

Local Area Boundary Reviews

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Area of Interest: Naas Local Electoral Area

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1. Introduction

This document is submitted as input to the current exercise of boundary reviews for local electoral areas.

Within this document I have made suggestions for how the review may treat of Kildare and the Naas electoral area in particular.

In particular I have addressed the following two aspects of the terms of reference:

- Alignment of Dáil and Local electoral boundaries.
- Levelling of variances to achieve uniform representation at intra-county level.

2. InterCounty Variance

All commuter counties and no less Kildare, have seen great swathes of population influx in recent times, and have resultingly grown at a more rapid pace than rest of country.

The review is very welcome and will address some current anomalies. However it should be stated that the term of reference requirement to freeze representation levels within each council as a whole, will allow representational imbalances to continue at intra-county level if not inter-county.

That is, Kildare county, with a population of 186,335 retains 25 councillors before and after the review which translates to a councillor-constituent ratio of 7453 : 1 which is approximately three times the national average.

It is also instructive to compare representation at national level with representation at local level – there are constitutional requirements on representation at national level which enforces a level of uniformity across the country. However no such requirement, constitutional or otherwise, currently exists at local level.

The contrast is striking if we compare number of TDs to number of councillors for different constituencies:

Constituency	Number of TDs	Number of Councillors	Ratio
Carlow-Kilkenny	5	47	9.4
Louth	4	26	6.5
Longford-Westmeath	4	44	11.0
Kildare (North & South)	7	25	3.6
Meath (East & West)	6	29	4.8

From above table it is obvious there are significant imbalances in local representation with some counties being under and some being over represented. Even considering just the near neighbour Leinster counties as above, with more TDs and less councillors than any other, it would appear Kildare is at the wrong end of the scale.

In effect this means constituents in Kildare and more populous counties experience lower levels of representation per head than elsewhere. I believe it is important for this anomaly to be acknowledged and although outside current terms of reference, it should be addressed at the earliest possible opportunity.

3. EDs and intra-county variance

Naas Local Electoral Area currently consists of the following EDs:

Electoral Divisions	2006 Population
003 Naas Urban	20044
085 Rathmore	1025
056 Ballymore Eustace	1524
060 Carnalway	1703
061 Carragh	1487
063 Donore	756
069 Gilltown	896
070 Kilcullen	3022
072 Kill	3734
073 Killashee	295
076 Killeel	552
077 Ladytown	862
079 Naas Rural	1717
080 Newtown	473
085 Rathmore	1025
Total	39115

Additionally the following three EDs are within the Naas LEA to varying degrees:

Electoral Divisions	2006 Population
082 Oughterard	3734
059 Bodenstown	1848
065 Droichead Nua (Newbridge) Rural	690
Total	6272

A pro-rata figure is derived for the latter three EDs:

Electoral Divisions	Pop. 2006	ProRata	Adj. Pop
082 Oughterard	3734	50%	1867
059 Bodenstown	1848	75%	1386
065 Droichead Nua (Newbridge) Rural	690	50%	345
Total	6272		3598

Thus a combined total population for the LEA is computed as 42,713 (= 39115 + 3598).

The current position therefore sees a councillor:population ratio of 8543 : 1 and a variance of almost 15% from the county average.

Area	Population	Seats	Ratio	County Avg.	Variance
Naas	42713	5	8543	7453	14.62%

4. Alignment of Dáil and Local Boundaries

The Naas local electoral area currently straddles two Dáil constituencies, namely Kildare North and Kildare South.

With the exception of Carragh area, the EDs within the Kildare South constituency are arguably outside the traditional Naas hinterland also.

In keeping with the terms of the review, and for continuity of representation it would appear appropriate to remove all Kildare South EDs (bar Carragh, Donore and Ladytown) from the Naas LEA and allow the LEA reside primarily in the Kildare North Dáil constituency.

This would see the removal of the following EDs:

Electoral Divisions	2006 Population
056 Ballymore Eustace	1524
060 Carnalway	1703
069 Gilltown	896
070 Kilcullen	3022
073 Killashee	295
Total	- 7440

The remaining population within the Kildare North EDs then becomes 35,273.

