

Submission to the Electoral Area Boundary Committee

**Submission regarding the division of County Kildare for
future local elections**

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26 February 2008

1. Introduction

I would like to submit this document for the consideration of the Electoral Area Boundary Committee. I hope that it will be useful in your examination of the boundaries within County Kildare.

The document includes a reflection on the terms of reference of the committee, a detailed analysis of population distribution across the current LEAs, a proposed redrawing of boundaries in light of your terms of reference and a map of what the impact of this redraw might be.

I have used the figures from the 2006 census to underpin my examination, specifically those population figures included in Volume 1, Table 6 "*Population and area of each Province, County, City, urban area, rural area and Electoral Division, 2002 and 2006*" of the census report.

2. Committee Terms of Reference

There are a number of key considerations that I have taken from your terms of reference:

- Internal variance of +/- 10% across LEAs
- Boundaries should follow Dáil constituencies as much as is practicable
- Preservation of natural communities\hinterlands
- LEAs should be between 4 and 7 seats
- No overall change in the number of councillors

I would like to say at this point that I am disappointed that the Committee has not been empowered to consider adding extra councillors to authorities. Kildare people are among the least represented at local level. Our council of 25 members represents a population of over 180,000.

Some areas have full councils for populations less than the current Kildare LEA, which depends on just 6 members for a population of 46,087. This is a greater population than counties Leitrim (28,950) and Longford (34,931), and also Waterford City (45,748) each of which has a full council.

Our variance with adjoining counties is also striking. Kildare has 1 councillor to 7,453 people. Our neighbours in Offaly have 1 to 3,374 and in Laois it is 1 to 2,682, which is around three times better than the Kildare average.

At the same time, our county is growing faster and therefore has a more pressing need for effective local leadership and broad input. The populations of many of our towns would be sufficient to elect members in other counties, but not in Kildare. This inevitably means that some areas such as Monasterevin or Kilcullen, find it difficult to feel ownership over the future direction of development of their communities.

This is a sad oversight by those who framed the terms of reference and perhaps indicates a lack of commitment to reforming local government to meet the needs of modern Ireland.

3. Existing LEAs and 2006 Population

Under the 1998 review, Kildare has 25 councillors split across 6 Local Electoral Areas. At a county wide average of 7,453 persons per councillor, these areas are approximately represented as shown in Table 1.

The figures are not precise as some divisions are split between LEAs, e.g. Bodenstown. Where this is the case I have divided the population evenly between the areas concerned. This arbitrary distribution produces a significant distortion in the Leixlip and Celbridge LEAs, however I propose to combine these areas so this does not affect the analysis presented.

Minus values indicate that an area has above average representation.

1998 LEA	2006 Population	% Area	Number of Cllrs	Pop per Cllr	Variation ¹
Athy	20160	24.2%	3	6720	-9.8%
Celbridge	27905	5.8%	3	9301	+25.8%
Clane	32458	27.8%	4	8114	8.9%
Kildare	46087	22.8%	6	7681	3.1%
Leixlip	20633	1.8%	4	5158	-30.7%
Naas	39093	17.5%	5	7819	4.9%

Table 1 – 1998 Boundaries and 2006 Populations

Excepting Leixlip and Celbridge, it can be seen from this that while no area is above the 10% variance threshold, two areas (Athy and Clane) are towards the outer extremes. Indeed the variance between Clane and Athy is nearly 19%, with Clane being significantly worse off on a per person basis.

In addition a significant number of Kildare South Dáil divisions are in Kildare North focussed LEAs.

Lastly, two LEAs currently have three seats.

The full divisional breakdown for these seats is included in Appendix 1.

¹ Calculated as: (population per cllr – average)/average * 100

4. Proposal for Redrawing of Boundaries

My proposal is based on three main factors: removal of 3 seat LEAs; consolidation of divisions into the same LEA; and seeking to place all divisions within an LEA in the same Dáil constituency subject to maintaining natural communities.

The mechanism for achieving this is the consolidation of the Celbridge and Leixlip areas into a single 6 seater, a transfer of most Kildare South divisions into Kildare South LEAs and the creation of a new four seat LEA based on an expanded Athy LEA.

The new areas would give the following new LEAs.

