

The Workers' Party



Secretary
Local electoral Area Boundary Committees
Room 1.67
Custom House
Dublin 1.

Submission to Committee No 2 in respect of South Dublin County Council

A chara,

The Workers' Party, Dublin Mid West Constituency, make the following submission in relation to the boundaries of the LEAs within the South Dublin County Council area.

We are aware that the terms of reference for your work are outside of your jurisdiction but, it is nevertheless important, that we state our belief that the capping of representation within LEAs at seven seats is a retrograde and anti-democratic development. In large urban areas, with high population densities, the geographic difference between a seven or eight-seater LEA would be minimal whereas the division of naturally cohesive units and the subsequent democratic loss can be substantial. On the other hand, we understand the necessity for five-seaters in sparsely populated rural areas.

The Dáil constituency of Dublin Mid West provides a large, and reasonably cohesive geographic component, within the overall South Dublin County Council area. In the 2014 Local Elections this constituency was allocated 16 seats, divided into two LEAs. According to figures provided by Cllr Paul Gogarty, Mayor of South Dublin, the population of Dublin Mid West, with the addition of Saggart, justifies an allocation of 17 seats. If this extra seat is allocated it is clear that some element of population shift across Dáil constituency boundaries will have to occur.

We note also that while there is no formal policy set out regarding DEDs that the historical precedent has been to maintain the unity of DEDs with Local Electoral Areas. WE recognise the logic of this position in long-established urban or rural communities where there is population and family continuity over many generations. This however is not the situation in many District Electoral Divisions (DEDs) within Dublin Mid West.

The present population of Lucan Esker, for example, is 32,236. It is, by a multiple of three, larger than any other DED in the constituency and larger by over a multiple of four than the average for all the other DED's in the constituency. However this is, relatively speaking, a new area that has undergone a population explosion in the last 25 years. In Census 1991 the population of Lucan-Esker was 3,099. In Census 2016 the population is 32,236.00. This is an almost unprecedented ten-fold increase within one generation. The same situation applies in Lucan-St Helens. In the 20 years from 1986 to 2006 the population hovered at the 6,500 mark. In the last 10 years, but especially in the last five, the

population has increased by 4,000 or approximately 66%. In this instance it is clear that the population increase is largely due to the construction of the new conurbation of Adamstown. The relevant issue here is that these very large, and rapidly expanding DEDs, do not indicate any cohesive community structure and merely hark back to a time when West Dublin was still largely a rural and farming area.

We are working on the basis that despite the clear population increase in this constituency, and the justification for another seat allocation, the status quo will be maintained and we will remain with 16 seats. This can only then be divided into a 6, 5, 5 arrangement. We believe that the basic criteria that should therefore apply, are social and community cohesiveness, historical associations, and proportional representation within the normal parameters.

There is a longstanding and natural link between the communities of Lucan and Palmerstown extending over many generations and continuing to the present day. There is also of course a geographical continuity. We believe that a geographical unit consisting of the EDs of Palmerstown Village, Palmerstown West, Lucan Heights, Lucan-St Helens to the boundary with Adamstown, and the Northern portion of Lucan-Esker form the best basis for one 6-seat LEA.

Clondalkin forms one natural LEA. There is a social, community, family, cultural, educational and business cohesiveness throughout the area. However, to include all six Clondalkin electoral divisions would exceed the seat limit allowed. We therefore believe that one constituency consisting of Clondalkin-Dunawley, Clondalkin-Rowlagh, Clondalkin-Cappamore, Clondalkin-Moorfield and Clondalkin-Monastery should be placed in one LEA. This best maintains the unity of Clondalkin, north and south, without breaching the guidelines set out.

The third LEA would consist of Clondalkin-Village, Newcastle, Rathcoole, the Adamstown portion of Lucan-St Helens and a small portion of Lucan-Esker. in a largely urban Dáil constituency this is, admittedly, a somewhat sprawling LEA. However, it has geographical continuity, it links a number of existing population centres undergoing rapid expansion, and it does not disrupt any pre-existing inter-community links. Historically, especially in the era of the Clondalkin paper mills, there were strong business and family linkages between the old villages of Clondalkin, Newcastle and Rathcoole. It is clear to the Workers' Party that this area would have a unified focus and its creation would help to further develop links within communities in the south of the constituency.

We believe that within the rules as set out, the division of the constituency of Dublin Mid West into the three LEAs as outlined above adhere to the precepts of common sense, largely maintain geographic and social cohesiveness, and is democratically equitable as between the three proposed LEAs.

We look forward to a positive engagement from the committee.

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Chairperson

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Secretary

Lorraine Hennessy
Local representative

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Local Representative