

DUBLIN 15 COMMUNITY COUNCIL

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A CHUIMSION: BAILE BLAINSEIR-CAISLEAN CNUCHA - CLUAN SAILEACH-MULLACH EADRAD

Representing: Blanchardstown-Castleknock-Clonsilla-Mulhuddart

Chair: C. Kurtz. Vice Chair: J Greene, Secretary: C Durnin, Treasurer: Leo Gibson, P.R.O: K. O'Neill

By e-mailed to: constituency_commission@environ.ie.

Public consultation.

The Secretary,
Constituency Commission
Room 1.65
Custom House,
Dublin 1

10 July 2007

Re: Constituency Commission Submission

Dear Sirs,

On behalf of DUBLIN 15 COMMUNITY COUNCIL I wish to make the following observations on the call for written submissions in relation to matters which should be considered in reporting on constituencies. In preparing this submission, the community council engaged its membership in discussions and this submission represents the consensus views of the Dublin 15 Community Council members.

1.0 General

The Dublin 15 community council welcomes the review of constituencies particularly Dublin West where the area is currently under represented in population ratio to TD.

Who are the Dublin 15 Community Council?

The Dublin 15 Community Council was formed 15 years ago (merging the Castleknock & Blanchardstown community councils which date from the early 1970's) to provide an umbrella organisation for the many residents and voluntary community groups in the Dublin 15 area.

Residents Associations and Community groups focus on their own specific areas but often feel powerless to influence the big issues like transport, educational, recreational & sporting infrastructure or crime prevention. The Community Council provides a forum to discuss these issues and potential solutions.

Our main objective is to develop the consensus views of the Dublin 15 community in matters relating to Planning & Development, Public Transport, Environment, Education, Health Care, Policing, Job Creation, Recreational Facilities, General Infrastructure and Tourist facilities. Having developed the consensus, make representation to State and other Statutory Bodies through a wide variety of communication channels, with the aim of improving the quality of life for the residents of Dublin 15.

2.0 Growth of Dublin 15.

The greater Blanchardstown area (Dublin 15) was earmarked from the early seventies as one of County Dublin's three new towns. It has been anticipated for the past twenty years that this area would eventually accommodate a population of circa 100,000 persons. The adoption of residential density guidelines has resulted in increased densities particularly along the Maynooth rail line leading to the expectation that the area will exceed a population of 120,000 based on the availability of lands currently residentially zoned.

The break up of Dublin County Council into 3 county councils and 1 city council has helped develop a specific identity for the area. This is reinforced by the Fingal county council who have an administrative office in the Blanchardstown Town centre and an area committee based on the Castleknock and Mulhuddart wards to develop a strong local identity.

The Greater Blanchardstown area is defined by the river Liffey to the South, the Phoenix Park to the East, the county border with Meath to the West and the N2 road to the North.

Fingal development board report (strategy 2002-2011) predict Dublin 15 population reaching 118,000 by 2011 based on zoned lands and current rate of development. The Census figures support that projection

2002 census data is as follows:

- The Dublin 15 area has grown rapidly from 53,221 in 1996 to 69,566 an increase of 31%.
- Within Dublin 15 some areas have increased by 60%.

2006 census data is as follows

- The Dublin 15 area has grown rapidly from 69,566 in 2002 to 90,952 an increase of 20%.

In the past few years the Ireland has undergone a radical transformation. Our economy has achieved annual growth rates, which are the envy of our European partners. All indications are that for the immediate future, the economy will continue to grow at levels exceeding the EU norm. The greater Blanchardstown area is currently one of fastest growing regions in the EU and an important area in terms of satisfying the appetite of the 'Celtic Tiger'.

With the explosion in economic development and the growth of residential developments in Dublin 15 have come many of the associated problems that accompany such success.

Those relevant are;-

- Higher demand for housing.
- Increased inward investment in industrial / commercial activity, much of it attracted to the greater Blanchardstown area in turn generating local housing needs.

Future expansion

- There was land zoned to build 13,732 new homes in Dublin 15 prior to the adoption of the current development plan. The 2005 – 2011 plan added additional residentially zoned lands at Barnhill to the west and Hollystown to the north east of Dublin 15.
- CSO population trends: The report forecasts that the figure for Dublin will grow by 317,000 by 2021 (from 1.123 million) a 28% increase. It is expected that development pressure will continue in Fingal and in the Dublin 15 area.

3.0 Growth of Fingal.

Fingal is the fastest growing area in the state. It is almost entirely contained within Dublin West and Dublin North. Given the CSO population projections it is likely to continue to grow at a faster pace than other areas within the state.

Our request to the commission is to consider Fingal as an entity. The terms of reference specifically exclude Dublin administrative areas from the criterion “to avoid breaching of county boundaries”. However it is logical to consider the previous growth pattern and the future projections “to maintain continuity in relation to the arrangement of constituencies”.

Our recommendation is to consider Dublin West and Dublin North as Fingal West and Fingal East, and to accommodate the population growth by adding in a seat and adjusting the boundary between the two constituencies to minimize the % variance from national average population per TD

4.0 Current situation

<i>Constituency</i>	<i>NO. of TDS</i>	<i>2006 Population</i>	<i>Population Per TD</i>	<i>% variance from national average population per TD</i>
<i>Dublin West</i>	3	92,900	30,967	21.24
<i>Dublin North</i>	4	120,309	30,077	17.76

In preparing a report under subsection (1)(a) a Constituency Commission shall, in observing the relevant provisions of the Constitution in relation to Dáil constituencies, have regard to the following:

- (a) The total number of members of the Dáil, subject to Article 16. 2. 2 of the Constitution, shall be not less than 164 and not more than 168;
- (b) Each constituency shall return three, four or five members;
- (c) The breaching of county boundaries shall be avoided as far as practicable; The reference in subsection (2)(c) to county boundaries shall be deemed not to include a reference to the boundary of a county borough or any boundary between any two of the administrative counties standing established by virtue of Part II of the Local Government (Dublin) Act, 1993
- (d) Each constituency shall be composed of contiguous areas;
- (e) There shall be regard to geographic considerations including significant physical features and the extent of and the density of population in each constituency; and
- (f) Subject to the provisions of this section, the Commission shall endeavour to maintain continuity in relation to the arrangement of constituencies.

