

Submission to Boundary Committee No. 1.

With the Population of County Louth increasing by about 4% since the Census of 2011, and with the results in Census 2016 showing that the increase was fairly evenly spread throughout the county, there is a strong case to leave things as they were. There is no option to increase the total number of members of the Louth County Council, although Louth will now have one of the lowest number of Councillors per total population, with the Councillor per population working out at one Councillor per 4,444 of population. But there is a case, even in the circumstances outlined above, for increasing the Ardee Local Electoral Area (LEA) population by adding to it the Castlering ED (taken from Dundalk South) and then adjusting the number of Councillors in the Ardee LEA from 6 to 7, while reducing the number of Councillors in the Dundalk South LEA by one to 6.

However, the Terms of Reference require that further consideration be given, in any submission, so that the number of Councillors in a LEA shall be 'not less than 5 and not more than 7' - (except in compelling circumstances where 3 or 4 may be recommended). That rules out that the current Drogheda LEA could remain as a 10 seater. The least upheaval, in my view, would be to create two LEA from the existing one, divided more or less, as previously, by the old Drogheda to Dunleer main road, leaving a Drogheda West LEA as a 5 seater and also a Drogheda East LEA as a 5 seater.

This would give the overall allocation of seats as follows:

- Dundalk Carlingford LEA - 6 seats,
- Dundalk South LEA - 6 seats,
- Ardee LEA - 7 seats,
- Drogheda West LEA - 5 seats, and
- Drogheda East LEA - 5 seats.

Total: 29 seats.

There is a further complication in regard to County Louth. The Terms of Reference at 7 (i) ask for consideration to be given to 'towns that were formerly a Borough, or where the population is 30,000'. County Louth, uniquely, has two such towns, Drogheda and Dundalk. There is near unanimity in the Political Parties that the abolition of Borough Councils and Urban District Councils in the larger towns was not a good idea and that such Councils should be restored as soon as is practicable. The current Boundary revision could be 'a stepping stone' to the restoration of the Town Councils.

If it is the highest priority for the Boundary Committee to designate both Drogheda and Dundalk as 'Municipal Borough Districts', then the analysis I have provided above would have to be 'adjusted' to take this in to account. The 'settlement' of Drogheda with a population of 40,965 would require 9 seats; as would the 'settlement' of Dundalk with a population of 39,004 require 9 seats also. (Using the 'Legal Town' definition would mean smaller areas with the Drogheda population at 31,785 and the Dundalk population at 32,520, requiring 7 seats each). Using either assignment will require two LEA's if the 'settlement' definition is used - a 5 seat and a 4 seat - in both Drogheda and Dundalk; however, if the Legal Town definition is used, then both the Drogheda LEA and the Dundalk LEA could be 7 seaters.

In the event that the designating of Municipal Borough Districts in Drogheda town and Dundalk town as LEA's is the highest priority, and that the 'settlement' assignation is used, then the 'rest of county Louth' can be served by the Ardee LEA, as it is at present, with 6 seats, and a Dundalk Rural LEA for the hinterland, north of, west of and to the south of the town of Dundalk be created, with 5 seats.

I would appreciate it if the committee would take these comments in to account.

Yours Sincerely,

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Pat Mc Daid.