Proposed LEA	Seats	Constituency	Total Pop	Pop per Seat	Variance	% Area
County Kildare	25 Seats		186335	7453	-	-
Athy-Kilcullen	4 Seats	Kildare South	30678	7670	2.9%	36.0
Kildare	6 Seats	Kildare South	46052	7675	3.0%	23.2
Clane	4 Seats	Kildare North	29032	7258	-2.6%	25.2
Leixlip-Celbridge	6 Seats	Kildare North	45499	7583	1.7%	5.3
Naas	5 Seats	Kildare North	35074	7015	-5.9%	10.4

Table 2 – Summary of proposed new LEAs

The new LEAs would be composed as shown in the following pages. The “Former LEA” column indicates where the divisions previously lay. The key for this is:

- A – Athy
- K – Kildare
- CL – Clane
- C – Celbridge
- N – Naas
- L – Leixlip

Areas highlighted in yellow were previously in a different LEA, or were split across a number of areas.

Athy - Kilcullen LEA

Geographic Area	Former LEA	Dáil Constituency	Persons 2006	Area *(hectares)
Athy - Kilcullen LEA	4 Seats	Kildare South		
001 Athy East Urban	A	S	3242	219
002 Athy West Urban	A	S	3046	170
004 Athy Rural (part)	A	S	840	2856
004 Athy Rural (part)	A	S	1655	560
005 Ballaghmoon	A	S	217	1088
006 Ballitore	A	S	780	1277
007 Ballybrackan	K	S	468	1241
008 Ballyshannon	A	S	1626	2612
009 Belan	A	S	219	1083
010 Bert	A	S	154	1085
011 Burtown	A	S	319	2061
012 Carrigeen	A	S	583	3013
013 Castledermot	A	S	1300	1930
014 Churchtown	A	S	482	1873
015 Dunmanoge	A	S	460	1451
016 Fontstown	A	S	383	1835
017 Graney	A	S	620	2660
018 Grangemellon	A	S	571	1836
019 Harristown	K	S	382	2087
020 Inchaquire	A	S	185	1223
021 Johnstown	A	S	167	868
022 Kilberry	A	S	580	1696
024 Kilkea	A	S	332	1823
025 Kilrush	A	S	584	1800
028 Moone	A	S	429	1755
029 Narraghmore	A	S	713	1683
030 Nurney	K	S	894	1258
032 Skerries	A	S	483	1499
056 Ballymore Eustace	N	S	1524	1705
058 Ballysax West	K	S	1042	1447
060 Carnalway	N	S	1703	3051
069 Gilltown	N	S	896	3227
070 Kilcullen	N	S	3022	1786
073 Killashee	N	S	295	1387
089 Usk	A	S	482	1896
			30678	59041

Table 3 – Athy-Kilcullen LEA

The Athy – Kilcullen LEA is based on the existing Athy area; parts of the Naas district that are in Kildare South to the south of the town of Naas; and the southernmost divisions of the Kildare LEA.

This new LEA is based around a number of key supporting factors:

- The M9 corridor is a well-defined axis for future development
- The Kilcullen\Ballymore\Two-Mile House area transferred from Naas represents a sufficient critical mass of population that it can elect a councillor from its own area.
- The ratio of councillors to population is slightly below average, but as this area is likely to experience slower population growth than the county as a whole, this is likely to come back into line through general population growth elsewhere.

Kildare LEA

Geographic Area	Former LEA	Dáil Constituency	Persons 2006	Area *(hectares)
Kildare LEA	6 Seats	Kildare South		
023 Kildangan	K	S	535	1505
026 Lackagh	K	S	683	2556
027 Monasterevin	K	S	3649	2739
031 Quinsborough	K	S	137	1453
046 Cloncurry	K	S	351	1573
049 Killinthomas	K	S	441	1502
052 Lullymore	CL	S	181	2150
053 Rathangan	K	S	1490	1445
054 Thomastown	K	S	723	2007
057 Ballysax East	K	S	2123	2071
065 Droichead Nua (Newbridge) Rural	K	S	1848	1926
066 Droichead Nua (Newbridge) Urban	K	S	7888	280
067 Dunmurry	K	S	401	1609
068 Feighcullen	K	S	526	1102
071 Kildare	K	S	8791	3710
074 Kilmeage North	CL	S	1781	2258
075 Kilmeage South	CL	S	1668	1764
078 Morristownbiller	K	S	11127	1707
081 Oldconnell	K	S	864	1781
083 Pollardstown	K	S	340	1085
084 Rathernan	K	S	505	1746
			46052	37969

Table 4 – Kildare LEA

While the Athy-Kilcullen LEA has gained from Naas, the above redistribution brings most of the new population in the Kildare LEA from the Clane LEA. This transfer takes in the Kildare South divisions immediately to the north of the current Kildare LEA with a slight outbound transfer from the southern part of the area.

