

Submission to
Electoral Area Boundary Committee

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in relation to
Electoral Areas in County Limerick

Submission by

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Contents

		Page
Section 1	Introduction	1
Section 2	Terms of Reference	2
Section 3	Analysis and naming of areas	2
Section 4	West Electoral Area	2
Section 5	South area	3
Section 6	City suburbs	3
Section 7	county mid-West	4
Section 8	Administrative efficiency	5
Section 9	other Social/Cultural Boundaries	6
Section 10	Naming of Electoral Areas	8
Section 11	Number of Seat and Variances	8

Attachments

Table 1	Proposed Newcastle West Electoral Area – population tables	10
Table 2	Proposed Rathkeale Electoral Area - population tables	11
Table 3	Proposed Kilmallock Electoral Area - population tables	12
Table 4	Proposed Castleconnell Electoral Area - population tables	13
Table 5	Proposed City Environs Electoral Area - population tables	14
	Boundary Map of proposed electoral areas	15

Submission to the Boundary Commission in relation to Local Electoral Areas in County Limerick.

Section 1: Introduction

1.A County Limerick is unusual within County Councils in that there is no Town Council or Towns Commissioners within the county.

Within the county there will be three Dail Constituencies in the next Dáil elections: Kerry North- West Limerick, Limerick, and Limerick City. Only one of these is entirely within County Limerick.

Currently there are five local electoral areas within the county: Newcastle, Rathkeale, Bruff, Kilmallock, and Castleconnell.

The recent boundary changes of the administrative areas of Limerick County and Limerick City have resulted in the movement of over 7,000 population from the County to the City. This is the equivalent of the loss of 25% from the previous Bruff area.

1.B In terms of natural divisions of the county there are “accepted” divisions of city & suburbs, west county Limerick, east county Limerick, and south county Limerick. Indeed certain sporting organisations make use of such divisions in their own administrative structures. While there is no uniform definition of where “east stops and west begins”, generally west of Adare (including Adare) would be considered “west” and south of Bruff (including Bruff) would be considered “south”.

1.C Administratively the County (Council) is divided into a number of areas for the delivery of services.

For the delivery of water services (and related services such as housing) the council is divided into four areas. The boundaries of these areas are NOT “co-terminal” with the boundaries of electoral areas.

For the delivery of roads services the council is divided into five areas. These are “co-terminal” with the electoral areas. (It is my understanding that the roads areas have always been “co-terminal” with the electoral areas, even when such boundaries have changed.)

The Council (in addition to its headquarters) operates through a network of area offices. There appears to be four “full service” offices (NewcastleWest, Rathkeale, Kilmallock, and Annacotty (Castleconnell)) and one “sub-office” in Croom which services part of the previous “Bruff” area and is subservient to the Annacotty office.

An implication of the current arrangements from the point of view of the public is that is that customers have to deal with a myriad of offices. For example a householder in Bruff has to deal with the Croom office (and possibly the Annacotty office) in relation to a roads query, while the same customer may have to deal with the Kilmallock office for a water query. From the point of view of a County Councillor in the course of representations for the Bruff area has to deal with three area offices and occasionally a fourth area office¹.

¹ Example in relation to Councillors and the previous Bruff area: A water query for Bruff town is dealt with by the Kilmallock office, a water query for Adare town is dealt with by the Rathkeale office, a roads query will be dealt with by the Croom office, or on some occasions by the Annacotty office)

Section 2 Terms of Reference.

The terms of reference for the committee include
the desirability of preserving natural communities
the desirability of preserving the hinterlands of population centres
urban or neighbourhood focal point (or points)
the desirability, where it may be possible to do so, of aligning local electoral area boundaries with Dáil constituency boundaries.

I would suggest that administrative consistency would assist the preservation of natural communities. Or to state this in the converse, electoral boundaries should not unduly stretch natural administrative boundaries.

