Rathgar-Rathmines changed to Dublin Bay South-West

Pembroke South Dock changed to Dublin Bay South-East

With similar approaches for other Dublin LEAs.

This completes my submission.

Councillor Anne Feeney

Rathgar-Rathmines LEA (Constituency of Dublin Bay South)