This new Kildare LEA is based around a number of key supporting factors:

- The M7 corridor is a well-defined axis for future development
- The Kildare-Monasterevin area is a recognised cluster in the national spatial strategy and should remain in the same LEA to facilitate good planning.
- The rate of population growth in this area would be expected to lag the rate for the county as a whole, so the slight under-representation of 2.9% is likely to come back into line through natural population growth elsewhere in the county.

Clane LEA

Geographic Area	Former LEA	Dáil Constituency	Persons 2006	Area *(hectares)
Clane LEA	4 Seats	Kildare North		
086 Robertstown	CL	N	1897	1405
033 Balraheen	CL	N	1655	3330
035 Cloncurry	CL	N	1393	3400
036 Donadea	CL	N	679	2058
038 Kilcock	CL	N	4697	1641
041 Straffan	LC	N	1449	2602
042 Ballynadrumny	CL	N	531	1957
043 Cadamstown	CL	N	1108	2036
044 Carbury	CL	N	1721	4469
045 Carrick	CL	N	246	1545
047 Drehid	CL	N	228	1554
048 Dunfierth	CL	N	690	2245
050 Kilpatrick	CL	N	841	2053
051 Kilrainy	CL	N	626	2159
055 Windmill Cross	CL	N	882	1397
062 Clane	CL	N	6106	1888
064 Downings	CL	N	2573	1609
087 Timahoe North	CL	N	988	3608
088 Timahoe South	CL	N	722	1698
			29032	41249

Table 5 – Clane LEA

The Clane LEA has lost a number of divisions to the Kildare LEA. In order to maintain 4 councillors, and to facilitate the consolidation of the Leixlip and Celbridge areas, the Straffan division has been brought into the Clane LEA. The net result is to bring Clane back from significant over-representation of 8.9% to a slight under-representation of 2.9%.

This new Clane LEA is based around a number of key supporting factors:

- It maintains the existing LEA to a significant degree.
- All divisions are in the Kildare North Dáil constituency.
- The LEA continues to have 4 councillors.

Leixlip - Celbridge LEA

Geographic Area	Former LEA	Dáil Constituency	Persons 2006	Area *(hectares)
Leixlip-Celbridge LEA	6 Seats	Kildare North		
034 Celbridge	LC	N	14933	1760
037 Donaghcumper	LC	N	4233	2434
039 Leixlip	LC	N	14833	1138
040 Maynooth	LC	N	11500	3369
			45499	8701

Table 6 – Leixlip-Celbridge LEA

Leixlip and Celbridge currently exist as two separate LEAs, each of which has above average representation for their respective populations. They also account for a small geographic area, and can be considered as linked from a future development standpoint. I am therefore proposing that the areas be combined, with an outbound transfer of Straffan to produce a new 6 seat LEA.

This new Leixlip - Celbridge LEA is based around a number of key supporting factors:

- It eliminates a three seat LEA.
- The area represents three expanding towns which should be viewed for future development in a co-ordinated manner.
- The infrastructural needs of the two former LEAs are inter-dependent and can now be handled in a more centralised fashion.

Naas LEA

Geographic Area	Former LEA	Dáil Constituency	Persons 2006	Area *(hectares)
Naas LEA	5 Seats	Kildare North		
077 Ladytown	N	S	862	2011
063 Donore	N	S	756	2016
061 Carragh	N	S	1487	1295
003 Naas Urban	N	N	20044	1830
059 Bodinstown	CL	N	3734	2800
072 Kill	N	N	3734	1941
076 Killeel	N	N	552	1748
079 Naas Rural	N	N	1717	1351
080 Newtown	N	N	473	2042
082 Oughterard	N	N	690	1590
085 Rathmore	N	N	1025	2431
			35074	17028

Table 7 – Naas LEA

Under this arrangement all divisions bar Carragh, Ladytown and Donore are in the same Dáil constituency as the rest of the LEA. In the case of these divisions, I have not moved them as to do so would place an undue population burden on the accepting LEA, and in addition both fit more naturally into a Naas LEA as they are part of the town's natural hinterland. This is inline with point 3 of the committee's terms of reference regarding the preservation of natural communities and hinterlands.

This new Naas LEA is based around a number of key supporting factors:

- It significantly improves the representation ratio of the LEA.
- The over-representation of 5.9% provides some capacity for future growth without adversely affecting the ratio of representation.
- The areas of Carragh, Donore and Ladytown are part of Naas's natural hinterland and should remain in the same LEA as the services they most frequently use.

5. Overall

This system also presents a much more equitable distribution of population as can be seen in Table 8.