The terms of reference sets a limit of +/- 10% in relation to the ratio between population and seats across a county. Although the terms of reference do not state it one could suggest that to the extent that there may a variance one could allow a positive variance (in terms of greater population per councillor) in urban type constituencies and allow a negative variance in rural or sparsely populated constituencies.

Section 3: Analysis and naming of areas.

Sections 3 to 7 below contain data and references in relation to the proposed division into electoral areas.

For the purposes of analysis these electoral areas are called West, South, City suburbs, East and county mid-West.

Section 10 below then discusses the names which might be allocated to these electoral areas in the future.

Section 4: West Electoral area

One of the terms of reference is "*the desirability, where it may be possible to do so, of aligning local electoral area boundaries with Dáil constituency boundaries*".

If one were to construct an electoral area based on that portion of County Limerick which is part of the Kerry North-West Limerick Dail constituency one could have an electoral area with 3 council seats. Although 3 seat electoral areas are allowable under the terms of reference, the requirements for such an area are not met in this instance. Indeed if one were to create such an area one would have the town of NewcastleWeast bounded immediately on the north, west and south by the "3 seat area". This would not meet the requirement of *the desirability of preserving natural communities*.

It is submitted that it is preferable to ensure that all the “Kerry North Limerick West” electoral districts within County Limerick are within one electoral area. Therefore it is submitted that the “West” electoral area should contain the previous Newcastle electoral area together with those electoral districts in the Kerry North Limerick West Dáil constituency which were previously not in the Newcastle area.

The proposed electoral districts in this “West” electoral area are listed in Table 1 attached. (Note the EDs of Ballynoe, Ballynoewest and Cloncagh have also been added to this “West” electoral area. This is in order to achieve a more “rounded” area and it also reduces variance between areas. The suggested representation for the West Area is 6 seats.

Section 5: South Area.

It is submitted that the “South” electoral area should contain the previous Kilmallock electoral area together with the EDs of Ballygrennan, Rathmore, Grange, Cahercorney, Crean, and Bruff. This creates a natural southern electoral area, with a natural focus on the historical town and administrative centre of Kilmallock. It also removes some of the anomalies referred to in the inductory sections.

The proposed electoral districts in this “South” electoral area are listed in Table 2 attached.

The suggested representation for the South Area is 5 seats

Section 6. City Suburbs.

Certain areas in the county area of Limerick are effectively suburbs of Limerick City. This includes areas such as Raheen, Ballycummin, Dooradoyle, Castletroy, Monaleen, Annacotty. These suburbs are reflected in ED terms by Ballycummin, Limerick South Rural, Ballysimon and Ballyvarra. These suburbs are a single natural community as envisaged in the terms of reference. It is submitted that they should form a single electoral area.

These four EDs are also within the Limerick City constituency for purposes of Dáil elections.

(The Limerick City constituency also contains the ED of Castleconnell. It is submitted that for a number of reasons that Castleconnell ED should not be included in the City Suburbs electoral area. Such a move would not meet the “natural communities” criterion. Neither would it meet the “preserving hinterlands” criterion. When one examines the report on the revisions of the Dáil constituencies it is to be noted that the variance of the Limerick City constituency is “-1.15%”; therefore one may surmise that Castleconnell was “added in” essentially to reduce the variance rather than as a result of any view that Castleconnell ED was of the same character as the suburbs & the city. This is further reinforced when one examines the relative growth rates of these EDs: Castleconnell experienced a decline of 0.4% while the suburbs grew at rates up to 21%. - Furthermore if one were to look beyond the current terms of reference, and if one were to imagine a future Dáil constituency revision in

the context of increasing suburban populations, one could imagine a future Dáil revision omitting the Castleconnell ED from the Limerick City constituency. -)

The electoral districts for this proposed electoral area of City Suburbs, together with population data are included as Table 3.

The proposed number of seats for this electoral area is 7 seats.

Section 6: East Area

The core of this proposed electoral area is the old Castleconnell electoral area, with some additions and deletions.

