

18.072

Secretary,
Local Electoral Area Boundary Committee,
Room 1.67,
Custom House,
Dublin 1.

12/2/2018

Dear Secretary,

I understand your Committee is to review local electoral areas in order that they become more streamlined and integrate town and county governance organised on the basis of perhaps extra municipal districts within counties such as Mayo. I also understand that following this review, recommendations on the division of council areas into local electoral areas for the 2019 local Elections will take place, and that the number of existing "Areas" may be sundered or greatly altered. As a rural dweller and one who has been actively involved in community development, sporting and cultural organizations in my region for forty years, I sincerely plead that my own Parish, "Burriscarra/Ballintubber will not be sundered and divided in order to make up numbers in diverse municipal districts. This would be a disaster for people living in the countryside whose requirements and needs are very different to urban dwellers.

Since 2008 when the integrity of our Parish was re-established we have enjoyed excellent local representation from the councilors in Castlebar Electoral Area. Our representatives have helped and were interested in assisting us provide Community and sporting facilities, as we were "a solid historic identifiable unit". Other very prestigious developments for local villages are now in the pipeline and it is vital that we retain our presence in Castlebar Council Area. It is of the utmost importance that our voice is not divided, thus stifling our ability to lobby for necessary further developmental and community project aid. As I specified in my previous submissions, Castlebar is "our local town" where the vast amount of our young people attend Secondary School. It is also the main shopping town for the overwhelming majority of our households. It is undoubtedly the area we have the greatest affinity with.

There is a positive bonus in that scenario for our Parish. Trust, familiarity and respectful working relationships are built up over the years with local Government representatives and Council personnel and that relationship would be sundered if we were included elsewhere. Our Parish having lost three Post Offices and a Garda Station in recent years. Local shops are closing and public houses are suffering a huge decrease in business. It is vital that we at least have proper local Government representation that is not fragmented and is unquestionably sympathetic and familiar with our problems.

Our Parish has a number of different and distinct "village" communities, Killawalla, Tawnynagry, Clogher, Burriscarra and Rosslea. These communities are presently well bonded and one solid unit for many varied purposes, Solus and RSS Schemes, County Council Services, Sport, Ballintubber G.A.A Club, Carnacon Ladies Club, Ballintubber Cycling Club etc. This "sense of identity" is of vital importance in rural Ireland in an era of diminishing services and ever-growing desertion from Central Government. It fosters "pride of place" counters apathy and greatly assists in recruiting volunteers for many worthwhile local development and sporting organisations.

Life experience from having served for many years as a Fás CE Supervisor in the Parish, and having been an Office holder in a Development Association and currently Cathaoirleach of our local G.A.A Club has brought home to me the immense value of "a harnessed, vibrant, unified community" operating within the ancient and valued traditional Parish structure. Our unity is our strength.

Once again I urge you to give due consideration to this submission and treat the Region (Parish) as one identifiable natural unit, placing it firmly within its natural setting which is "Castlebar Electoral Area".

Regards,

Sean Hallinan