

## Submission to Electoral Area Boundary Committee

Currently there is a significant disparity between the population per county councillor in each of the four Districts comprising Wexford County Council. According to the figures contained in the 2006 Census there are approximately 7,300 people per councillor in the Gorey District, 6,400 in the Enniscorthy District, 6,300 in the Wexford District and just 5,400 in the New Ross District.

In the case of Wexford County Council I believe the terms of reference of the committee would be best fulfilled by a distribution of seats as follows :-

Enniscorthy District – 6 (an increase of 1 seat)

Gorey District – 5 (an increase of 1 seat)

New Ross District – 4 (a reduction of 1 seat)

Wexford District – 6 (a reduction of 1 seat)

In order for the councillor to population ratio to be broadly similar in each District, I believe that the following boundary changes would be advisable:-

- transfer of the Newtownbarry Electoral Division from Enniscorthy District to Gorey District
- transfer of the following Electoral Divisions (or part thereof not already in the Enniscorthy District) from Wexford District to Enniscorthy District – Ardcahan, Ardcolm, Artramon, Glynn, Killurin and Kilpatrick
- transfer of the Adamstown, Clongeen and Clonroche Electoral Divisions from New Ross District to Enniscorthy District

The major reason for such changes would be to account for the greater increase in population in the northern part of the county by increasing the seats in the Gorey and Enniscorthy Districts by one in each case. A reduction in seats by one in the case of the New Ross District is justified on population grounds and in Wexford District an added consideration is the recent extension of the geographical areas covered by Wexford Borough Council meaning that if left unchanged some electors would have an excessive 19 local elected representatives in their area i.e. 7 county councillors and 12 members of Wexford Borough Council.

The proposed transfer of the Newtownbarry Electoral Division from Enniscorthy to Gorey is both a return to previous precedent, presents geographical sense and by the addition of population (c. 2,300 as per the 2006 census) fully justifies the increase in Gorey District from 4 to 5 seats in addition to the strong population growth already experienced in that part of the county over the past decade.

The transfer of population outlined above from the Wexford District to the Enniscorthy District represents a movement of geographically contiguous areas, a significant portion of which were previously in the Enniscorthy District. It achieves the objective of broadly equalising the population per county councillor in each district and reunites some local geographical areas that are currently split between the two districts.

The transfer of population from the New Ross District to the Enniscorthy District facilitates the objective of equalising population per county councillor in each district and represents the movement of geographically contiguous areas.

Overall I believe that the division of the county into four districts comprising 4-6 seats each as outlined above represents the most equitable way of achieving the objectives of this review.

Although outside the terms of reference of this committee I would also point out that the total membership of Wexford County Council at 21 is proportionately significantly lower than that of counties with a similar or smaller population. This is an issue that requires to be addressed separately.

In relation to the other local authorities within County Wexford (in the towns of Enniscorthy, Gorey, New Ross and Wexford) I believe that there is no pressing need for change in either the boundaries, number, or method of allocation of seats.

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