The additions include Patrickswell, Kilpreacon and Crecora EDs. The deletions are Ballysimon and Ballyvarra which move to the City Suburbs and Caherconroy which moves to join the former Kilmallock area.

One defining characteristic of this proposed East electoral area is that it contains many communities which are becoming “satellite” communities to Limerick City. The villages and communities in this area face common challenges in this regard.

The area forms a natural community of EDs. It has Limerick City and suburbs as its “Gateway” focus but contains within itself local centres of focus such as Patrickswell, Castconnell, Caherconlish, Morroe, Doon, Cappamore, Oola and Pallasgreaun. Indeed it is one part of Limerick which justifies the description sometimes applied to rural County Limerick –“a county of villages and rural settlements”.

The electoral districts for this proposed electoral area of “East”, together with population data are included as Table 4.

The proposed number of seats for this electoral area is 5 seats.

Section 7. County mid-West.

The remaining area has been called for the purposes of this analysis “county mid-west”. The core of this proposed electoral area is the old Rathkeale electoral area, with some additions and deletions.

The deletions comprise those EDs which form part of the Kerry North – Limerick West Dáil constituency (Glin, Fleanmore, Kilfergus, Kilmoylan, Glensharold) which move to the former Newcastle Area, the EDs of Ballynoe, Ballynoe West and Cloncagh which also move to the former Newcastle area, and the ED of Ballygrennan which is proposed to join the former Kilmallock area.

The additions comprise the western EDs of the former Bruff area (Carrig, Clarina, Adare north, Adare south, Dunaman, Croom, Garrane, Abbeyville and Ballybanogue).

The area contains within its boundaries towns such as Adare, Askeaton, Croom and Rathkeale. It returns to Rathkeale town what traditionally would have been viewed as

associated settlements of Croom and Adare. These four towns can be expected to progress along similar growth paths and share many features in common. The inclusion of Adare and Croom with Rathkeale makes far more sense than the previous association with the Bruff area which stretched from Caherdavin in the north of the city to Bruff in the south.

This enhanced area will also serve to strengthen the town of Rathkeale as a major centre of administration.

The electoral districts for this proposed electoral area of “county mid-West”, together with population data are included as Table 5.

The proposed number of seats for this electoral area is 5 seats.

Section 8: Administrative efficiency

The issue of administrative areas within Limerick County Council was examined briefly in section 1C above. When one examines the boundaries of the proposed electoral areas and compares them to the non-roads administrative areas within the County Council, one finds (fortuitously) that the new electoral boundaries are very close to the “non-roads” boundaries.

Given that the roads areas boundaries are apt to vary as electoral areas vary, it follows that the arrangements in this proposal will lead to a very close alignment of all administrative areas within the county. This is particularly so in respect of the larger settlements such as Croom, Adare, Bruff, but also in respect of the village of Glin.

One would presume that the “non-roads” administrative boundaries are already based on sound factors bearing in mind the geography (both physical and economic) of the county.

The proposed arrangement of electoral areas overcomes the problem mentioned in 1.C above whereby councillors in the former Bruff area needed to access at least three different administrative offices in order to transact business on behalf of constituents.

It is submitted that the proposed electoral areas as set out in this submission will allow for:

- Greater ease of access by the public in relation to County Council services for their own areas
- More efficient transaction of business by County Councillors
- Grouping of EDs with similar characteristics together.
- Enhancement of local democracy.

This proposed electoral division has maintained a total of 5 electoral areas within the county. The number of seats per area varies from five to seven . No electoral area exceeds the allowable variance.

Section 9: Note re other social/cultural boundaries.

9.1 One of the terms of reference included "*the desirability of preserving natural communities*"

Section 8 above discussed the merits of the proposed boundaries relative to administrative efficiencies and alignment with certain administrative boundaries within Limerick County Council. It is contended that the proposed boundaries give a very good balance between the terms of reference to the committee and pre-existing administrative boundaries.

