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BY EMAIL TO: constituency.commission@housing.gov.ie

The Secretary
Constituency Commission
Room 1.65
Custom House
Dublin 1
D01 W6X0

Dear Sirs,

This is a submission by the Fine Gael, Dublin Central Constituency Executive in relation to the review of electoral boundaries.

There is a constitutional requirement that you add an extra seat to the Dail to bring the total to at least 159. As Dublin Central has a significant under-representation, it seems clear that the additional seat should be allocated to this constituency.

Dublin Central in its current configuration has a population of 96,048; in the 2011 census it had 89,030 people, so has grown by 7,000, an increase of 7.9%.

We believe it is highly unsatisfactory that the areas of Ashtown A (population 10,545), Ashtown B (population 2,640) and Phoenix Park (population 1,528), while being part of the Dublin City Council area, are allocated to a constituency otherwise wholly in Fingal. They are geographically aligned to Dublin Central by the Navan Road while being separated from the rest of Dublin West by the N3 and Phoenix Park.

Both Ashdown A & B were formally part of Dublin Central and our representatives continue to get queries from constituents in these areas. They are not adequately represented as their TDs are largely Fingal-focussed and their current council area is split across three constituencies, probably the only such area in the entire country. If they were to be re-instated wholly back into Dublin Central, they would add a population of 14,713 to the constituency.

We are conscious that some of the Phoenix Park division is allocated to Dublin South Central constituency. There does not appear to be a great logic to having these associated with South Central - they are largely areas on the north side of the river adjacent to Arran Quay D and are much closer to Dublin Central than inhabited parts of South Central. About 700 of those people are separated from South Central by the Heuston Station complex and the Royal Hospital.

With the proposed addition of Ashtown A & B, the population of Dublin Central would rise to approximately 109,233 (or with all of Phoenix Park to 110,761). The addition of a further 5,000 to 6,000 would bring Dublin Central to an acceptable level for a four-seat constituency and would ensure adequate representation for the population. We don't believe either incorporating part of Dublin on the south of the Liffey to Dublin Central or to divide Finglas would be in the best interests of residents in these areas.

However, a further available option would be the inclusion of Drumcondra South A with an aggregate of 5,100. If this option was chosen in addition to our other recommendations, it would bring Dublin Central to a population of just under 116,000. We believe the average constituency will have 29,924 persons per member, so about 119,696 persons for a four-seater. This would result in Dublin Central being 3.2% below the average. It is to be envisaged that the area will continue to follow the current growth trend and a specification of -3.2% will allow for this growth without additional changes in the medium-term.

Please contact me if you have any queries.

Yours faithfully,

Fiona O'Connor
Chairperson, Dublin Central Fine Gael