

Amanda Morrison  
Secretary to the Commissioner  
Office of the Local Government Boundaries Boundaries Commissioner  
Forestview  
Purdy's Lane  
Belfast  
BT8 7AR

4 January 2007

Dear Madam

We wish to make representations on behalf of:

- SDLP Balmoral branch (chair, Catherine Fleming)
- Councillor Carmel Hanna MLA
- Councillor Bernie Kelly.

Our representations refer mostly to South Belfast constituency and Balmoral district electoral area. These are as follows:

1. We are extremely disappointed at the appalling quality of reproduction of the ward maps, which made studying them so difficult. We find it difficult to understand how such a mistake was made, particularly when previous boundary maps were so clear. We suggest you provide an explanation as to how such an oversight was made.
2. Given that the Parliamentary Boundary Commissioners have not yet finally reported, but are working off the basis of existing boundaries, and that the Commissioner has apparently proposed new ward boundaries or 'localities, the situation is confused. We suggest that the two sets of recommendations be reconciled as soon as possible. While accepting that even the expanded Belfast Council area is barely enough to support three parliamentary seats, we believe that the local government boundaries of Belfast should be extended to minimise the wards taken from adjoining councils to make up the parliamentary boundaries. The ideal solution would be that Belfast Council be as far as possible co-terminous with the four parliamentary constituencies, while recognising that this cannot be wholly achieved.
3. We acknowledge the good work done in broadly equalising the number of electors in wards, which is long overdue. We also welcome the fact around 40,000 electors are added to Belfast Council area. We welcome the extension of the boundaries to Belvoir (part of the South Belfast parliamentary constituency). However, on the same principle, the boundaries of Belfast should have been extended further to include existing Castlereagh wards such as Galwally, Newtownbreda, Beechill, Cairnshill and Knockbracken (all of which are already part of South Belfast parliamentary constituency) and even further out to Carryduff (whose two wards are proposed to come into South Belfast).

4. In relation to the proposed Balmoral ward, we are opposed to the ward boundary with Finaghy ward splitting Ashton Park and recommend that this boundary be reviewed as the Ardmore/Ashton area has a strong communal identity and voters will be confused.
5. In relation to the University wards, the Donegall Road streets to the rear of the Belfast City Hospital are not really relevant for inclusion in the University ward. We suggest they be moved to the Boucher ward and the appropriate number of streets in Boucher from Donnybrook Street southwards added to the University ward. Indeed the Donegall Road streets could also be considered for addition to the new City Hall ward.

Yours sincerely

Carmel Hanna