9.2 For the purposes of checking the proposed boundaries against other criteria for the purposes of this submission the boundaries were cross checked against other published maps of cultural and sporting organisations. While it was difficult to locate such maps one map was located of the sub-divisions within the GAA in County Limerick. This map was sourced at the website of Milford GAA at www.milford.limerick.gaa.ie/limerickclubs.html.

When one examines this map against the proposed division of electoral areas one finds:

The proposed "South Electoral area" corresponds to a significant degree with the South Board of Limerick GAA

The clubs in the east division of Limerick GAA are largely also contained within the proposed "East electoral area", with the possible exception of South Liberties.

The eastern extent of the GAA western Board is very close to the eastern boundary of the proposed "county mid-west" electoral area.

9.3 The above comparison with the GAA boundaries is not made in the sense that the GAA boundaries should be used as some reference.

However having completed the analysis from aspect of populations within EDs, the purpose of the comparator with the GAA boundaries is a confirmation that the boundaries which have been selected are "natural" and logical within the context of the county, rather than "forced".

9.4 While the administration of Association Football (soccer) is not organised in the same relatively strict county and sub-county basis as the GAA, there are sub-divisions of soccer organisation within Limerick.

Two of the major organisational divisions in amateur soccer in Limerick are the Desmond League and the LDMC (Limerick District Management Committee). The Desmond League covers the "west" of the county. When one examines the clubs playing in the Desmond league one sees clubs such as Abbeyfeale, Newcastle West, Broadford, Rathkeale, Ballingarry, Pallaskenry, Kildimo and Adare. The geographic spread of the Desmond League (from Abbeyfeale in the west and Adare in the east) again matches the geographical extent of the "West" and "county mid-West" areas

discussed above. This further reinforces the appropriateness of the analysis and selection process for those areas.

While the LDMC includes clubs from the rest of the county (as well as Shannon in Clare and Charleville in Cork) it is instructive to look at the clubs in the A Premier League. This premier league is currently composed entirely of clubs which are either located in the Limerick City administrative area (eg Ballynanty, Fairview, Pike, Carew Park, Janesboro) or are located in the immediate suburbs (“Regional” which is based in Mungret –Raheen (Ballycummin ED) , and “Aisling” which is based in Castletroy-Annacotty area (Ballysimon-Ballyvarra ED)). The other divisions contain a mixture of clubs from the county and the city together with “B” teams from the premier clubs. One could argue that this indicates something about the sporting preferences of the city and the immediate suburbs. A similar point could also be made in respect of Rugby, where the “senior” teams –based on AIL ratings- are either city based or based in the immediate suburbs (Garryowen’s grounds are in Dooradoyle (Ballycummin ED) are Bohemians RFC are based in Castletroy-Annacotty (Ballysimon-Ballyvarra ED))

Again to echo sentiment in 9.3 above the above comparison with the sporting boundaries is not made in the sense that the sporting boundaries should be used as some reference.

However having completed the analysis from aspect of populations within EDs, the purpose of the comparator with, say, the soccer boundaries is a confirmation that the boundaries which have been selected are “natural” and logical within the context of the county, rather than “forced”

The Desmond league has a similar extent as the proposed “West” and “county mid-West” electoral areas. The proposed City Suburbs electoral area contains areas which are stronger in rugby and soccer than the rest of the county.

Section 10: Naming of Electoral Areas.

For the purposes of the analysis above the electoral areas were called

West
Mid West
South
East
City Suburbs

It is submitted that for electoral purposes these should be called

Newcastle West
Rathkeale
Kilmallock
Castleconnell
City Environs

This nomenclature maintains the nomenclature of the previous electoral areas, the exception being the abolition of the former “Bruff” electoral area and the creation of the new “City Environs” electoral area.

The arrangement allows for maintaining the same network of area offices serving the public such as Newcastle West, Rathkeale etc.