The currently shared EDs of Bodenstown and Oughterard can be assimilated wholly into the Naas LEA:

Electoral Divisions	2006 Population
082 Oughterard	3734
059 Bodenstown	1848
Total	+ 5582

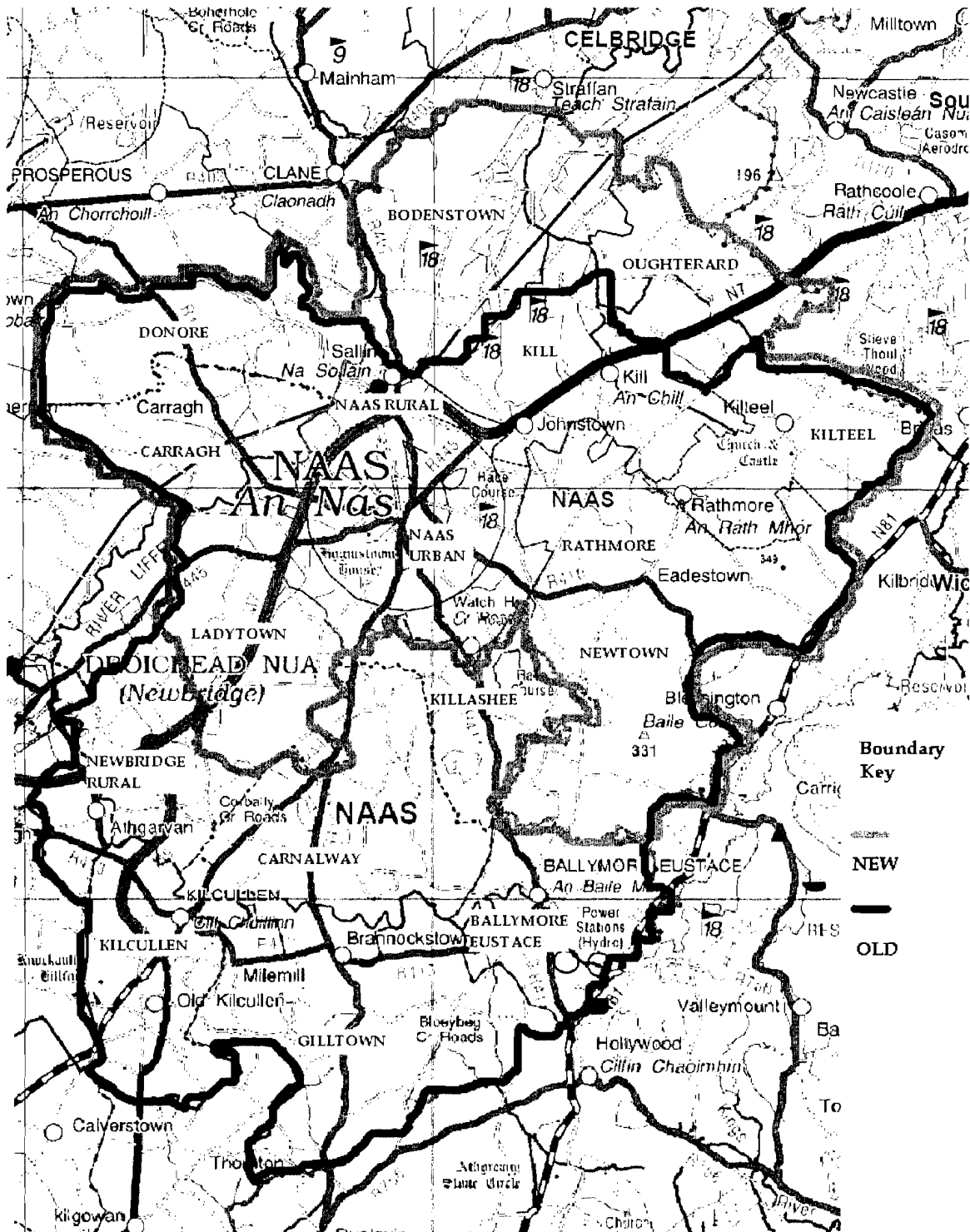
The Bodenstown district would form part of the wider Sallins community so it is a natural alignment for them to be in same electoral area as opposed to being split.

The above permutations satisfy the terms of reference of the review whilst achieving level variances across the ward.

The resultant population is 37,947 and the new LEA has a net variance of 1.8%

Area	Population	Seats	Ratio	County Avg.	Variance
Naas	37947	5	7589	7455	1.80%

5. Maps of revised LEA Boundaries



The above map reflects the proposed new Naas LEA realigned to sit primarily within the Kildare North Dáil constituency barring certain natural hinterlands such as Carragh and surrounds. The electoral divisions of Bodenstown and Oughterard have been wholly assumed into the LEA also.

6. Summary

The proposal satisfies the review terms of reference by aligning Dáil and local boundaries whilst ensuring the revised entity has a net level variance in keeping with county averages.

This is done by truncating the current LEA at the Kildare South border, barring the townlands of Carragh and surrounds which can be comfortably accommodated as part of the natural Naas hinterland. Additionally the divisions of Bodenstown and Oughterard join the Naas LEA.

The net result is an LEA which is focussed and primarily located within the Kildare North Dáil constituency, has almost zero variance against county averages and comprises a cohesive electoral and geographic unit.