

Ald. JEFFREY DONALDSON MP MLA
Democratic Unionist MP for Lagan Valley



4th January 2007

Ms Amanda Morrison
Secretary
Local Government Boundaries Commission
Forestview
Purdy's Lane
BELFAST
BT8 7AR

Dear Ms Morrison,

I wish to respond to the provisional recommendations by the Local Government Boundaries Commission regarding the boundaries for the new Local Government Districts (LGD's) in Northern Ireland.

My parliamentary constituency is for the main part contained within the proposed Inner East LGD, although the Dromore area is included in the proposals for the South LGD. Therefore, my remarks will be limited to the proposals for these two Districts.

It should also be made clear at this stage that my comments on these proposals are without prejudice to the view of the Democratic Unionist Party that there ought to be a larger number of local Councils in Northern Ireland than the seven Councils envisaged in the Commissioners report. This is a matter that we are continuing to pursue in the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Proposed District Names:

I wish to lodge an objection to the proposed names of 'Inner East' and 'South' for the Local Government Districts associated with my constituency. I appreciate that the Commissioner has chosen geographical names in the absence of obvious local alternatives. However, this will reduce the identification that people will feel with their Local Government District and I therefore feel it is essential that alternative names be found.

In respect of the Inner East Local Government District, an example of a possible name is '**Dalaradia**', which is the name given to the ancient territory that comprised the southern part of County Antrim and the northern part of County Down. A possible name for the 'South' LGD is '**South East Ulster**', reflecting both the geographical location of the district and its association with the ancient province of Ulster. I am sure there are other options that could be considered that would have historical connections to the various districts.

Perhaps the Commissioner could arrange for local surveys to be conducted providing people with a range of possible names for each Local Government District to test their popularity in each locality. Consideration could also be given to the holding of local referenda on suitable names to coincide with the elections for the first 'shadow' Councils in 2008.

Inner East LGD:

I have received a number of representations from residents of Dunmurry Village expressing their concerns about the proposed Dunmurry ward being transferred from Lisburn (Inner East) to Belfast City Council.

I have also received a letter from my constituent **Michael Ingleston**, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] who has stated his view that wards within the current Dromore District Electoral Area, presently in Banbridge District Council, should be transferred to the new Inner East LGD. This would involve the transfer of the proposed wards of Dromore, Gowdystown and Kinallen to the Inner East LGD. Mr Ingleston is of the view that the people living in the wider Dromore area look more towards Lisburn than Newry for public services etc. A copy of Mr Ingleston's letter is available on request.

Other specific observations I would make about the proposed ward boundaries are as follows:

- I welcome the inclusion of the entire Seymour Hill Housing estate within the single ward of Seymour Hill. The previous division of the estate between two separate wards has caused problems for the local community in terms of data collected for enumeration purposes etc.
- I welcome the transfer of the Lagmore Housing estate from Derriaghy ward to form the new ward of Lagmore, which will be located in Belfast City Council. The people of the Lagmore area look towards West Belfast and have a strong affinity with Twinbrook and Poleglass, whilst the people in Derriaghy/Milltown look towards Lisburn and have been rightly retained in the Derriaghy ward (Inner East LGD).
- I welcome the inclusion of the entire village of Stoneyford within the Ballinderry ward.
- I welcome the retention of the entire village of Aghalee within the Maghaberry ward. Many of the children in the Aghalee area attend school in Maghaberry and there are close links between the two settlements.
- I would like to suggest the name '**Down Royal**' for the proposed ward known as 'Racecourse'. This is a rather bland name and could as easily apply to the area near Downpatrick, which also has a racecourse. In contrast the name 'Down Royal' is well known and has been associated with this area for over three centuries. If 'Down Royal' were unacceptable, I would make a second suggestion of the name '**Broomhedge**' for this particular ward. Again, the Broomhedge name is synonymous with the district contained within the proposed ward and is used as the parish name for local churches.

South LDG:

- As stated, my constituent Mr Ingleston has suggested that the proposed wards in the Dromore area, namely Dromore, Gowdystown and Kinallen be transferred to the Inner East LGD for the reasons given previously.
- Failing this, Mr Ingleston would wish to see the townlands located to the north of the Lurgan Road and to the east of the A1 dual carriageway at Dromore in the proposed Gowdystown ward transferred to the proposed Racecourse ward in the Inner East LGD. My constituent claims that this would create a more sensible district and ward boundary between the proposed wards of Gowdystown and Racecourse.

- I welcome the inclusion of the whole of the village of Blackskull within the Gowdystown ward.
- I welcome the inclusion of the settlements of Magherally and Ballela and the townland of Corbet within the Gowdystown ward, which is consistent with the location of their respective hinterlands.
- I welcome the inclusion of the northern side of Slieve Croob within the Kinallen ward, including the source of the River Lagan. This is a natural and sensible realignment of the ward boundary.

I do hope that the aforementioned points will be helpful to the Commissioner in his further consideration of the proposed Local Government District and Ward boundaries. If it were felt helpful, I would be happy to meet with representatives of the Commissioner to clarify any of these points.

With kind regards.

Yours sincerely

Ald. JEFFREY DONALDSON MP MLA