

## Chapter 6 – Local Government Arrangements within Counties

### Arrangements in Dublin

**6.4.9** Dublin is a special case, having regard to a range of considerations relating to demographic, spatial, organisational and governance issues which are significantly different from other areas. The introduction of municipal district arrangements in other areas to replace town councils raises a question of whether some, possibly similar, form of district governance should be introduced in Dublin. The introduction of any new arrangement in Dublin that would involve the creation of an additional element of local administration and associated cost would be at variance with the approach towards rationalisation and efficiency which underpins the local government reform programme generally. The issue of replacing town authorities does not arise in Dublin (aside from Balbriggan) as in other counties. However, the concept of an element of governance or decision-making below the level of the county does, in principle, appear applicable. Accordingly, it is proposed that provision would be made to enable the type of reserved functions which will be performed by the elected members at municipal district level in other counties, to be exercisable also by the elected members in the counties of Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown, Fingal and South Dublin, meeting in a sub-formation at the level of each electoral area. It is proposed, however, that the operation of this system would be optional in Dublin. It would be a matter for the overall council in each county to decide whether this form of sub-county arrangement should apply.

**6.4.10** Any proposals in relation to local authority membership in Dublin would need to be carefully considered in the context of other significant issues relating to local government structures and governance, particularly as reduction in the population to member ratio could have significant implications for the size of councils and associated efficiency and cost. However, there is a good case for reducing the degree of representational imbalance currently in the Dublin counties, particularly Fingal, which has 24 seats and a member to population ratio of 1:11,416 and South Dublin which has 26 seats and a ratio of 1:10,200. The member to population ratio in Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown, which currently has 28 seats, is less unfavourable at 1:7,366, but still relatively high compared with many other areas. A review of local electoral areas and the number of members assigned to each of those areas will be undertaken.