LEA	Seats	Dáil Constituency	New Population	Old Population	New Variance	Old Variance
Athy-Kilcullen	4 Seats	Kildare South	30678	20160	2.9%	-9.8% ²
Kildare	6 Seats	Kildare South	46052	46087	3.0%	3.1%
Clane	4 Seats	Kildare North	29032	32458	-2.6%	8.9%
Leixlip-Celbridge	6 Seats	Kildare North	45499	48538	1.7%	-7% ³
Naas	5 Seats	Kildare North	35074	39093	-5.9%	4.9%

Table 8 – Summary of changes

A map of the county under these new areas is shown in Figure 1. The numbers shown indicate the seats in each LEA.

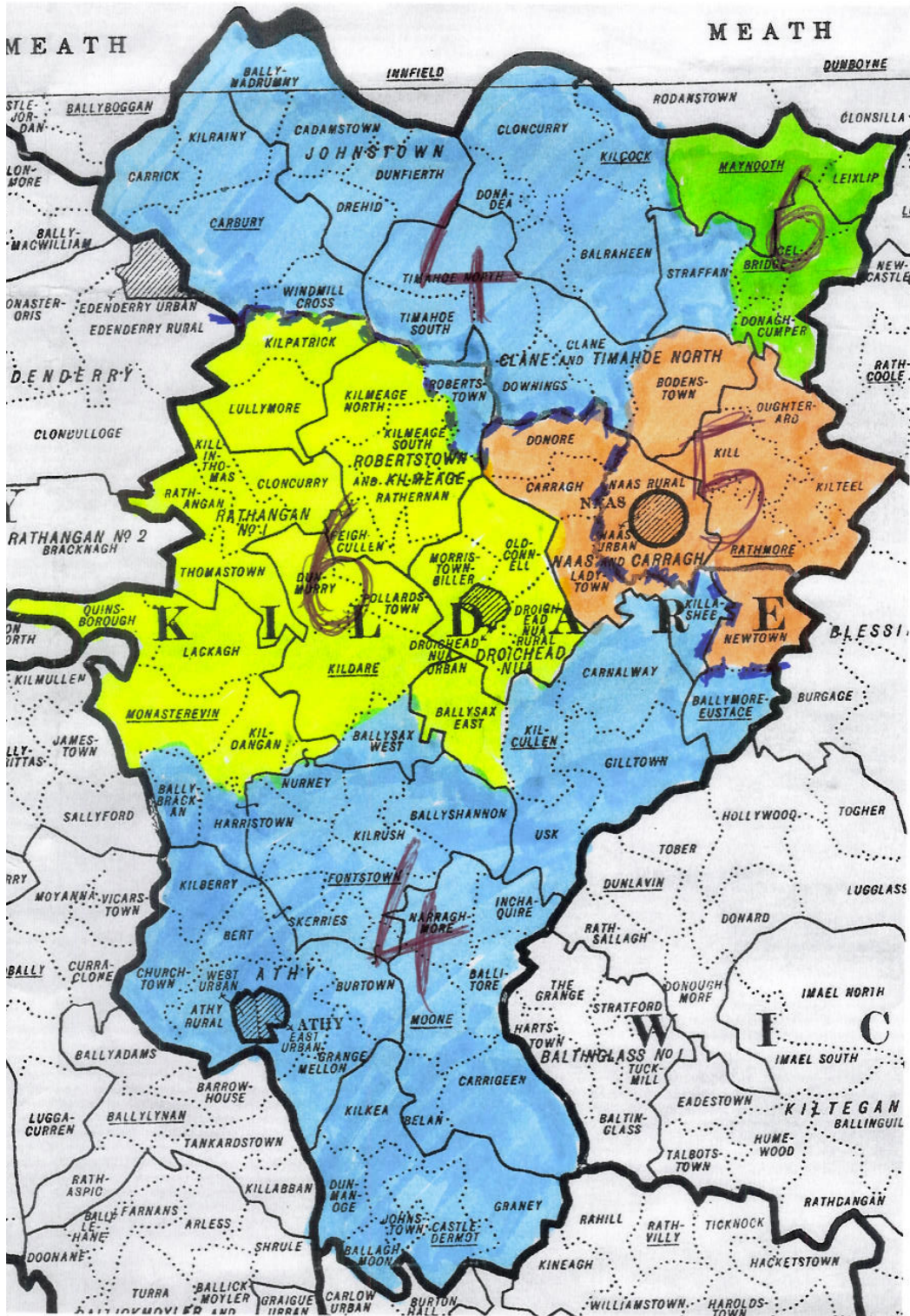
I feel that overall, this redistribution represents a better deal for Kildare residents than is currently the case. It also recognises that population will grow in the coming years, and that areas need to be redrawn with this future demand in mind.

