

18.422

To Committee No. 1 & Committee No. 2

Dear Sir/Madam,

I would like to lodge this submission in the name of Michael McGrath T.D. and Cllr Seamus McGrath.

We welcome the opportunity to express our views on the review of the Local Electoral Areas (LEA's). As residents and Public Representatives from Carrigaline, we have been waiting for this opportunity since the illogical decision to divide Carrigaline between two LEA's in the 2014 local election. The decision to split a town of approximately 17,000 residents was bizarre and nonsensical. We have seen the real negative implications this has had over the past four years.

It has been very difficult in practical ways, such as for community groups and clubs who find themselves spread over two Municipal Districts. As local representatives it has been very frustrating, there are many issues which require an 'all of Carrigaline' solution, such as traffic congestion, yet the town is spread over two electoral areas. In fact, the northern side of Carrigaline is in the Council's Southern Division and the southern part of Carrigaline is in the Western Division. Carrigaline must be united as one LEA so that a town of this scale can have the focussed and clear representation it deserves.

Over the last couple of weeks we have set up an online petition for residents of Carrigaline to express their wish to have all of Carrigaline in one LEA. The petition is also calling for Crosshaven to be linked with Carrigaline in the same LEA. There are natural connections between Carrigaline and Crosshaven. For example, the majority of people travelling to work from Crosshaven would have to go through Carrigaline. Many children from either area go to the school in the other area. By contrast, there is a very poor connectivity between Crosshaven and remainder of the Bandon – Kinsale Municipal District which it is currently in. Just to note, in our description of Crosshaven, we would also include Fountainstown and Myrtleville. Despite the fact that it can be very difficult to engage people on topics such as LEA boundaries, we are pleased to say that almost 300 people took the time to sign the online petition. We can honestly say that over the past four years, we have never heard a single person argue that the division of Carrigaline made sense. Equally, we believe the linking of Crosshaven with Carrigaline would be supported by the overwhelming majority of local residents. For your information, the online petition can be viewed at www.gopetition.com (enter Carrigaline in the search box and the petition is entitled ' All of Carrigaline / Crosshaven in one local electoral area '). A number of those who signed the petition have also left comments, so we would ask you to please consider these.

In general, we are supportive of the proposed Carrigaline LEA as outlined in the submission made to your Committee by Cork County Council. We believe the Council has considered the issues in detail and has formulated a very sound proposal regarding this proposed new LEA within the constraints of the terms of reference as set out by the Minister. The Council's proposal includes linking areas such as Minane Bridge, Ballygarvan, Passage West, Monkstown, Ringaskiddy, Crosshaven and parts of Ballinhassig and Waterfall with Carrigaline. We believe this proposal makes sense and be adopted by the Committee.

In general, in relation to the new Cork City Council area, we would ask the Committee who are devising the new LEA's, to keep communities together in so far as possible. We have seen first hand in Carrigaline the negative implications which results when communities are divided and we believe this point is equally applicable to the new City area. We appreciate the terms of reference the Committee received are quite restrictive and you have a difficult job. However, we would ask you to consider communities and not just population numbers and representation ratios. Local Councils and Councillors engage with communities in a wide range of activities, it is vital that communities largely made up of volunteers are able to continue that engagement in a cohesive and straight forward manner.

We would like to thank you for considering these points and would like to wish you well with your work.

Kind Regards,

Michael McGrath T.D.,

Cllr. Seamus McGrath