

SUBMISSION TO THE ELECTORAL AREA BOUNDARY COMMITTEE

COUNTY KILDARE

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**Thomastown
Naas
County Kildare**

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SUBMISSION TO THE ELECTORAL AREA BOUNDARY COMMITTEE

What follows is a submission by Mr. Timmy Conway to amend the Local Electoral Area's (LEA's) of County Kildare.

My submission specifically relates to what is currently the Naas Local Electoral Area but in light of the Terms of Reference in establishing the Local Area Boundary Committee which state that each area should have not less than 4 and not more than 7 Councillors, this submission offers a configuration of the entire county.

The Terms of Reference also state that the variance from the county average per Councillor for each LEA should be within the range of + or - 10%. As there are currently 2 LEA's which have only 3 Councillors and a further 2 that fall outside the specified range it is necessary to carry out a significant reconfiguration of the LEA boundaries of County Kildare.

There are currently 6 LEA's in County Kildare as follows;

LEA	POPULATION	COUNCILLORS	POP PER COUNCILLOR	VARIANCE FROM COUNTY AVERAGE +/- %
ATHY	20111	3	6704	-10.0
CELBRIDGE	21349	3	7116	-4.5
CLANE	32052	4	8013	+ 7.5
KILDARE	44965	6	7494	+0.6
LEIXLIP	26214	4	6554	-12.1
NAAS	41644	5	8329	+ 11.8
COUNTY	186335	25	7453	

It is proposed that there should be 5 LEA's i.e. a reduction of 1. The proposed configuration is graphically illustrated in the accompanying map.

The proposed configuration is as follows:

LEA	POPULATION	COUNCILLORS	POP PER COUNCILLOR	VARIANCE FROM COUNTY AVERAGE +/- %
ATHY	27923	4	6981	-6.3
CELBRIDGE/LEIXLIP	46948	6	7825	+5.0
CLANE	31213	4	7803	+4.7

KILDARE	39932	5	7986	+7.2
NAAS	40339	6	6723	-9.8
COUNTY	186335	25	7453	

ATHY

As per the Terms of Reference Athy gains a Councillor. This is achieved by retaining the existing 24 Electoral Divisions (ED's) and transferring from Kildare LEA the following ED's:

Ballybackan
Harristown
Kildangan
The remainder of the Kilrush ED
Lackagh
Monasterevin
Nurney
Quinsborough
Thomastown

The new population of Athy is 27,923 and has a variance of -6.3%.

CELBRIDGE-LEIXLIP

Celbridge is currently a 3 seat LEA and consequently requires adjustment. It is not a practical solution to take population from Leixlip LEA as Leixlip is over-represented by 12.1% and also requires population to take it within the 10% range. While it would be possible to take population from Clane LEA to convert Celbridge to a 4 seat LEA this would cause a knock on effect as Clane would then require population from another LEA to meet the requirements for a 4 seat LEA.

Therefore the most practical solution, I believe, is to combine Celbridge and Leixlip into a single LEA of 6 seats. While this is an overall loss of 1 seat for the combined area they currently are 8.8% over-represented for 7 seats and an adjustment to the Celbridge side of the new LEA would ensure a more equitable Councillor/population ratio. Celbridge and Leixlip were joined together as an LEA until the 1999 Local Elections and now that the Celbridge interchange is in operation the two towns together with Maynooth are only a few minutes drive from each other.

To facilitate the change I recommend that the Oughterard ED which is currently divided between Celbridge and Naas LEA's be moved in its entirety into the Naas LEA.

CLANE

Clane currently has 4 Councillors and is under-represented by 7.5%. The ED of Bodenstown is split between Clane and Naas LEA's and by transferring all of Bodenstown into Naas the under-representation would be reduced by 3% points and the integrity of Clane LEA would be maintained.

KILDARE

Kildare has 6 Councillors at present and effectively has perfect representation for its population. However, the requirement to increase the number of Councillors in Athy necessitates reducing Kildare to 5 Councillors. It is recommended that some other amendments are made to Kildare to re-unite communities that are currently split over 2 LEA's.

The town of Kilcullen is in Naas LEA yet the hinterland is in Kildare LEA. Newbridge Rural is also divided between the 2 LEA's. This is done on the basis of the M7 and M9 Motorways. However the ED's of Naas Rural, Kill and Ladytown are also divided by the Motorways and yet are in the same LEA. The infrastructure which incorporates more than adequate overpasses and other access routes does not justify the splitting of these communities particularly as they have an affinity with Newbridge rather than Naas for commercial, educational, retail and social requirements.

It is proposed therefore that all of both the Kilcullen and Newbridge Rural ED's be re-united in Kildare LEA. A further proposal to re-unite communities that impacts on the configuration of Kildare LEA is set out in the next section relating to Naas.

NAAS

Naas has been the fastest growing town in Ireland for the past 10 years. It is the County Capital and administrative centre and has the only full service hospital in the County. It is currently has 5 Councillors and is under-represented by 11.8%. While implementation of this proposal would mean Naas over-represented by 7.2% this will dissipate quite quickly giving the continual growth of population in the town and the impact of the County Development Plan. There have been dramatic increases in the population of many of the ED's between 2002 and 2006 in the proposed Naas Electoral Area, examples of which are listed below:

- Caragh +65.04%
- Naas Rural +51.41%
- Kill +24.76%
- Carnalway +21.73%
- Donore +17.94%
- Bodenstown +16.94%
- 6 others in excess of +10%

Naas warrants 6 Councillors and given the other necessary changes to the configuration of the LEA's in the County, as detailed above, it is the most equitable and practical solution.

Two northern portions of two ED's, Oldconnell and Rathernan, which are currently in Kildare LEA, have complete affinity with Naas rather than Newbridge. The children attend primary school in Caragh and they and their parents attend church and engage in sporting activities there, which effectively is a suburb of Naas. The vast majority of the children attending secondary school do so in Naas which is also the main cultural and retail centre for this area. The

population of the following townlands would benefit by being represented by Councillors who have allegiance to Naas rather than Newbridge and counter the sense of isolation and neglect that they perceive:

**Barrettstown
Derreens
Thomastown
Blacktrench
Clongorey
Rathernan
Russellstown**

This would entail the transfer some 830 population from Kildare to Naas LEA and would also satisfy the Terms of Reference in relation to “respecting the hinterlands of population centres and local communities”.