Should you wish to contact me further about any of the details I have raised, please feel free to do so at tony.odonnell@gmail.com or 087 9081649.

Dr Tony O'Donnell
26 February 2008

² Based on the existing Athy LEA and its 3 councillors

³ Based on combining the existing Celbridge and Leixlip LEAs, and calculating for 7 councillors



Dail Boundary

Figure 1 – Proposed LEAs

Appendix 1 – Existing LEAs

Geographic Area	Dáil Constituency	Persons 2006	Area *(hectares)
Athy			
001 Athy East Urban	S	3242	219
002 Athy West Urban	S	3046	170
004 Athy Rural (part)	S	1655	560
004 Athy Rural (part)	S	840	2856
005 Ballaghmoon	S	217	1088
006 Ballitore	S	780	1277
008 Ballyshannon	S	1626	2612
009 Belan	S	219	1083
010 Bert	S	154	1085
011 Burtown	S	319	2061
012 Carrigeen	S	583	3013
013 Castledermot	S	1300	1930
014 Churchtown	S	482	1873
015 Dunmanoge	S	460	1451
016 Fontstown	S	383	1835
017 Graney	S	620	2660
018 Grangemellon	S	571	1836
020 Inchaquire	S	185	1223
021 Johnstown	S	167	868
022 Kilberry	S	580	1696
024 Kilkea	S	332	1823
028 Moone	S	429	1755
029 Narraghmore	S	713	1683
032 Skerries	S	483	1499
089 Usk	S	482	1896
025 Kilrush	S	292	900

Celbridge			
037 Donaghcumper	N	4233	2434
041 Straffan	N	1449	2602
059 Bodenstown	N	1245	933
082 Oughterard	N	345	795
034 Celbridge	N	7467	880
039 Leixlip	N	7417	569
040 Maynooth	N	5750	1685

Clane			
033 Balraheen	N	1655	3330
035 Cloncurry	N	1393	3400
036 Donadea	N	679	2058
038 Kilcock	N	4697	1641
042 Ballynadrumny	N	531	1957
043 Cadamstown	N	1108	2036
044 Carbury	N	1721	4469
045 Carrick	N	246	1545
047 Drehid	N	228	1554
048 Dunfierth	N	690	2245
050 Kilpatrick	N	841	2053
051 Kilrainy	S	626	2159
052 Lullymore	N	181	2150
055 Windmill Cross	N	882	1397
062 Clane	N	6106	1888
064 Downings	S	2573	1609
074 Kilmeage North	S	1781	2258
075 Kilmeage South	N	1668	1764
086 Robertstown	N	1897	1405
087 Timahoe North	N	988	3608
088 Timahoe South	N	722	1698
059 Bodenstown	N	1245	933

Kildare			
025 Kilrush	N	292	900
007 Ballybrackan	S	468	1241
019 Harristown	S	382	2087
023 Kildangan	S	535	1505
026 Lackagh	S	683	2556
027 Monasterevin	S	3649	2739
030 Nurney	S	894	1258
031 Quinsborough	S	137	1453
046 Cloncurry	S	351	1573
049 KillinThomas	S	441	1502
053 Rathangan	S	1490	1445
054 Thomastown	S	723	2007
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066 Droichead Nua (Newbridge) Urban	S	7888	280
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068 Feighcullen	S	526	1102
071 Kildare	S	8791	3710
078 Morristownbiller	S	11127	1707
081 Oldconnell	S	864	1781
083 Pollardstown	S	340	1085
084 Rathernan	S	505	1746
065 Droichead Nua (Newbridge) Rural	S	924	963
070 Kilcullen	S	1511	893

Leixlip			
034 Celbridge	N	7467	880
039 Leixlip	N	7417	569
040 Maynooth	N	5750	1685

Naas			
059 Bodenstown	N	1245	933
082 Oughterard	N	345	795
065 Droichead Nua (Newbridge)			
Rural	S	924	963
070 Kilcullen	N	1511	893
003 Naas Urban	S	20044	1830
056 Ballymore Eustace	S	1524	1705
060 Carnalway	S	1703	3051
061 Carragh	S	1487	1295
063 Donore	S	756	2016
069 Gilltown	N	896	3227
072 Kill	S	3734	1941
073 Killashee	N	295	1387
076 Killeel	S	552	1748
077 Ladytown	N	862	2011
079 Naas Rural	N	1717	1351
080 Newtown	N	473	2042
085 Rathmore		1025	2431

Kildare County		186335	169420
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