

Proposal to carry out voter participation study for SPAN/Southside Partnership

Title: **Voter Participation in Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown**

specifically Southside Partnership's 21 Designated Communities.

Overall Objective: To examine voter behaviour and what affects that voting behaviour in Southside Partnership's Designated Communities.

Timeframe: This report to be produced between the end of November 2006 and April 2007 (inclusive).

Areas to be covered in this report:

- A short section covering current academic thinking in relation to voter turnout and voter participation, thus putting previous voter turnout for Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown in perspective.
- Political background to Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown and Southside Partnership's designated communities. It would also point to voter turnout trends these areas have exhibited in previous elections. This section would then highlight the current political representation of the county.
- Factors that influence turnout levels in different order elections will be examined. Some of these are particularly pertinent to the areas in question such as: Social well-being, housing, age, residential mobility and voter education.

Specific voter turnout rates for 2002 General Election, 2004 Local Elections and also 2004 European Elections for the relevant areas will be examined. This would include the geography of voter turnout across the county and also a comparison to Dublin and national turnout levels.

Graphs and tables corresponding to turnout levels for the relevant areas would also be included in this report.

(Regarding the upcoming General Election (expected to take place some time around May 2007) it is proposed that turnout rates for that election be forwarded to SPAN when available. It is hoped that this would be within 12 months of the completion of this current project.)

- A pilot study, with *four* strands will help determine the level of political interest and engagement among some of the Partnership's most disadvantaged communities.
 - (i) Four Focus Groups involving members of STAG (Southside Traveller Action Group); Swan (Southside Women's Action Network); DIG (Disability Interest Group) and residents of the Hillview estate will be set up.
 - (ii) A complementary questionnaire will be distributed in Hillview and among members of the traveller community.
 - (iii) Postal questionnaires to a control group within Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown (for comparison purposes) will also be distributed, if the local advisory group consider this appropriate.
 - (iv) Interviews will be conducted with political figures who represent the Hillview estate.
- Statistical analysis of voter turnout in Southside Partnership's designated communities. This would involve analysis of turnout figures alongside results of census figures, thus producing quantitative analysis of relevant statistical data. 2002 Census figures are available to this researcher and preliminary 2006 Census results are also available. Full 2006 Census figures are not expected to be released until between April-December 2007.*
- Recommendations – arising from analysis of previous election turnout figures and from results of interviews and questionnaires.

* Central Statistics Office Ireland, (<http://www.cso.ie/census/Census2006Results.htm>)

Costs:

Total cost: 7,500 Euro

It is expected that time spent on this report will be in the region of 20 hours per week.

Therefore 21 weeks X 20 hours per week = 18~ Euro per hour.

Note: This price does not include large-scale photocopying costs, postage (questionnaires) or report printing.

Door-to-door questionnaire surveys in Hillview and among the Traveller community are expected to be conducted. As such therefore there would be no postage cost incurred in relation to these questionnaires. However if a control group is established, questionnaires to such participants would be sent via mail and include a prepaid envelope for questionnaire return.

END.

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