Good morning ladies and gentlemen and I welcome you to The Manor House Hotel for the District Electoral Areas commissioner Public Inquiry this morning.

I have a few housekeeping announcements while we’re here. If you need to use the facilities, they’re in the lobby out the door and to the left; there's no fire alarm planned today but if we do hear it there’s a fire exit at the back of the room or to the side and the meeting point will be pointed out by hotel staff. Please switch mobile phones to silent for the duration of the inquiry. I'll hand over to our Assistant Commissioner, Sarah Havlin, and Heather McKinley from the District Electoral Areas Commissioner’s Office. Thank you.

Sarah Havlin: Thank you. I'm just going to run through some of the formalities before we start. Good morning ladies and gentlemen and thank you for coming today; I'm now formally opening this Public Inquiry into the proposed district electoral areas for the local government district of Fermanagh and Omagh.

My name is Sarah Havlin and I have been appointed by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland to conduct this inquiry. I want to stress at the outset that I am independent of the District Electoral Areas Commissioner, Dick Mackenzie. It's not my function here today to defend his recommendations; my role is to listen to and consider the evidence that will be put forward at this inquiry and to report my findings and my own recommendations to the commissioner. My recommendations are to be made within four weeks of the close of this inquiry.

We don't plan to stop for any breaks today but if anyone does have a request for any adjournments I will of course consider that. There are copies of the Commissioner's provisional recommendations available for inspection here; there are also copies of the written representations which have been made relating to this district and those have been made during the eight week consultation period which ended on 27th June.

I also want to point out that the inquiry is being recorded and that there will be a transcript available on the Commissioner's website in due course. If anyone cannot access the website and wishes to receive a printed copy of the transcript you can leave your name and address and contact details with a member of my support staff here and we will
accommodate that. There are maps available and on the screen which show the proposed grouping of the wards into electoral areas which is what we're considering here today.

And just a little on the purpose and the scope of the inquiry. The purpose of this public inquiry is to consider representations concerning the provisional recommendations of the District electoral Areas commissioner for the local government district of Fermanagh and Omagh, and it should be noted that this inquiry has been convened to consider and hear arguments for and against the objections which have been raised to the Commissioner's proposals during the consultation period, which closed on the 27th June. So any new objections which are unrelated to those already submitted cannot be considered by me. I also want to emphasise that you can't reserve your position to await my report, it will not be possible for you to make any further written or oral submissions to me or indeed to the commissioner once the inquiry has concluded.

Some of you may have already made written representations and I have studied those carefully as part of my preparation for this inquiry and they will certainly be taken into account in my full report to the commissioner. If you wish to make submissions today and you've already made a written representation you are free to elaborate further on the representation that you've made here today but I just want to stress that I'm not going to be assisted by repetition of submissions. If you've already made your points fully in writing you might simply wish to state that you support or oppose the particular recommendation for the reasons that you've already stated in your written representation. I want to assure you that full account will be taken of all written representations, regardless of whether or not they are referred to during the course of this inquiry.

I would also be grateful if other speakers would try not to repeat points already put to the inquiry but simply record your support for views expressed previously. I want to make sure that you realise that it's important that you back up your proposals with evidence where possible, rather than relying on unsubstantiated statements or anecdotal evidence. Bear in mind that in making his recommendations, the Commissioner was constrained by the rules set out in the relevant legislation and so those are binding upon us today.

There are, however, a number of issues that I want to make sure you are aware of that are outside the scope of this inquiry and that includes the boundaries and the names of local government districts and their constituent wards; that was already settled under the terms of the Local Government Boundaries Order 2012, so those are issues I can't look at.

I can't consider the impact of the provisional recommendations on political representation and I can't consider any issue that does not relate to the Commissioner's proposals for the grouping of wards within this particular local government district of Fermanagh and Omagh.
The procedure that we are going to follow in relation to the oral submissions is that you'll be called to the table in front of me to speak into the microphones that are provided and, in making your submission, I would like you to start by stating your name for the record and tell me whether you're speaking in a personal capacity or if you're representing someone or a group of people and let me know who it is that you’re representing.

Try and speak clearly for the recording, to avoid abbreviations or anything that might cause difficulty for our transcribers and also let me know if you've already made a written representation so I can refer to it. As a matter of guidance, it would be very helpful if you can explain the reasons why you’ve taken a particular position, whether you're supporting an objection or a counterproposal to the Commissioner's recommendations, whether you're supporting the Commissioner's original recommendations or if you're proposing an alternative to both. When you finish your submission other people will be permitted to put questions to you from the floor and I may have some questions for you or points of clarification.

I would like to conduct the inquiry in an informal manner that is conducive to all of those who wish to contribute. Formal cross-examination is not appropriate at this inquiry but I'm very happy for people to put questions to the speaker through myself and, similarly, I'll facilitate the person answering the question in the best way possible.

And also touching on site visits, some of you may wish to request me to make site visits; I may go to view some areas under consideration. If there is a particular boundary or feature that you want me to look at then please mention it during the course of your submission and I can note that and try and go and see it.

If we are ready and if the first speaker would be happy, it would be my intention to call the first speaker who I believe is Tom Elliott. Mr Elliott, if you would be happy to come forward to the microphone; thank you very much.

Tom Elliott: Thank you very much. Thank you, Assistant Commissioner, I’m Tom Elliott MLA; I represent here today the Ulster Unionist Party. The Ulster Unionist Party put in a general submission in response to the DEA Boundary Review and that response indicated that while we weren't content in Fermanagh and Omagh with the ward proposals or the ward structure and makeup, you did indicate you have no remit to change that or to look at that, so as far as the DEAs go, we were content with them.

I'm merely here today because I did note that community groups in Hillview and Kilmacormick II had made representation in relation to the Lisnarrick boundary or the Lisnarrick ward and that it should not be in
Erne North but instead go into the Enniskillen DEA because of the inclusion of part of Hillview and Kilmacormick II.

I have a large degree of sympathy with them in relation to the makeup of that particular ward and indeed the Ballinamallard ward, which actually includes a small urban area in and around Cavanaleck as well, which is in a very similar position. However, both Ballinamallard and Lisnarrick are very broadly rural wards and Lisnarrick stretches almost to the village of Kesh, which is a huge elongated ward and if you were to bring that into Enniskillen DEA, it would be almost impractical to operate.

