

From: [Roy Beggs MLA \(O\)](#)
To: [McKee, John](#)
Cc:
Sent: 05/09/2008 at 17:01
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Subject: Response to Quality Impact Assessment for the Role Out
DARD Direct

I wish to express my concern at the proposal to close the DARD Office in Larne and relocate the staff elsewhere. This will result in considerable inconvenience for the farming community in the East Antrim Area who will have to travel much further to access DARD Offices elsewhere.

The East Antrim Constituency is a largely Unionist Constituency and the proposals results in a very high proportion of the constituency being outside the indicative 16 miles / 25 Km radius of each of the proposed new Offices. This proposal significantly adversely effects what is a predominately Unionist constituency and which contains a high density of farmers. I would therefore wish to lodge an objection to the proposal on equality grounds.

I notice from the proposal that Lough Neagh is well covered for in terms of access to the proposed new offices with it being entirely within the 16 mile radius model and indeed parts of it being within the 16 mile radius of more than 1 of the proposed DARD Offices. This does not make optimum use of the 10 base model. I would suggest that there is a need re-assess the proposal to ensure that areas such as my own constituency of East Antrim are appropriately covered by the proposed new Office proposal.

I would also wish to highlight the remoteness of farmers in the Islandmagee area to the proposed offices. Some farmers will be approaching 30 miles away from their nearest DARD Office if they were to use minor roads to travel to the proposed new locations and considerably more if they were required to use major trunk routes as a result of adverse weather conditions.

I would also wish to highlight that East Antrim has one of the lowest numbers of civil servants jobs located within the constituency. Indeed I understand that the Borough of Larne has the one of the lowest density of civil servant jobs/head of population of any council area. This proposal will further reduce the limited number of jobs that are located in a constituency which has a largely Unionist electorate.

I would therefore request that consideration should be given to retaining a DARD Office within the East Antrim area and ensuring the relocation of other Civil Servant jobs to East Antrim.

Regards

Roy Beggs MLA