

Kildare County Council



The Secretary
Electoral Area Boundary Committee
Room 2.03
Custom House
Dublin 1

12 March 2008

By Post and E-mail

Dear Secretary,

Thank you for your letter of 25 January with invitation for submissions on the review of local electoral area boundaries.

Our council, having considered the matter, submits as follows:

1. That the issue of proportionality of local authorities was not addressed at all by the prescribed terms of reference. County Kildare currently has an elected membership of 25 councillors for a population of 186,335. This equates to one councillor per 7,453 persons. Neighbouring councils such as Laois have a representation of 1 councillor per 2,682 persons while Offaly has 1 to 3,374. A county growing at the rate of Kildare requires an increase in the overall number of elected members. It is evident that in larger population centres there are very significant pressures on councillors, as was seen in Dublin where sixteen councillors have resigned citing excessive demands on them.
2. That the timing of the proposed review is precarious. There would be relatively little time between any emergent changes to electoral areas and the 2009 local elections to allow for candidates and communities to come to terms with any new boundaries. Changes of the kind now envisaged should be made in the first year after the local elections.
3. That any change of boundaries arising from the review should not be an isolated event but should rather be accompanied by a more comprehensive review of local government, including the critical issue of funding. Pending such a more comprehensive review, there should be little if any change in electoral area boundaries.

Our council appreciates the opportunity afforded by your committee's consultative process and hopes that you can secure implementation of the views set out above.

Yours faithfully

A. C. Talbot
Secretary