If you will permit me, Commissioner, to go back a bit - in 2008 our party did make a very strong representation about the ward makeup and that those urban areas should not have been mixed with that rural area of Lisnarick and Ballinamallard, very strong representation, but it wasn't heeded by the Commissioner at the time. I have since had several discussions with Mr Mackenzie about it.

So while I do have that sympathy with the communities of Hillview and Kilmacormick, I do not support bringing Lisnarrick into the Enniskillen DEA. I do think it would skew it - I know there are social issues as well, but I'm assuming with super output areas within individual wards that maybe those issues can be resolved. If you had the power, Commissioner, to look at the wards I would be making a totally different representation but you haven't. So clearly that is quite simply my position.

Sarah Havlin: Thank you Mr Elliott. You mentioned there about the elongated ward of Lisnarrick and you said that it would almost be impractical to operate. Could you perhaps tell me a little bit more about what you mean by that? Obviously I don't have the benefit of local knowledge.

Tom Elliott: Enniskillen DEA is a pretty compact DEA and takes in Enniskillen town itself plus the areas of Lisbellaw and Tempo, so they would have broadly a natural affinity with Enniskillen and have done so for years. Lisnarrick is different in the sense that doesn't have the same affinity with Enniskillen town because it goes almost to Kesh village. Lisnarrick ward actually takes in those two housing estates in the urban area of Enniskillen but it goes down right through what we would call the hamlets of Trory, Killadeas, Ballycassidy, Lisnarick itself and right down to near the village of Kesh.

It then goes over to the east and almost circles around the populated area of Ballinamallard, so it takes in an area that would be naturally associated with Irvinestown or Ballinamallard and on the other side, an area that would be associated with Kesh. So there would be generally no affinity there to the town of Enniskillen in electoral terms or in community terms.
I do understand that the people of Hillview and Kilmacormick II will actually feel the same, in that they don't really have any affinity with those areas - the difficulty is that it's the large part of the area and the majority of people there will be in that Erne North area. It's about numbers; it's about where the greater difficulty will be. And I know the suggestion was then to bring Tempo into Erne North but if you look at the structure, if you bring Tempo into Erne North and bring Lisnarrick into Enniskillen, again that skews the issue because you're relating Tempo to Belleek, whereas those living at the edge of Kesh and would feel affinity to Kesh are then going to be in Enniskillen DEA; so it just would not be good for a community cohesive base.

Sarah Havlin: So, in your submission, Mr Elliott, Lisnarrick would be coming out of Erne North and into Enniskillen?

Tom Elliott: No, what I'm saying is I'm content with the Boundary Commissioner's proposals as far as the DEAs go; I'm merely arguing against the case made by the community associations in Kilmacormick II and Hillview.

Sarah Havlin: So you're content with the Commissioner's proposals in relation to Erne North and Enniskillen?

Tom Elliott: Yes.

Sarah Havlin: Both?

Tom Elliott: I have to say I'm not content because of the wards but there is nothing we can do about that, so I'm content on the basis of what he has done there.

Sarah Havlin: So your point really is in relation to the difficulty with the ward and those urban areas having been caught up in that particular ward of Lisnarrick, but you understand that that's a settled issue?

Tom Elliott: Yes.

Sarah Havlin: I see. Would anyone have any questions or anything that they would like put to Mr Elliott for consideration, arising from what has been said? No? I don't have any further questions Mr Elliott; thank you very much for your submission.

Could I check with Councillor Frank Britton if you wish to make a submission? Could I ask you to come forward at this point please? Thank you very much. May I just remind you if you could just tell us for the record your name and who you are representing here today.

Frank Britton: Councillor Frank Britton, SDLP in County Fermanagh. I'm a councillor in the Enniskillen area. First of all, you're very welcome to County Fermanagh, both yourself and your staff. The issue, and it will be repeated this morning, is the impact on the north west of Enniskillen and
the people who live in that area. We are aware that the wards have been set, this obviously is about the configuration of the DEAs. While recognising that the wards have been set, it is important to reiterate the impact of taking some of Enniskillen and putting it into particularly the Lisnarrick ward and a little bit of it goes into the Ballinamallard ward as well. The residents in that area are particularly unhappy and they will make their own case, they are here this morning. But they are unhappy and I have had representations made to me about this because they themselves in nearly every aspect of their lives look towards the town of Enniskillen; they look towards the town of Enniskillen for services, for social activity, for work, transport and education.

Now politics is a service itself and now this is one service that has been taken out from Enniskillen and been placed in the Lisnarrick ward. This is a source of great grievance to the people in the area, and particularly because of the impact on the neighbourhood renewal area which crosses this new ward arrangement, and that will have an impact that will be obviously spoken about shortly.

The desire of the Devenish ward and Kilmacormick II, Hillview, Cavanaleck and Drumclay has always been to be in the Enniskillen area; that has been the history of it.

Sarah Havlin: Just so I understand, sorry to interrupt you, but you mentioned the Devenish ward; now I think that maybe is an old name, isn't that right? What area would that be that you're referring to now?

Frank Britton: Well the Devenish ward is now gone but it would have been over in Kilmacormick I and that area of the town as you come in on the Cornagrade Road.

Sarah Havlin: Ok. Devenish then is the name of the old ward before the changes?

Frank Britton: Yes, and of course in other areas around that area.

Heather McKinley: Just to clarify, would that be in what is the new Lisnarrick ward?

Frank Britton: Yes, some of it is gone now into the new Lisnarrick ward and that is obviously having an impact. For today's hearing we are placed in the invidious position of having to make choices as to which wards should suit Enniskillen and our view at this point in time is that from an Enniskillen perspective it is preferable that Lisnarrick comes into Enniskillen. I must repeat that, from an Enniskillen perspective, the people that I have represented and still represent in Enniskillen are quite clear that they want to be within an Enniskillen district electoral area and do not want to be in what is largely an urban ward. So from that point of view we would be advocating that Lisnarrick comes into Enniskillen.

Sarah Havlin: So Lisnarrick is currently under the proposals in Erne North.
Frank Britton: Yes.

Sarah Havlin: And your submission is that it should be moved into Enniskillen?

Frank Britton: Yes.

Sarah Havlin: And that is because of community links and social ties of the residents in those estates?

Frank Britton: Yes.

Sarah Havlin: And the urban estates you're talking about at the bottom of that ward that have the ties to the urban area of Enniskillen, is that right?

