

# Cllr. Marcia D'Alton

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22 Hillcrest,  
Pembroke Wood,  
Passage West,  
Co. Cork.

6<sup>th</sup> December, 2017.

Mr. Eoghan Murphy, T.D.,  
Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government,  
Custom House,  
Dublin.

## **RE: Cork Local Government Review – final arrangements**

Dear Minister Murphy,

On Monday evening last, the elected members of Cork County Council convened under the stewardship of the executive and Mayor to receive a briefing on the final position of the new boundary of Cork City as had been agreed between the Chief Executives and Mayors of Cork City and County Council respectively with the Implementation Oversight Group during the course of that same day. The members were presented with a map to aid what was an animated and prolonged discussion.

That same evening, the elected members of Cork City Council convened in a similar manner. They too were presented with a map illustrating the final agreed boundary, again to aid their collective conversation.

It has subsequently transpired that the maps distributed to the elected members of both local authorities differed. That presented to the members of the County Council was entitled "Working Draft" and indicated five small areas of the boundary that needed further technical analysis. That presented to the members of the City Council was entitled "Final Map" with no areas of the proposed boundary indicated as needing further agreement.

As an elected member of one of those local authorities, I am most concerned that the boundary under consideration by the members of each authority was different. It is of particular concern that the "Final Map" distributed by Cork City Council indicates a boundary which impacts on my electorate in a way that was not anticipated and not illustrated by the "Working Draft" distributed by Cork County Council.

Should the final line of the boundary be as was indicated by Cork City Council to its elected members, it would run to the edge of the Passage West development boundary. Passage West is a designated satellite town of Cork City. Although we are currently finalising a Town and Village Renewal Strategy for Passage West, the town exhibits a neglected core with significant dereliction and a poor choice of retail offerings. One of Passage West's greatest assets is the much-used Greenway running along the line of the former Cork, Blackrock & Passage Railway. Should the Cork City Council boundary as indicated in its "Final Map"

be that adopted by Ministerial Order, it would split Passage West from one of the key assets on which it hopes to build its future. It is fair to say that this split would be administrative rather than physical but having worked with community groups in areas such as Douglas which currently span both City and County, I can confirm that this administrative split can genuinely complicate progress.

I have spoken about this to the executive of Cork County Council. I have expressed my deep concern that the line of the boundary presented to the members of both local authorities on Monday evening was different. I have identified that the difference in the boundary between Hop Island and Passage West as outlined on both maps is one which would have potentially significant impact on my town. My executive has, in turn, explained that neither map was accurate; that the final boundary will be drawn up by the Senior Planners of both local authorities in conjunction with the planner from the IOG. Because we have not yet seen this final boundary, the reassurance unfortunately assuages neither of my concerns.

I fear that what may now be implemented as a result of Ministerial Order has not been to date presented accurately to the members of either local authority for their endorsement.

I recognise that the area between Hop Island and Passage West would be marginal to most. It is green belt and steeply sloping. It offers little opportunity for either commercial or residential development. But for Passage West, it is the main artery with Cork City and a hinterland with which historically Passage West identifies closely. Please be assured that the concern that Passage West would remain as one with this stretch of hinterland has absolutely nothing to do with the town's being within either the City or the County territory. Rather, it has to do with enabling the long-held desire of Passage West residents: that the town would finally begin to carve out a unique presence and a positive future. In fact truthfully, in the context of the town's development, it is possibly better to be the gateway to one jurisdiction rather than the backwater of another but because this has never to date been presented as an issue, it is a consideration that the residents of the town have never to date engaged with.

Should a final agreed boundary not be presented to the members of both local authorities in advance of your Ministerial Order, I should therefore be most obliged if you could restrict the City boundary to as close to Hop Island as is acceptable in the context of the City/County negotiations, allowing Passage West the opportunity to develop as a key harbour-side town on a scenic approach to Cork City.

Thank you for your consideration and I wish you well in your decision on this process.

Yours sincerely,



Marcia D'Alton  
Independent Member, Cork County Council

- cc. Mr. Simon Coveney, T.D., Tánaiste  
Mr. Micheál Martin, T.D.  
Mr. Michael McGrath, T.D.  
Mr. Donnchadh O'Laoghaire, T.D.  
Mr. Tim Lucey, C.E., Cork County Council  
Ms Ann Doherty, C.E., Cork City Council  
Cllr. Declan Hurley, Cork County Mayor  
Cllr Tony Fitzgerald, Lord Mayor, Cork City  
Mr. John O'Connor, Chairman, Implementation Oversight Group