

ELECTORAL AREA BOUNDARY COMMITTEE.

SUBMISSION OF COUNCILLOR *KATIE RIDGE*.

KILDARE COUNTY COUNCIL.

- 1. The principle of Proportionality vis a vis Local Authorities and their citizenship is not addressed in the prescribed Terms of Reference. County Kildare currently has an elected membership of 25 Councillors for a population in the region of 186,335. By way of comparison the neighbouring Councils, Laois and Offaly, have a proportion of citizens to Councillors of 2,682 to 1 and 3,374 to 1 respectively. It is clear therefore that the people of Kildare require an increase in the number of their local representatives so as to ensure a fair, equal and effective representation on the Council.**
- 2. The timing of the proposed review is manifestly unfair given that the local elections are to be held within twelve months of the boundary committee issuing it's report. This will allow insufficient time for prospective candidates and their constituents to effectively manage whatever new arrangements may be put in place. There can be no sound argument for scheduling the report prior to the forthcoming Local Elections and fundamental fairness requires that the maximum amount of time be afforded candidates and their constituents to put in place whatever strategies they wish in good time prior to an election.**
- 3. The towns of Celbridge and Maynooth do not have a Town Council. Leixlip on the other hand has. In the event that all three seater constituencies are to be abolished Celbridge would in all probability be amalgamated with the Leixlip electoral area. Maynooth and Celbridge, not having any Town Council platform, would be at a significant disadvantage to the citizens of Leixlip who would as a consequence of such change be doubly represented. Such an inequity will not be tolerated**

and cannot under any circumstances be justified or explained as being at the heart of 'better local government'.

- 4. Perhaps significantly any changes in electoral areas will mean changes to local management / operational areas within local authorities. Clearly such will have an adverse impact upon what are already very limited resources (financial, personnel, infrastructure / buildings). For example Directors of Services have been appointed for existing electoral areas and in many local authorities services are now delivered from within electoral areas as distinct from the county council headquarters. Consequently in the event of a change in the present electoral area configuration councils are going to have to revise and remodel how they provide the existing services. Presently there is no financial provision to make these adjustments. Nor have the costs of such adjustments been calculated. To bring about such change without first costing it and securing the budget provision for same is reckless and devoid of any proper planning or consideration.**

Katie Ridge. MCC. B.L.

Dated the 14th March 2008.