Frank Britton: Yes, it's on that basis we're making that submission.

Sarah Havlin: I think that just in terms of if I were to agree with you, if I were to test that out, Lisnarrick coming out of Erne North would then leave Erne North with four wards which wouldn't be compliant with the statute because there has to be a minimum of five and a maximum of seven. Now if we move Lisnarrick into Enniskillen that would give us seven wards in Enniskillen which is permissible of itself, but I would wonder if you would have any alternative proposals as to how it would be reconfigured in Erne North to balance Erne North to have a minimum of five wards. Is that something that you have considered?

Frank Britton: Yes, but I'm not going to make any comment on that. My comment is on the impact on north-west Enniskillen by the proposal to put the Lisnarrick ward into Erne North. I think the important thing overall is that Enniskillen retains its integrity as a town, as a county town, that people who live in the town relate to for virtually everything in their lives. But here we have one part of the town, for one aspect of an important service, which is local government, being taken out and put into a largely rural area. And that is very unsatisfactory from the residents' point of view.

Sarah Havlin: Yes. And I do see that the Commissioner in his proposals and in setting out his approach did mention that the creation of distinct urban and rural DEAs was something that he would be considering as part of his overall planning when he was looking at grouping the wards together, so I do see the relevance of the argument that you're making on that basis.

Frank Britton: Thank you.

Sarah Havlin: It's something that I will look into and consider and I would ask if anyone else in the room has any questions that they would like to put to Mr Britton as a result of what he has said. Yes, Mr Elliott?
Tom Elliot: Tom Elliot, Ulster Unionist Party, just a quick query to Councillor Britton. While I accept his point that the majority of those living in Kilmacormick and Kilmacormick II and Hillview that would be going into the Erne North area, would he accept that the rest of those people living in the Lisnarrick area, or the majority of the rest of those people living in that Lisnarrick area, would probably prefer to stay in Erne North as opposed to going into the urban DEA of Enniskillen?

Frank Britton: Thank you very much. I accept that a large number of people in the current Lisnarrick ward may well want to remain as they are in Erne North. My representation is for the people of Enniskillen, and certainly the people of north-west Enniskillen, and their desire to remain within the Enniskillen political grouping of wards and obviously the Enniskillen DEA.

Sarah Havlin: Thank you very much. Anything further, any further questions? Yes, madam, if you could just let us know who you are for the purpose of the record before you ask your question.

Rosemary Flanagan: Rosemary Flanagan, SDLP. It's not exactly a question but just to reinforce what Mr Britton has said. I, as a resident of Enniskillen for over 40 years, will now be voting in Ballinamallard and the same argument applies to Cavanaugh, Drumclay and Chanterhill as applies to Kilmacormick and Hillview. All of a sudden as an urban dweller I, my family and my neighbours will be voting in a rural area, an area with which we do not have a connection and it underlines what you have just said as a representative of the Commissioner, the distinction between urban and rural has not been preserved and we object to that.

Sarah Havlin: Thank you very much. Thank you very much Mr Britton, it was very helpful, thank you. I don't think I have any more speakers registered to speak this morning; I have a few more speakers who are going to speak later this afternoon. Would anyone like to speak at this stage or make any submissions because, if not, I would propose to adjourn the proceedings?

The team will remain here to ensure that anyone who wants to speak is facilitated but we do not have any further speakers registered for this morning so I would propose an adjournment. I don't think we'll be back until after lunch time.

Rosemary Flanagan: Sorry, could I ask about that? The speakers scheduled this afternoon can they not speak now instead of this afternoon?

Sarah Havlin: I understand they have other representatives coming this afternoon to speak as a group, would I be correct in that? Yes. But not all of the speakers are available at this time. Is it after 1pm we are expecting you? What's your name, sorry?
Brendan Farry: Brendan Farry, Hillview Association. I am collecting other folk from the area who have an interest in this for the evening session and they agreed to come to this, so any submission we wish to make we'd like to make it in their presence so I would thank you if you would wait.

Sarah Havlin: Yes, that's perfectly acceptable because the inquiry is open until 5pm today. But just to let other interested parties know who might wish to be here to hear those submissions that I would sit again at 1.30pm to hear that and that people will be free to put questions or any further submissions at that stage.

Is there anyone who has just joined the room who wants to make a submission at this stage before I close the proceedings just on an adjourned basis?

Tom Elliott: Thank you, Tom Elliott. Just a query, is it possible that other people who would come in this afternoon can actually speak then if they're not registered at this stage?

Sarah Havlin: Yes, they will be able to speak if they come this afternoon and register but I would just reiterate that we can only consider the objections that have been put so no new objections would be considered; if there are further speakers it would still be based on the objections that have been made so far under the consultation.

So if we're content I'm going to adjourn and I'll sit again at 1.30pm; thank you very much indeed, ladies and gentlemen.

AFTERNOON SESSION

Jane Watson: Ladies and gentlemen, just before I officially hand over to the Assistant commissioner, a few housekeeping announcements for the short time we may be here this afternoon. The facilities are in the lobby just through the door to the left if you need to use them; there's no fire alarm planned today but if we do hear it there is a fire exit at the rear of the room and to the left and staff will guide us to the master point. And during proceedings, if I could ask you to switch any mobile phones to silent mode until we are concluded. I'll hand over to Assistant commissioner, Sarah Havlin. Thank you.

Sarah Havlin: Thank you, Jane. Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. I am formally reconvening this public inquiry. We were in session this morning and some of you were there this morning and some of you are attending for the first time so forgive me for repeating anything I've said earlier this morning for those of you who were here but I'm just going to run through the formalities again and set out exactly what the inquiry is here to do today and give you some background information.
My name is Sarah Havlin and I have been appointed by the Secretary of State of Northern Ireland to conduct this inquiry into the proposed district electoral areas for the local government district of Fermanagh and Omagh. I just want to stress to everyone that I am independent of the District Electoral Areas Commissioner, Dick Mackenzie, and it's not my function to defend his recommendations. My role is to listen to and consider the evidence put forward at this inquiry and then I will report my findings and my recommendations to the Commissioner and that will be done within four weeks of the close of this inquiry.

For this afternoon session I don't propose to stop for any breaks but if anyone should require an adjournment you should advise me of that and I will consider it; that's not a problem. Just to advise you that there are copies of the Commissioner's provisional recommendations available for inspection here. I see some of you have those and you can avail of those if you need them. There are also copies of the written representations relating to this district which have been made to the Commissioner during the eight week consultation period which ended on 27th June.