2002 changes:

The Dublin constituencies with very high average representation are in North and West Dublin. The second-highest variance from national average representation in the country is in the Dublin West 3-seat constituency (+16.43%) and the third-highest is in Dublin Mid-West (+15.45%). The Commission considered allocating an extra seat to Dublin West but decided instead to allocate an extra seat to Mid-West because this change facilitates the transfer of the Palmerstown area from Dublin West to Mid-West, thus establishing the Liffey as a constituency boundary from Chapelizod to the Kildare county boundary.

Current Dublin West constituency consisting of three seats:

In the county of Fingal the electoral divisions of:

Blanchardstown-Blakestown, Blanchardstown-Coolmine, Blanchardstown- Corduff, Blanchardstown-Delwood, Blanchardstown-Mulhuddart, Blanchardstown-Roselawn, Blanchardstown-Tyrrelstown, Castleknock- Knockmaroon, Castleknock-Park, Kilsallaghan and Lucan North;

And, those parts of the electoral divisions of Blanchardstown-Abbotstown, Dubber and The Ward situated north of a line drawn along the Northern Cross Route (M50) passing in a clockwise direction around and excluding roundabouts Nos. 5 and 4 at the junction of the Northern Cross Route (M50) with national road N2 and regional road R108, respectively.

5.0 Specific concerns

5.1 Castleknock as a contiguous area.

The previous constituency commission report addressed imbalances by transferring population to adjacent constituencies using the M50 as geographic considerations with significant physical features. This approach is not reasonable in Castleknock for the following reasons:

- The M50 was routed through the centre of Castleknock, while this is an obvious physical barrier there are 4 road linkages in Castleknock which facilitate significant interaction and minimize the impact of the M50.
- A more significant physical barrier between Dublin West and the constituency to the east is the Phoenix Park, we contend that this should remain a defining physical boundary for Dublin West.
- There are 2 Electoral Divisions in Castleknock (Castleknock- Knockmaroon and Castleknock-Park), both of these Electoral Divisions straddle the M50. If the M50 was to become the eastern boundary of Dublin West it would mean the partition of 2 Electoral Divisions, creating new ED's.

5.2 Recognizing the Fingal wards of Mulhuddart & Castleknock as central to the constituency.

The reform of local government in Dublin has transformed the administration of the greater Blanchardstown area. We now have a large office in the Blanchardstown Town centre where approximately 50% of Fingal County Council's staff are located. The county council has adopted a 3 area committee approach with all local issues debated at the Mulhuddart & Castleknock Area Committee prior to decision making at the monthly county council meeting.

From an administrative and political perspective the Fingal wards of Mulhuddart & Castleknock as central to the constituency.

5.3 Positioning the constituency for the inevitable planned growth to “endeavour to maintain continuity in relation to the arrangement of constituencies”

Both the National Spatial Strategy and the Regional Planning Guidelines for the Greater Dublin Area set out the levels of population growth expected and how each region and county should accommodate the expected growth.

The National Spatial Strategy provides population projections up to 2020 and gives a projection for the Greater Dublin Area (Dublin, Kildare, Meath and Wicklow) of between 1.9 and 2.2 million. The Regional Planning Guidelines set out population projections HI and LO for the Greater Dublin Area for the years 2010, 2016 and 2020. The favoured LO projection for the GDA 2010 is 1,696,581. The Guidelines forecast a population of 259,757 for Fingal for 2010.

The Regional Planning Guidelines - Greater Dublin Area set out the household numbers required for each county from 2002 up to 2010. It gives a provision requirement for Fingal to 2010 of 44,996 new dwellings.

Fingal development plan has the strategic policy of

- Consolidating the growth of the major centres of Blanchardstown, Swords and Balbriggan largely within their previously identified limits by encouraging infill rather than Greenfield development and by intensification at appropriately identified locations.
- Consolidating development to prevent urban sprawl.

It is clear from the population projections in the National Spatial Strategy and the trends measured and predicted by the CSO the population growth in Fingal will continue to expand faster than the Dublin region and the country as a whole.

In planning for this growth we recommend that the constituency commission consider the following long term strategy for Dublin North and Dublin West (Fingal)

Constituency	Current situation	Proposed 2007 (population 213,209)	Proposed 2011 (population 259,757)
Dublin North	4 seats	4 seats	5 seats
Dublin West	3 seats	4 seats	5 seats

5.4 Decline of Dublin North West

The last constituency revision transferred some population from Dublin West to Dublin North West, this was a result of the ageing population and population decline associated with the children of residents moving out and establishing their own homes elsewhere.

This population decline is halted by the large development in Pelletstown in the Dublin City administrative area (north of Ashtown) which when finished will provide in excess of 1,000 new homes with a corresponding increase in population. There appears little point in transferring further population from Dublin West to Dublin North West.

We are available to discuss further any of the issues raised in our submission.

Yours sincerely,

Kieran O'Neill

Kieran O'Neill
Dublin 15 Community Council