

Submission to Local Electoral Area Boundary Committee Regarding Cork County.

I would first like to say that the decision to keep the Cork County Council at 55 Councillors for once was the right decision by a Government who has so often got it wrong on democratic issues.

Since the abolition of all Town Councils & merger of several city and county councils we have seen a drastic reduction in elected councillors in populace, considering that Ireland had already the weakest local democracy in the EU, a further reduction would be punitive, even though the population will be going down (moving to the city) the reality is that due to the abolition of many town councils throughout Cork, the representational ratio will still be very high compared to pre 2014.

I would like to state my total opposition to the creation of the 3 or 4 seater exceptional rule.

Cork had 8 electoral areas, 1 x10 seater, 1 x8 seater, 1 x7 seater and 5 x6 Seaters, if we notice the last and second last seats won in the last election, it added greatly to the diversity of representation. Due to the questionable parameters given of 5-7 seaters, this will almost ensure without a vote cast that the 2 large parties will gain seats, due to smaller seat constituencies and thus higher practical vote thresholds but also due to more constituencies a higher number of candidates & resources needed, another effective form of threshold that will favour large parties over small parties and independents and thus limit the electorates right to diverse representation.

Under generally accepted academic thought PR-STV only approaches acceptable proportionality when a minimum of 6 seats is the district magnitude. This leads one to consider the minister's parameters to consider constituencies as low as 5 and under exceptional circumstances 3 or 4, but not 8 or 9, as academically ignorant at best or politically motivated gerrymandering at worst.

I would like to urge the committee to consider keeping 8 electoral areas.
With constituencies of 7 x7 seats and 1 x6 Seats.

- This could be done by dividing up the Cobh electoral district to give north sections to the Fermoy, east sections to East Cork and possibly the Cobh area into a cork bay area with carrigaline/passage/monkstown.
- Reducing west cork to 7 seats, some area should be given to bandon and macroom
- Bandon if in need of more space and if cobh town being moved into a cork bay with carrigaline, might take some of the western portion of cariigaline eg inniskenny etc
- Optionally west cork more substantially goes into bandon, and the western part of kinsale/nohoval goes into carrigaline, monkstown, passage area.
- Some movement would also need to happen between kanturk-mallow and the macroom electoral areas, and possibly between kanturk-mallow and fermoy. where practicable, current electoral areas should largely comprise the new electoral areas.
- Ideally it should also try to remain where practicable in line with Dail constituencies.

Cork County has been badly served in regard to these concerns in recent years and it is my hope that this committee, notwithstanding the minister's hamfisted naked ploy for party advantage, will rectify this in the coming boundary revision. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Mark Khan, May 2018.