I also want to let you all know that the inquiry is being recorded and that a transcript will be made available on the Commissioner's website in due course. If anyone cannot access the website and wishes to receive a printed copy of the transcript then please leave your name and contact details with a member of my support staff and we will accommodate that. There are also maps available and on the screen behind me showing the proposed grouping of wards into electoral areas under the current proposals of the Commissioner.

The purpose of this inquiry is to consider the representations that have been made concerning the provisional recommendations of the District Electoral Areas Commissioner for this district. It should be noted that this inquiry has been convened to consider and hear arguments for and against the objections which have been raised to the Commissioner's proposals during the consultation period and that closed on the 27th June. So I need to point out to you that any new objections which are unrelated to those already submitted cannot be considered as part of this process. I must also emphasise that you cannot reserve your position to await my report; it will not be possible for you to make any written or oral submissions to me or indeed to the Commissioner after this inquiry has concluded.

Some of you may have already made written representations and I have studied those carefully as part of my preparation for this inquiry and I will certainly take them into account in my report to the Commissioner. Those of you who have already made written representations will want to elaborate on the representations today but I just want to let you know that I will not be assisted by repetition of the written submissions; if you think you've already made the points fully in writing you might simply wish to
state that you support or oppose a particular recommendation for the reasons that have been stated in the written representation. And I want to assure you all that full account will be taken of all written representations, regardless of whether or not they are referred to during the course of this inquiry.

I should also be grateful if other speakers would try not to repeat points that have already been put to me in this inquiry but it would be helpful if you record your support for views which have been expressed previously. It would also be very helpful if you back up your proposals with evidence if you have it, where possible, and bear in mind that the Commissioner is constrained by the rules which are set out in the legislation and so they will have to be applied to the process as well.

There are a number of issues that would be outside the scope of this inquiry and that includes the boundaries and names of local government districts and their constituent wards; they were already settled under the terms of the Local Government Boundaries Order 2012 and I will not be considering that.

The impact of the provisional recommendations on political representation is another issue that I'm not permitted to consider, and any issue that does not relate to the Commissioner's proposals for the grouping of wards within this particular local government district, so I can only consider representations relating to this district. So anything that is raised in this inquiry that's not relevant, I will not be able to consider and I will give reasons in my report why I can't consider it.

In relation to giving your oral submissions, I just want to let you know the procedure for that. You will be called to come up to the table in front of me to speak into the microphones provided. It's very important that when you do speak that you speak into the microphones and anyone from the floor who wants to put questions to speakers will be aided with a roving microphone. Before you speak it's very important, because of the record that we're keeping today, if you state your name and let me know who you're representing if you're representing someone or a group of people; please do let me know the capacity in which you're speaking.

When you finish your submission there could be questions from the floor, I may have some questions for you, points of clarification, but I just want to let you all know that I intend to conduct the inquiry in an informal manner and I want it to be conducive to all of those here who wish to contribute. Formal cross-examination is not appropriate at an inquiry of this nature; I will be very happy to facilitate questioning but that needs to be done through me.

I also want to touch on site visits. After this inquiry is over I may go to view some areas that are under consideration and if you feel there is a particular boundary or feature that you would like me to look at by way of
site visit then please mention it to me during the course of your submission so that I can note it and try and go and see it.

I'm assisted in the running of the inquiry by a team of staff. We have Heather McKinley and Debbie Davison from the District Electoral Areas Commissioner’s Office and also Jane and Nicola are here from Morrow Communications. Please feel free to approach any of these staff with any queries that you might have and they'll be pleased to help you or draw the matter to my attention.

So with that out of the way I would like to commence the proceedings and call our first speaker this afternoon. And our first speaker, I think perhaps the two speakers would like to speak together, is that right, would you like to approach the table together? And we have Brendan Farry from Hillview Residents Association, is that right?

Brendan Farry: Yes.

Sarah Havlin: Yes. And Roisin McCusker from Devenish Partnership; is that right?

Roisin McCusker: Yes.

Sarah Havlin: Well thank you very much indeed for coming forward to speak. There are some written submissions in relation to what you're going to make your submission about. Would you like to speak first or do you wish to both speak together?

Brendan Farry: Can we work on a tag?

Sarah Havlin: On a tag team basis, yes.

Brendan Farry: This is a format new to us and we don't feel terribly comfortable.

Sarah Havlin: Whatever makes you comfortable but just before you do speak if you'd just say your name for the purpose of the record.

Brendan Farry: Brendan Farry, Hillview Association.


Sarah Havlin: Thank you very much. So perhaps you would like to talk me through the objections that you have raised in relation to the proposals and elaborate a little bit more on the submission that has been made.

Brendan Farry: First, I'd like to say that this came out of the blue in a very short time from today and we were taken aback with the lack of knowledge coming forward to us as residents. We were very hard taken aback by where we're sitting - that part of the community I live in, in Hillview, being halved
and part of it remaining in the Enniskillen area. And we couldn't, as residents there, come to understand where the philosophy was there but we discovered as we went on that other communities attached to us in our area were being moved to a new ward too.

Sarah Havlin: Could I just stop you there just to clarify because I know this process can be quite confusing in talking about different boundaries and the ward boundaries and the boundaries for the district electoral areas. The ward boundaries are already fixed in terms of where your particular area, where you live, falls within that ward; that boundary is fixed and so it's not within my power or the Commissioner's power to change that under this process but I just wanted to clarify that you're not talking about the ward boundary, you're talking about moving the whole ward into the district electoral area of Enniskillen. Is that right?

Brendan Farry: Yes. We were an urban community and in years to come or the foreseeable future we'll become rural. In a sense we're moving from, in layman's terms, from townies to country folk and as far as we are concerned - I'm not being disrespectful to the country area – but we don't have an awful lot of affinity in needs. Our social needs in the area that we live, is a combined social need. And when we think of what we have worked at over a lot of years to build up that cohesiveness in the area, that all of a sudden this is going to be completely eroded and not only leave us very vulnerable but leave those who are, in some terms, left behind extremely vulnerable. So therefore we find it hard to come to terms with where we sit as ordinary residents in the sense that where I live in the Hillview Estate, from what we can gather, will be in one ward and part of the estate will remain in the other ward. We'd be looking at our so-called 'neighbours' in a different ward because it's splitting our area.