Section 11: Number of Seat and Variances

The variances in the proposed electoral areas are as follows:

Area	Number of Seats	Variance
Newcastle West	6	-5.6%
Rathkeale	5	+5.7%
Kilmallock	5	-5.7%
Castleconnell	5	-2.7%
City Environs	7	+6.7%

These variances are within the allowable limit of +/-10%. The variances are positive in the City Suburbs and in the Rathkeale area. In the other areas, which are either more rural or further from the centres of population, the variances are negative.

Attachments

Table 1 Proposed Newcastle West Electoral Area – population tables

Table 2 Proposed Rathkeale Electoral Area - population tables

Table 3 Proposed Kilmallock Electoral Area - population tables

Table 4 Proposed Castleconnell Electoral Area - population tables

Table 5 Proposed City Environs Electoral Area - population tables

Boundary Map of proposed electoral areas

Table 1**NewCastle West Area**

	Population 2006	population increase 2002- 2006	% increase 2002- 2006
Abbeyfeale	2494	231	10.2
79 Ardagh	973	31	3.3
80 Ballintober	360	15	4.3
8 Ballynoe	445	-4	-0.9
81 Ballynoe West	316	40	14.5
82 Boola	142	-13	-8.4
83 Broadford	892	46	5.4
84 Caher	336	10	3.1
85 Cleanglass	311	-6	-1.9
86 Cloncagh	259	24	10.2
87 Danganbeg	384	11	2.9
88 Dromcolliher	982	6	0.6
89 Dromtrasna	841	55	7
90 Feenagh	314	-1	-0.3
21 Fleanmore	205	6	3
91 Garryduff	296	-10	-3.3
92 Glenagower	510	38	8.1
93 Glengort	711	-26	-3.5
94 Glensharrold	454	8	1.8
22 Glin	1208	30	2.5
23 Kilfergus	501	-7	-1.4
95 Kilmeedy	345	-5	-1.4
24 Kilmoylan	461	-14	-2.9
96 Knockaderry	476	18	3.9
97 Mahoonagh	517	54	11.7
98 Monagay	1109	91	8.9
99 Mountcollins	510	-36	-6.6
100 Mountplummer	315	17	5.7
101 Newcastle Rural	1977	672	51.5
102 Newcastle Urban	3938	443	12.7
103 Port	547	-13	-2.3
104 Rathronan	838	-38	-4.3
105 Rooskagh	292	6	2.1
106 Templeglentan	845	6	0.7
Total	25104	1685	7.20%

Table 2**Rathkeale**

	Population 2006	population increase 2002- 2006	% increase 2002- 2006
1 Abbeyville	294	35	13.5
2 Adare	589	9	1.6
3 Adare	1849	-163	-8.1
107 Askeaton	676	-42	-5.8
108 Askeaton	999	118	13.4
109 Aughinish	262	32	13.9
4 Ballingarry	837	138	19.7
110 Ballyallinan	389	30	8.4
7 Ballynabanoge	313	-8	-2.5
111 Ballynacarriga	651	65	11.1
58 Carrig	591	2	0.3
112 Castletown	415	16	4
60 Clarina	1642	191	13.2
113 Craggs	272	5	1.9
114 Croagh	692	21	3.1
13 Croom	1594	30	1.9
115 Dromard	757	83	12.3
116 Dunmoylan	460	18	4.1
117 Dunmoylan	85	-9	-9.6
14 Dunnaman	631	77	13.9
16 Garrane	308	13	4.4
118 Iveruss	275	-18	-6.1
119 Kilcornan	667	35	5.5
120 Kildimo	601	4	0.7
18 Kilfinny	268	8	3.1
121 Kilscannell	478	12	2.6
122 Lismakeery	423	20	5
123 Loghill	705	31	4.6
124 Mohernagh	138	10	7.8
125 Nantinan	772	71	10.1
126 Pallaskenry	1012	3	0.3
127 Rathkeale	358	23	6.9
128 Rathkeale	1438	76	5.6
129 Riddlestown	487	47	10.7
130 Shanagolden	1008	27	2.8
131 Shanid	477	21	4.6
Total	23413	1031	4.61%

