

Dear Runai,

In response to your advertisements for submissions on the County Council electoral area boundary changes, I would like to make the following submission.

The main points I would like to make are

1. Building constituencies around population centres and their natural hinterland should be the priority over following the moving targets of Dáil boundaries.
2. Cork County Councils Divisional structure should be maintained.
3. Similar population centres would be best served together rather than mixed into different areas, eg city suburbs and urban neighbourhoods in 1 constituency, while market towns and their hinterlands in another.

Over the last 20 years the Dáil boundaries in Cork have constantly changed in each review while in the same time the Council boundaries will only change twice at most. The Dáil boundary reviews have seen large changes including the removal and adding of Tower to Cork North Central, the Ballincollig suburb moving to rural Cork North West and the extension of Cork North Central northwards to within 5 miles of Mallow town. Clearly the Dáil boundaries are a moving target and it's reasonable to expect further changes in future reviews. Forming Council electoral areas along current Dáil boundaries would only likely see boundaries misaligned again at the next Dáil review as they are a much more fluid boundary, a moving target. It could also result in towns and their natural hinterlands being disconnected into different constituencies. Typical examples of this would be where a Dáil boundary skirts along the edge of Dunmanway and Mallow towns dividing parishes and local communities into different constituencies. It would be more natural to build constituencies around population centres and their hinterlands where communities, with common issues and concerns would be together in the same area and having local representatives they connect with.

The Macroom area is a market town and its natural hinterland where there are many common issues and interests including the N22 Macroom bypass, Lee valley tourism, shopping, sporting and family connections. The town and its hinterland are intrinsically connected. This would be similar to the nearby market town of Bandon and its hinterland. In the past Macroom and Bandon were the one 7-seat electoral area and both areas still meet together for the Monthly Area Committee. We face many common challenges and concerns such as the growing town and villages, farming matters, planning for one off

houses, rural post office closures and small schools etc.. Rebuilding a constituency of the Macroom and nearby Bandon market towns and their hinterlands would be a positive step as the public and their representatives could be more unified in addressing our common issues.

The same could be said of a suburban constituency such as the Carrigaline area where social and affordable housing would be more of a concern than for example one off rural housing and schools would be bursting at the seams rather than under treat of closure. Clearly, mixing city suburbs into rural constituencies could dilute the strength of the various communities.

Cork is the largest County in the Country and because of its size Cork County Council is divided into 3 divisions. These divisions (North, South and West Cork) act as almost 3 separate County Councils. The members of the Bantry and Skibbireen electoral area meet as the Western committee, Macroom, Blarney, Bandon, Middleton and Carrigaline areas form the Southern Division while Kanturk, Fermoy and Mallow form the Northern Division. Each division meet monthly to conduct the business of their area, they agreeing their own budgets annually, administering their own housing and sanitary services etc. Engineering areas are also formed along these divisional boundaries and each division conducts its own business in the same way as a County Council of similar size would. It would be important as the commission reviews the boundaries that it would be conscious of these divisional boundaries and strive to maintain them because key public services including road, waste collection, planning, housing, sanitary etc. are based along these boundaries.

In summary I believe

- Building constituencies around population centres and their natural hinterland should be the priority over following the moving targets of Dáil boundaries.
- Cork County Councils Divisional structure should be maintained.
- Similar population centres would be best served together rather than mixed into different areas.

I would be pleased if you would bear these points in mind as you redraw the Council Electoral boundaries around Cork, and if you have any query do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards

Aindreas Moynihan MCC, Railway View, Macroom, Co. Cork