Sarah Havlin: Could you tell me a little bit more about that - so Hillview Estate, part of that estate falls into the district electoral area of Enniskillen and the other part falls into Erne North? Is that correct?

Heather McKinley: There's a pointer there, I wonder would you be able to point out on the map where you're talking about?

Roisin McCusker: So if we look here, it's about here. This here is Hillview, am I right, Brendan?

Brendan Farry: Yes.

Roisin McCusker: And the other side of Hillview is this side. So part of Hillview, Hillview Road, is Enniskillen, is the Erne ward, and it's in the Enniskillen area but the other side of Hillview is Lisnarrick ward and therefore Erne North. And when we look at it we're talking about the town of Enniskillen, which is a half a mile from where we're talking about, of urban Enniskillen; the town
centre is a half a mile, maybe not even a half a mile, to Hillview, to Kilmacormick.

Brendan Farry: Can I ask just at this point, you did refer to being willing to do a walk to try to understand something that, even with all our talking here, to get your head round where actually we're talking about.

Sarah Havlin: Yes, that would be helpful.

Brendan Farry: But I think that you would actually need a walk to understand where we sit and where we will be sitting next electoral term. The map doesn't show you a very detailed view of where exactly we're talking about.

Sarah Havlin: Are you saying that the ward boundary splits the estate?

Roisin McCusker: The ward boundary splits and then also the wards...

Sarah Havlin: So the ward coming into the district electoral area splits it even further?

Roisin McCusker: Even further. So if you look on this map here...

Sarah Havlin: So in other words, are you saying that the ward boundary already splits the estate?

Roisin McCusker: Yes.

Sarah Havlin: So if you were to move Lisnarrick as a ward into Enniskillen?

Roisin McCusker: It will be part of the same district electoral area.

Sarah Havlin: It'll be part of the same district electoral area, all of the estate?

Roisin McCusker: Yes, because currently the estate is split so one part of the estate is in Lisnarrick and the other part of the estate is in Erne. So Erne is in Enniskillen and Lisnarrick is going to be in Erne North.

Sarah Havlin: But is that not because of the way the ward boundary falls rather than the district electoral area boundary?

Roisin McCusker: But with our proposal we're asking for Lisnarrick to come into Enniskillen.

Sarah Havlin: Right, so you're saying to move both wards into the DEA?

Roisin McCusker: Just one ward, Lisnarrick; Erne is already there.

Brendan Farry: Or to put it in layman's terms, moving a small portion into a big portion rather than putting a big portion into a small portion.
Sarah Havlin: I see what you're saying, Erne is actually already in Enniskillen which has got part of your estate in it and you're saying that Lisnarrick should also move into Enniskillen.

Brendan Farry: To our eyes, yes, that's most logical.

Sarah Havlin: Yes, obviously with not having local knowledge, that's very helpful, thank you.

In terms of my own research, if I were to agree with you that that's something that the Commissioner should consider, have you considered what the ripple effects of that might be in terms of this process? I mean it's fine if you haven't but if you want to say anything more about if Lisnarrick were to come out of Erne North, for example, I think that would leave Erne North with four wards. And the reason why that would be a difficulty is because the statute tells us that we have to have a minimum of five wards. Is it something that you've considered as to how that might be reconfigured to balance it out, whether another ward would move to take the place of Lisnarrick, a ward for example that is a rural ward?

Brendan Farry: Yes, we can understand where Lisnarrick might sit in the situation that we would be proposing; we understand that; we can see where a rural community is rural and where an urban community is urban. As I said before, we have no disrespect for the rural community but being urban and being urban reared, we don't have the day-to-day ties. Respectful, yes but our lives aren't bound in the Enniskillen area.

Sarah Havlin: I understand that point that you're making; I can see that argument. What I'm just wondering is - the proposed wards to be included in Enniskillen are Lisbellaw, Rossoorry, Portora, Erne, Tempo, Castlecoole. Do you feel that any of those wards are particularly rural and therefore should not be included in Enniskillen?

Brendan Farry: Well part of those names would be still town based; Rossoorry would be half and half, they would be still fringing on the town and slightly rural.

Sarah Havlin: So none of those six wards proposed as Enniskillen area you think are particularly incongruous?

Brendan Farry: Tempo would be rural.

Sarah Havlin: Tempo would be rural you feel.

Brendan Farry: It would be classed as rural. We always deemed Lisbellaw to be rural; I stand to be corrected, but in my lifetime I always associated Lisbellaw and the Tamlaght area as rural country areas.

Sarah Havlin: That's helpful, thank you.
Roisin McCusker: We've talked about Hillview and we've talked that previously people from the area have signed a petition and their concern was their affinity revolves around the town of Enniskillen, their health, their education, their social and community life and this proposal will change all that. They'll be changing to a rural ward but also a rural district area.

The Lisnarrick ward spans, as Tom Elliott referred to it earlier, a large area and a narrow area right down to the Kesh border. A vast amount of that area covers the Lough Erne and inhabited islands of Lough Erne; it covers the large parkland of Castle Archdale, it covers the new South West Hospital. So it covers large areas, but when you drill down to the inhabitants of that area, I looked at it last night and I looked at the streets that would be included in it, and I'm only talking about the narrow border of what I would call Enniskillen currently, you're talking about 600 houses and that's just houses.

It's heavily populated housing estates we're talking about. I'm not even just talking about Hillview and Kilmacormick II, I'm talking about Drumcoo as was talked about this morning, Drumbon, Drumbeg, Drumgarrow; it's a vast area population-wise. The rural area is vast but the population in the town is vast as well in a smaller geographical area and I think that has to be taken into account.

Our estates that we talk about today are the heart of Enniskillen town; the people live and breathe Enniskillen, this is what they know. Their affinity is to Enniskillen, their urban roots are to Enniskillen. A lot of these people that currently live there or their families now live in these estates are from the island town of Enniskillen and it's a very strong community. The town of Enniskillen many moons ago had houses within the town, the island town, and they were moved out into these four estates and still live there, as do some of the guys that are here with me today.

And I understand the whole rural element of it but when you look at the wards, from the tip of the new Lisnarrick ward is a half a mile from the town, less than half a mile from the town centre of Enniskillen. If you look at Tempo it's ten miles from Enniskillen town centre, so the question is, and I'm only using these two as examples, Lisnarrick is tipping Enniskillen town centre and we're going to call it rural, but Tempo is ten miles out of Enniskillen and we're calling it urban. And that's my question.