Table 3**Kilmallock**

	Population 2006	population % increase 2002- 2006	increase 2002- 2006
69 Anglesborough	325	-26	-7.4
25 Ardpatrick	398	10	2.6
26 Athlacca	355	-16	-4.3
5 Ballygran	509	-41	-7.5
6 Ballygrennan	275	21	8.3
70 Ballylanders	614	8	1.3
27 Ballymacshaneboy	435	32	7.9
28 Bruff	1268	3	0.2
29 Bruree	1001	81	8.8
30 Bulgaden	348	42	13.7
31 Cahercorney	604	75	14.2
9 Castletown	377	-14	-3.6
32 Colmanswell	549	-8	-1.4
10 Coolrus	417	22	5.6
11 Crean	420	46	12.3
71 Cullane	356	-8	-2.2
33 Darragh	316	16	5.3
34 Dromin	522	46	9.7
72 Duntryleague	322	21	7
35 Emlygrennan	663	30	4.7
73 Galbally	552	28	5.3
36 Glenbrohane	397	18	4.7
17 Grange	492	23	4.9
37 Griston	262	-1	-0.4
38 Hospital	1206	63	5.5
74 Kilbeheny	249	7	2.9
39 Kilfinnane	1087	-17	-1.5
40 Kilflyn	225	-	-
75 Kilglass	280	-7	-2.4
41 Kilmallock	2164	76	3.6
43 Knockainy	667	42	6.7
44 Knocklong	871	72	9
76 Knocknascrow	162	-	-
45 Particles	189	23	13.9
20 Rathmore	288	24	9.1
77 Riversdale	217	5	2.4
46 Rockhill	318	17	5.6
47 Tobernea	622	-5	-0.8
48 Uregare	566	27	5
Total	20888	735	3.65%

Table 4**Castleconnell**

	Population 2006	population increase 2002- 2006	% increase 2002- 2006
49 Abington	750	17	2.3
50 Ballybricken	1599	208	15
132 Bilboa	400	19	5
54 Caherconlish East	508	50	10.9
55 Caherconlish West	1388	170	14
56 Caherelly	271	43	18.9
57 Cappamore	1400	-8	-0.6
59 Castleconnell	2636	-11	-0.4
61 Clonkeen	697	171	32.5
12 Crecora	429	-10	-2.3
62 Doon West	218	14	6.9
133 Doon South	1250	40	3.3
15 Fedamore	1089	69	6.8
63 Glenstal	921	2	0.2
134 Grean	1370	60	4.6
64 Kilmurry	867	106	13.9
19 Kilpeacon	497	19	4
42 Killeely	549	92	20.1
135 Oola	1081	18	1.7
67 Patrickswell	1522	-52	-3.3
68 Roxborough	1608	-70	-4.2
136 Templebredon	499	37	8
	0	0	0
Total	21549	984	4.78%

Table 5

City Suburbs

		Population 2006	population increase 2002- 2006	% increase 2002- 2006	
51 Ballycummin		13435	16279	2844	21.2
52 Ballysimon		9675	11260	1585	16.4
53 Ballyvarra		3740	4139	399	10.7
66 Limerick	South Rural	980	1423	443	45.2
Total		0	33101	5271	18.94%

Map showing altered electoral area boundaries

On the attached page is a map showing the effects of the proposed boundary changes.

As I do not have access to maps of the existing boundaries in an appropriate format, I have used a copy of a map appearing in the County Development Board's website² which includes electoral areas and I have superimposed the electoral boundaries as proposed by this submission as thick black lines.

² reference: <http://www.limerickcdb.ie/images/Gamma-Boundaries%20Map.pdf>

Local Constituency

Proposed Boundaries

