

Quinn, Martin

From: I
Sent: 12 November 2008 11:20
To: Dick Mackenzie
Subject: Fw: Boundary proposals

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Please find below e-mail from Mayor, Cllr Ronnie Crawford:

----- Forwarded by Mayors Secretary/LisburnBC on 12/11/2008 11:19 -----

REVIEW OF COUNCIL BOUNDARIES

Submission by Cllr. Ronnie Crawford
Lisburn City Council

Although I am the current Mayor of the City of Lisburn, I wish to stress that this submission is being made entirely in my own name.

Our Council originally voted to support the merger of the entire council areas of Lisburn and Castlereagh Councils. I continue to support that view for the following reasons.

The proposed increase in the size of Belfast City Council area will distort local government even further. Not only will Belfast have 60 wards, but each ward will be over 50% larger in population terms than the rest of the remaining councils.

Even at its present size, Belfast City Council has exhibited an unpleasant aggression towards neighbouring councils. It has financed opposition to the Westfield/John Lewis development at Sprucefield, delaying it by some four years. It has opposed the National Stadium at the Maze with the result that our construction, engineering and design industries are now shedding thousands of jobs. It sought to attract the John Lewis development to Belfast and suggested at the time that it would be better in Dublin than Lisburn.

Furthermore, four of the ten Executive ministers are Belfast City Councillors and they exercise an influence upon the Executive to the detriment of the rest of the Province. Lisburn City Council wrote to all the parties in the Assembly seeking support for the John Lewis development. Only Sinn Fein and the TUV replied to the enquiry and both of them support the proposal.

To increase the size of Belfast City Council will simply add to its influence, through the Assembly to the detriment to the world outside Belfast. I would hope that the Commissioner has not been unduly influenced by a Development brief, in October 2006, commissioned by Belfast City Council, entitled "Belfast: State of the City."

The final paragraph states "Lastly, urban conurbation is best carried out on a conurbation wide scale - Belfast local authority should include a much wider area than at present, and possibly the whole BMA".

I and many of my colleagues believe that would be a total disaster for local government within the Province as Belfast already is a large cuckoo's egg in our local government nest.

The removal of the Dunmurry Cross wards from Lisburn will also lead to the under-representation of the Nationalist population in the new Lisburn and Castlereagh ward and reduce the opportunities for furthering cross-community relationships.

If implemented the current proposals will reduce Lisburn from being the second largest Council area to the second smallest and this agenda will suit Belfast City Council which has sought to impede economic development within our city.

The Commissioner makes the point in another area that Slieve Croob should be transferred to another Council area so that it can be administered by one single Council, but as far as the Lagan country park is concerned, he fails to apply the same logic. I would be interested to learn his reasons for this.

Finally, it is puzzling to note that the proposed name for our new Council is Lisburn City and Castlereagh District Council, whilst Belfast will retain the name Belfast City Council despite the fact that it is proposed it should absorb a large section of Lisburn and Castlereagh councils. Since those areas were presumably not included in the original grant of city status to Belfast, why is it not proposed to call it Belfast City and District Council?

I therefore suggest that Lisburn City and Castlereagh District Council be increased to 45 wards, covering the same area as at present and that Belfast be kept at its present level with the current population divided by 55 or 60 wards.

Ronnie Crawford

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