The estates that Devenish Partnership work in, and I'm only representing them today, but we work as a community within that area of Enniskillen. The four estates which have always had over two wards, the Erne and current Devenish ward, work together and have worked together for many years to build a cohesive community and this will not only change that dynamic but it just doesn't make sense.

Sarah Havlin: You mentioned the number of people.
Roisin McCusker: Houses.

Sarah Havlin: The houses. Do you have any further information about the split?

Roisin McCusker: I don't have numbers. Just going by the maps, I was doing a piece of research last night, and I counted about 600 houses if I was going just through the streets that would be included in that.

Sarah Havlin: I would wonder what the difference would be in terms of the amount of electors that live in the estates that you're referring to compared to the rest of the ward because obviously, as you say, the geographical area on the map of the ward makes it look as though the majority of the ward is a rural area.

Roisin McCusker: Yes, absolutely.

Sarah Havlin: But the argument that you're making is in terms of people, that the higher number of electors may well be in that area. I don't know whether that's true but I think that's something I could probably check for you.

Roisin McCusker: When I went into NISRA last night I wasn't able to drill down, because of the way the new ward has been split. But if you just count households in that area it is a heavily populated small part of the Lisnarrick ward.

Brendan Farry: There are multiple occupants in most of these houses that are there, the size of the families, impacting on them in that respect.

Sarah Havlin: I wonder if we could pause there at this point in your submissions because we've said quite a lot there and perhaps we could take any questions that there might be from the floor or anyone who would like to have any clarification. Thank you very much. If you wouldn't mind just giving me your name please before you speak.

Sam Foster: Yes, indeed, it's Sam Foster.

Sarah Havlin: Thank you Mr Foster.

Sam Foster: Enniskillen Ulster Unionists.

Sarah Havlin: Go ahead please.

Sam Foster: First of all, Rossorry here is called Rosorry, the pronunciation you got wrong, I can understand that, you don't know the area of course. The other point, speaking about numbers in the Enniskillen wards, have you a formal list of the numbers of voters in each of the areas?

Sarah Havlin: We do have a number of electors in each ward, yes.
Sam Foster: Would you like to disclose them?

Sarah Havlin: Well they are in the booklet within the provisional recommendations but they're a total figure of each ward. I wouldn't have a breakdown of where those particular electors might fall in the area.

Sam Foster: I was thinking of the area altogether, not just part of it. How many would it be when Enniskillen used to be Devenish?

Sarah Havlin: Do you mean in relation to the Lisnarrick ward as it is under this process? The total amount of electors is 2,293.

Sam Foster: Yes. Fair enough; I'll leave it be in the mean time.

Sarah Havlin: Thank you. Any other further questions at this stage or any points anyone needs to raise with the two speakers before we move on? Yes, please, the microphone please.

Debbie Coyle: Hello, my name's Debbie Coyle, I am a councillor here in Enniskillen and I apologise for being late so I only caught the end of Roisin's presentation. But my concern, or question to yourselves, is that I just don't understand how an estate within Enniskillen, and I agree with everything that Roisin has said, but there's an estate that's literally just been cut in half and half of it is going to be put into an urban area; I just don't understand the justification in that.

Sarah Havlin: Well I'm certainly not here to defend the proposals that are here, I think that's the reason for this inquiry. It's important that we do hear these objections and that we do look at them and that I look into them and can report back to the Commissioner advising him of what's been said here at this inquiry and I'll be looking at it from an objective point of view and putting forward my own recommendations. So unfortunately I can't answer the question but I do understand the point that you are making and certainly it will be something that I will be communicating to the Commissioner when I'm reporting to him.

Debbie Coyle: Yes, I think the community really need that looked into because to go from a town into a rural... when they're quite obviously in the town is just silly.

Sarah Havlin: Well I think that in the preamble in the booklet about the recommendations, the statutory considerations obviously have to be given priority and that's set out by the Commissioner. But he does confirm that his approach is to look at the creation of distinct urban and rural DEAs where possible and that is something that is a consideration in this process. So I would assure you that your point is relevant; the question is whether it can be accommodated under the way this process is framed within the statute because obviously the statutory considerations have to be given priority. But that's something that I will
look into when I'm looking at the matter as a whole and reporting back to the Commissioner with what has been presented to me and whether there are feasible alternatives.

Mr Elliott wants to speak.

Tom Elliott: Tom Elliott, thank you again, Commissioner. The question is relevant to what you're saying and to both Roisin and Brendan. They know my position on this, but clearly the issue is, in this case, you're either going to put a large section of a rural area into an urban DEA or else you're going to put a large section of an urban area into a rural DEA; that's the reality of it.

Sarah Havlin: Yes, I think that's the point exactly.

Tom Elliott: And I think it goes down to the argument that was made in 2008 around the ward boundaries and obviously that's the difficulty you have, Commissioner, of making your recommendations; it's impossible in this case, I believe - maybe somebody will disagree - it is impossible to go along with that recommendation of the Boundary Commissioner, that you try to keep urban urban and rural rural because in this case you can't.

Sarah Havlin: I think in the approach to this process the Commissioner did say that it's not always possible to define distinct urban and rural DEAs or to avoid the division of a settlement. I think he did make that point and I think in some cases there will be difficult areas. Is there something else you would like to add to your submission at this stage? No.

Yes, you mentioned that your point was that Tempo is ten miles from the centre and Lisnarick is half a mile.

Roisin McCusker: No, the Lisnarick ward, as in so the Hillview Estate, was the start of the Lisnarick ward.

Sarah Havlin: Oh, you mean the actual exterior, the boundary line.

Roisin McCusker: Yes, that's what I'm talking about, so if you were to go from the town centre of Enniskillen to Hillview, which will be the start of the Lisnarick ward now on the Cornagrade Road, it's less than half a mile, whereas if you were to go from the town centre to Tempo you're talking ten miles.

Sarah Havlin: Which is out here and yet Tempo is in Enniskillen, so that was the point you were making?

Roisin McCusker: Yes.

Sarah Havlin: Anything further you want to add?
Brendan Farry: A lot of things but I'll keep them; they're basically going over exactly what Roisin says, just to communicate that we find ourselves very uncomfortable at the moment.

