

A chara,

An Droichead is the Irish language development organisation for the Irish speaking community of South and East Belfast.

We would like to request once again that all boundary names in Belfast from now on reflect this by having both an official English and Irish form. (A full list of these could be easily obtained from QUB's Place names project.) Place names throughout Belfast reflect the city's strong and long link with the Irish language.

There is a vibrant and growing Irish speaking community in South and East Belfast, contained mostly within the Stranmillis (An Sruthán Milis), Botanic (An Luibhghairdín), Shaftesbury (-) and Ballymacarret (Baile Mhic Airt) wards. Recent census figures confirm this, as do the numbers and demographic breakdown of pupils in our primary school here on the Ormeau Road. We are especially eager therefore that consideration be given to the official recognition of Irish forms for wards in this part of Belfast.

There is an onus on government, as outlined in the Good Friday Agreement and the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages, to actively take steps towards officially recognising the identity of Irish speakers in the north of Ireland, and we see this as an opportunity to do just that.

It is with great disappointment that we note the refusal to consider this move in his report on the revised recommendations. The reasons provided for not doing so are dubious at best. Why for example does the Commissioner not consider the Commission to be an associated body under the EU Charter? How does he justify his questioning of the demand for this recognition in the face of the overwhelming demand that the submissions to his Commission constitute? In light of his questioning the demand, does he intend to simply ignore the indisputedly Irish language ethos of certain wards in Belfast?

How does he square this with his acceptance of the Duncairn and Blackstaff names "for reasons of history and geography/heritage of the area and the associations which local residents have with the name"?

The report on the revised recommendations shows complete disregard for the wishes of the Irish language community in general and an ignorance of the quite obvious nature of the areas being dealt with by your commission.

Le meas,

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Dr. Pól Deeds

An Droichead

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P Smaoinigh ar an timpeallacht le do thoil. An ea go gcaithfidh tú an rphost seo a chló amach?