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To whom it may concern,

I'd like to submit the following points for consideration in your upcoming review of boundaries in County Cork.

As a member of Cork County Council, I and some fellow members of the West Cork Municipal District highlighted our strong opposition to the terms of reference that we in the council were required to work within, during our recent debates in the council chamber in Cork. I disagree with the process in so far as population seems to dictate the allocation of seats in a local electoral area. This does not take any account of the geographical area of MD's, as in our case in West Cork. It also has led to areas which are natural hinterlands being divided up. Cork County Council have submitted their own submission for your consideration, but I and a number of my colleagues believe that because of the huge geographical area that we cover in West Cork, this MD should be allocated an extra seat at the very least.

The submission by Cork County Council was reluctantly agreed to by members of the West Cork Municipal District but we did ask that our concerns would be noted.

The map being submitted suggests that West Cork Municipal District is split into two areas, Bantry electoral area in the West and Skibbereen in the east, but it also excludes areas east of Clonakilty which were formally part of West Cork.

I strongly disagree with this exclusion of areas such as Ring, Darrara, Timoleague, Courtmacsherry and the Seven Heads Peninsula from the new West Cork Municipal District. These areas have a natural connection with the West Cork area, are familiar with organisations and personnel, council area offices and staff, have years of good working experience with West Cork groups and have benefited from various marketing initiatives based on the West Cork brand. Numerous organisations such as both Timoleague and Courtmacsherry Development Associations are not at all happy with proposals to put their area in the Bandon/Kinsale Municipal District.

While I recognise that some guidelines had to be put in place for this process, drawing lines because of population is not going to work.

In any event, there are areas North of Dunmanway which have a natural tie in with Macroom and should be considered to be included in a new MD based around Macroom.

Perhaps Skibbereen could be moved into the western side of the new West Cork Municipal District? This would allow for an administrative centre in Clonakilty, and should then include all of the Timoleague and Courtmacsherry areas as is currently the case.

As mentioned earlier, I believe the terms of reference are too restrictive and don't take account of the large geographical area of West Cork. I would recommend therefore that this MD should be made up of 10 elected members, 5 in each local electoral area.

I do hope that you will carefully consider these concerns and act on them accordingly. We the representatives for West Cork know and love the area and only want what's best for the area and it's people.

If you have any queries, or would like to clarify any issues raised above, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Best regards,  
Cllr. Paul Hayes.