Sarah Havlin: I can understand that and I take the points that you've made and I will be considering them, so thank you very much indeed to both of you. Before you step down, were there any further questions or anything anyone wants to put to the speakers?

Rosemary Johnston: Could I just give my view on this please?

Sarah Havlin: Well certainly, if you could speak into the microphone for me and tell me your name please.

Rosemary Johnston: I'm Rosemary Johnston and I'm in Hillview, part of the Association, and as far as we can make out I am on the side that is staying in Enniskillen and Brendan, who is four minutes down the road, and Jack and Josie and Theresa and Kathleen and these others, they're all moving out the road; now we're all less than seven or eight minutes from each other. It sounds so ridiculous.

Sarah Havlin: So your part of the estate falls within Erne? So you're in the Erne ward but you said you lived four minutes away.

Rosemary Johnston: Yes, from Brendan, and seven or eight minutes from the rest of them. Now there's the houses there and there's the houses there and that's going to be Enniskillen and that's going to be Lisnarrick. It's so ridiculous.

Sarah Havlin: Actually just one further point does occur to me though in terms of Mr Elliot's point, perhaps you might want to say something about it in that if I were to agree with you and say that Lisnarrick should come into Enniskillen area for the reasons that you've said, what would your response be in terms of those people who live in the Lisnarrick ward in the rural areas who perhaps don't feel the affinity to Enniskillen in the same way?

Roisin McCusker: In what sense?

Sarah Havlin: I presume that the rest of that ward actually is quite rural in nature.

Roisin McCusker: Yeah.

Sarah Havlin: And so if I were to agree with you I would be pulling in a rural area into Enniskillen. Do you have anything to say about that as to why I should do that or recommend that?
Roisin McCusker: Again, I can only speak on the area that we're here talking about, from the urban area, but Enniskillen people are very good and they'll embrace anybody that comes into their area.

Sarah Havlin: One of your supporters actually wants to add a point there, if you're happy for her to speak in relation to that.

Debbie Coyle: I absolutely agree with that.

Sarah Havlin: Could you just give me your name before you give me your point?

Debbie Coyle: Debbie Coyle. 100% yes, Roisin is right. But it would be no different than Tempo or Lisbellaw and now there's absolutely no difference, and you're talking about the area that includes the airport and where we are now. So it's not that much different and it would be no different than the way of having Lisbellaw and Tempo included into Enniskillen, so there's no difference. It's really important to keep the town together. The area that I was speaking about was the same as this lady; her neighbours are going to be - one side of her road is going to be there and this side in Enniskillen.

Sarah Havlin: Thank you for that.

Roisin McCusker: I think that is the important bit, the town centre is the town centre; it's the county town centre and we're splitting it up into rural and urban and I don't understand how that can happen. I'll go even in a different way, if you look at funding and things like that, there's rural funding and there's urban funding. So a half a mile from the town centre you're talking about a rural area which isn't rural by any stretch of the imagination. Yes, you might get funding but we have to be realistic - it's the town, it's the county town of Fermanagh and it shouldn't be split up.

Sarah Havlin: Thank you very much. Would you mind speaking into the microphone for me so I have a record of what you're saying?

John McKinney: John McKinney, Kilmacormick II. It probably would affect us in the future looking for funding for the Devenish Partnership Forum.

Sarah Havlin: Yes, in terms of because it's an urban area. Yes, thank you very much. Mr Elliott, did you wish to make a point? Sorry, we must get everything on record.

Tom Elliott: Just again, the issues that they make are very relevant but when you make it on one side you make it on the opposite side as well because you're then putting a rural area, a large rural area into an urban area.

Sarah Havlin: When you say that you're referring to the rural area of Lisnarrick?
Tom Elliott: Yes, because it's slightly different to Lisbellaw and Tempo because none of parts of Lisbellaw or Tempo ward would include an urban area, whereas part of Lisnarrick would include part of an urban area. So the argument that Jack and Roisin and Brendan are making around the aspect of bringing part of an urban area into rural settlement of a DEA, in and around funding, between rural and urban funding, the same would apply if Lisnarrick was brought into Enniskillen DEA and you're bringing a large section of a rural area into an urban area. So all I'm saying is that the argument goes both ways.

Sarah Havlin: Do you have any views on why those wards that were described by yourselves as being more rural, I think it was Tempo and Lisbellaw, as to why they as rural areas should be in the urban area rather than Lisnarick, which as you say, has an urban settlement within it?

Tom Elliott: Yes. Lisbellaw and Tempo, from my understanding, have been part of Enniskillen DEA for almost as long as I can remember and, because they were an area that made up the Enniskillen DEA to the seven wards or six wards, they had to bring them in from somewhere. And it appeared that Lisnarrick never had that urban settlement before and it's much more elongated than either Lisbellaw or Tempo. Roisin talked about ten miles maybe from Tempo to the centre of Enniskillen, I'm not sure how far Lisnarick is, it's probably maybe 12 or 14.

Roisin McCusker: But Tom, I was talking about the boundary of the ward, so if you're talking about from Enniskillen town to the boundary of the new Lisnarrick ward it was the half a mile, rather than the actual place.

Tom Elliott: Yes, I totally accept that; I'm not arguing about this issue. Could I just say that the mistake was made in 2008 over the ward boundaries and I argued that point at the time and unfortunately nobody else argued it along with us. We were the sole representatives who made that argument but that's gone now; we're over and done with that. I go back to the point that if you take Lisnarrick out of Erne North into Enniskillen what do you put into Erne North?

Roisin McCusker: Tempo, why not?

Sarah Havlin: This lady would like to speak.

Rosemary Flanagan: Rosemary Flanagan, SDLP. Basically Tom has just said the point that I was about to make, that the mistakes were made in 2008 and we did object to the breakup of Enniskillen. I would have to say that Tom made the case then that the boundaries drawn there should not have happened as they've happened since and now we cannot redress that situation.
As to Roisin's remark about Lisbellaw, in fact the suburbs of Enniskillen fall into Lisbellaw area as well but the rest of Lisbellaw and Tempo can really be determined as rural.

Sarah Havlin: So you would say there are some areas in Lisbellaw which would be suburban?

Rosemary Flanagan: Yes, there's a section which falls into the old Lisbellaw register which are actually suburbs of Enniskillen. But the entire process of the review of local government has been totally objectionable to us in the way that the criterion was set out was ignored in terms of relationships, communities, connections. And they should not have happened the way they did and Enniskillen should not have been broken up as is proposed now.

