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Tipperary County Council and Local electoral districts

Dear Sirs

We welcome this review and hope that it will facilitate some changes that we feel are required in the governance and electoral structure of county Tipperary

Tipperary county council currently has 40 members and we do not expect or advocate for a change in this number overall

However as currently constituted 3 of the electoral divisions/municipal areas contain 9 seats (namely Nenagh, Templemore/Thurles and Clonmel) and so would require changes to bring them in line with the guidelines as set out for your review where areas should not exceed 7 seats. We feel this will help local representatives better represent the areas they are elected for as they would likely be geographically smaller and so councillors could concentrate their efforts and work which should in turn lead to better levels of representation.

We do not see any mitigating or exceptional circumstance in any of these areas as to why the guideline re maximum numbers of seats should be ignored. While we acknowledge that the council have invested in Municipal offices in the 5 current districts this we feel does not lead to a prohibition on increasing the number of municipal districts or changing the structures or centres of the current ones.

We do not have a view on specific moves that should be made re the geographies of the area but would make the following general points

- With 40 seats a fair option may be to have 8 equal 5 seat districts – given its population this would mean Clonmel town and its hinterland would form one such district in all likelihood itself and this may go some way to meeting with some of the calls for a return of the Clonmel corporation that currently exists within the town
- Historically Cashel, Newport, Cahir and Roscrea/Templemore all acted as centres of district areas so it would not be a new or out of context concept for people in these areas to find themselves in districts centred on any of these towns again in the future
- Since the amalgamation of the north and south councils and indeed Dail constituencies there is still a view that the county still divides itself along the lines of that old border across the middle of the county– if this was something that you would like to address and to help remove that view and help with the integration of the county as a single entity - districts which span the middle of the county might help in dissolving those attitudes be they real or perceived currently

We wish you well in your deliberations and look forward to the publication of your report.

Regards

Tipperary Fine Gael Constituency Executive