



19 February 2018

Secretary
Local Electoral Area Boundary Committees
Room 1.67
Custom House
Dublin 1

Dear Secretary,

Solidarity, a component of the the registered political party Solidarity - People Before Profit make the following submission to the Local Government Election Boundary Commission Committee.

1) Terms of reference

Firstly we want to state our opposition to the criteria given to the commission by the Minister. The directive to your committee to cap local authority wards at seven seats (as opposed to the current ten) as well entertaining the creation of wards in rural areas with as little as three or four seats is a retrograde step.

2) Smaller wards lead to less proportionate outcomes

This directive will serve to reduce the amount of small party and independent councillors as the evidence of past elections shows that they tend to obtain representation more commensurate with their support in larger seat wards with lower quota percentages. Such a distortion will then subsequently reflect itself in the following Seanad elections with councillors composing approximately 80% of the electorate for the five vocational panels.

3) Thresholds for obtaining quota higher in Dublin

The briefing from the Department is silent on the matter of the capping of the amount of councillors in the four Dublin local authorities. Despite the redistribution of council seats in the run into the 2014 elections it remains the case that average quotas required in the Dublin local authorities ranged from 1,500 to over 2,000 votes compared to an average range of 1,000 to 1,500 votes outside of Dublin. This again serves to distort the political composition of the Seanad electorate given the stronger performance of small parties in the Dublin local authority elections.

4) Solidarity recommendations on the basis of criteria

Given the criteria that have been laid down we support the maximum sized wards (seven seats) to achieve the maximum proportionality and therefore the most democratic outcome possible. While this poses issues in rural local authorities which may end up being geographically large there are certainly no difficulties presented

with seven or more seats to a ward in urban local authorities which are, by their nature, geographically compact.

We request that boundaries appear natural to the electorate and take into account local community identities and furthermore are contiguous with the Dáil constituencies for the next general election.

Yours sincerely

Councillor Michael O'Brien
On behalf of the Solidarity steering committee