Sarah Havlin: Thank you for that, any further speakers? Mr Foster would like to speak again.

Sam Foster: Thank you. Sam Foster. I'd like to emphasise that I would concur with what Tom has said about Enniskillen and the surrounding areas. Tempo and Lisbellaw have been through the mill over the last couple of occasions and they've remained there, it hasn't caused a lot of difficulty and I would feel that to start to destroy them now would not be acceptable at all.

But you might not notice it so much as ordinarily as things are going on, people get on about their business and all that. I'm thinking even of times of an election you can have somebody who has a voting booth right beside them and you could have somebody else who's about five miles away and that needs to be thought about as well. Quite often you hear people saying how am I going to get so far away out of our territory altogether. So I would be very much opposed to interference with Tempo and Lisbellaw. Thank you.

Sarah Havlin: Thank you for that, Mr Foster. Would anyone else like to speak at this point or anything you would like to add? Yes, please could you wait for the microphone?

Debbie Coyle: One just one last remark on what Tom said, if it's an issue that Lisbellaw and Tempo have always been there, well so has Hillview and Kilmacormick so all the more reason not to break up the town. I know my own area, I live in the town but not the same area that we're discussing now, my area is going into Ballinamallard so we're not particularly happy about that; but at least we're two and a half miles out of the town centre. But this is actually in the town and it really shouldn't be broken up at all.

Sarah Havlin: You want to make a submission. Please do come forward to the microphones at the front. Are you Councillor Rosemary Barton?
Rosemary Barton: Yes.

Sarah Havlin: If you just make sure that you speak into the microphone and if you state your name and let me know who you're representing before you make your submission, thank you.

Rosemary Barton: I'd like to welcome you here to Fermanagh this afternoon.

Sarah Havlin: Thank you very much.

Rosemary Barton: And thank you for the opportunity for speaking. My name is Rosemary Barton; I'm the Ulster Unionist Councillor for Erne North. I'm speaking also in support of the Ulster Unionist Party's position.

Sarah Havlin: So you're supporting the Ulster Unionist Party's position. Have you made a separate written representation?

Rosemary Barton: No.

Sarah Havlin: Please go ahead.

Rosemary Barton: I'd like to reiterate that the boundaries in relation to the concerns expressed about the urban areas of Hillview and Kilmacormick II included in the rural wards, those submissions and objections to them were made in 2008 and the Ulster Unionist Party made those objections then and I think they should have been taken account of then.

Sarah Havlin: Yes.

Rosemary Barton: Also, just in commenting about the ward of Lisnarrick being moved into Enniskillen area, while I appreciate what these people are saying and appreciate the urban area, I'm not sure the rural people of Lisnarrick want to be moved into the Enniskillen area. They have great affinity with the areas of Irvinestown and the area of Kesh. Lisnarrick is very much tied up with tourism of the lakes and boating etc and again, it's affiliated to Kesh and indeed some of the children that live in the Lisnarrick area go to school in Kesh and then those children go further on, some of them even to school in Castlederg. So there are parts of Lisnarrick that have very little affinity, especially the north of Lisnarrick because that Lisnarrick region's boundary is just outside Kesh village.

In relation to the exchange of Tempo for Erne North, for Tempo to move into Erne North instead of Lisnarrick, there's very little affinity between Tempo and the Irvinestown/Kesh area.

Sarah Havlin: And so you would be objecting to the idea of moving, for example, those other wards that have been suggested as rural wards like Tempo and Lisbellaw into Erne North, you're supporting the position that the most obvious ward to go into Erne North would be Lisnarrick?
Rosemary Barton: Yes, that's my position. Also the people in the Lisnarrick ward have affinity with the people in Irvinestown, for example, next door to them; that's where a lot of them shop so there is that affinity, rather than maybe between Lisnarrick and Enniskillen.

Sarah Havlin: If I heard you right at the start of your submission, you're agreeing that those particular estates that are in the Lisnarrick ward would have an affinity with Enniskillen?

Rosemary Barton: Yes. Although I realise that's over and the boundaries are over and that's a decision that was made in 2008.

Sarah Havlin: Would anyone have any questions at this stage for this speaker? No. Would you like to say anything further or is that your submission?

Rosemary Barton: That's it.

Sarah Havlin: Thank you very much indeed, that was very helpful, thank you. Do we have anyone else? Can I just confirm then with everyone in the room that there's no one else here who wants to speak or make any further points? Happy enough? Ok.

Now that I've confirmed that there's no one else who has indicated that they wish to speak I'm going to adjourn the proceedings, I'm not going to formally close them. We've publicised that we're open until 5pm so we may have other people who turn up before 5pm, but because no one else wants to speak I'll adjourn now and if we should have other visitors and people who wish to participate then they will be given an opportunity and I will come back and reconvene the proceedings. It's 2.30pm. So what I will do is I will adjourn but we will leave the room open and the staff will still be here but we will close at 5pm and after 5pm there will be no opportunity for any further submissions. So thank you very much everybody.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Sarah Havlin: It is now 5pm and I am formally bringing this inquiry to a close. Earlier in the proceedings when I adjourned the inquiry at 2.38pm I confirmed that there was no one else who indicated that they wished to speak; participants were advised that once I had closed the inquiry I cannot receive any further evidence and at that stage the participants present confirmed that they had the opportunity to fully air and present their submissions. Those participants have now left the inquiry and no further people have presented themselves to this inquiry since the time of the adjournment and on that basis I propose to bring the hearing to a close.
Before I formally close these proceedings I would like to place on record my gratitude to everyone who has attended, particularly those who have made representations. I want to record my thanks to my support team from the office of the District Electoral Areas Commissioner and Morrow Communications and the transcribers and audio engineers for the help they have given me in preparing for and conducting this hearing.

I would also like to record our thanks to the management and staff of the hotel for the excellent facilities that they have provided to us. My immediate task now is to carefully consider all of the evidence I have heard at this inquiry, as well as the written representations that were received during the recent consultation period and to prepare a report for the District Electoral Areas Commissioner within the next four weeks. My report will be made publicly available on the Commissioner's website, together with the Commissioner's final recommendations report; it will ultimately be a matter for the Commissioner to decide whether to accept any or all of my recommendations.

I wish to formally thank you all very much for your assistance and participation and officially close this inquiry.

ENDS