

18.104.



February 13th 2018

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

RE County Mayo – Suggested Changes.
See Enclosed Map of Co Mayo.

Dear Secretary, Chairman & Committee Members,

Having studied your Terms of Reference we take this opportunity to make the following submission to your committee.

Mayo with a current population of 130,425, is a large, predominately rural county with varying demographics which include two large urban centres of Ballina and Castlebar and a vast and severely under populated rural area stretching from Bangor Erris towards Ballycastle in the northern section of West Mayo and from Westport South towards Leenaun on the southern section of West Mayo.

On the basis that established Urban Areas have greater catchments and that your terms of reference indicate a strong preference for urban centred municipal districts we advise your committee to consider our proposal for 6 Electoral Areas for Mayo with the following allocation of Council seats

- 7 seats to Castlebar.
- 6 seats to Ballina.
- 5 seats to Swinford/Ballyhanuis.
- 5 seats to Claremorris/Ballinrobe.
- 4 seats to Westport.
- 3 Seats to Belmullet.

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Our conclusions are based on the following;

Castlebar is the administrative capital with the largest natural catchment which currently stretches from Addergoole in the North to Abhainn Bhrain on its Southern periphery.

Due to the fact that your terms of reference specify a maximum of 7 seat electoral areas we are obliged to recommend a transfer of part of the existing Castlebar electoral area to neighbouring districts.

It is generally accepted that the current Northern section of the Castlebar municipal district which includes Addergoole, Letterbrick and Ballynagorraher are more closely associated with both Crossmolina and Ballina. We therefore recommend the transfer of these neighbouring areas to Ballina.

The decision to transfer Kiltimagh, Killedan, Ballinamore and Toocananagh to Castlebar during the last Boundary review has not operated to everybody's satisfaction.

It is therefore advisable, in our opinion, that these four areas be transferred to a new Electoral Area of Swinford/Ballyhanuis.

Swinford/Ballyhanuis Electoral Area.

We propose to create a new electoral area of Swinford/Ballyhanuis which requires a transfer of DEDs from Ballina, Castlebar and Claremorris.

Until relatively recently Swinford had its own Electoral area and as a consequence our proposal may reintroduce both elected members and the general public to a situation deemed to be both familiar and satisfactory.

Claremorris/Ballinrobe Electoral Areas.

We propose to reduce the current size of the Claremorris/Ballinrobe Electoral area to a revised 5 seat Electoral Area which, similar to the aforementioned Swinford, also had its own electoral area on many occasions in the past.

West Mayo Electoral Area.

The current huge area of West Mayo is widely considered to be too large to manage or to govern effectively or efficiently. It currently stretches from Blacksod Bay in the north to Leenaun in the South - a distance of 96 miles.

Should your committee decide to dissect this specific area and thereby to create two separate Electoral areas - Westport to the South comprising 4 seats and Belmullet to the North comprising 3 seats, your decision would receive widespread approval.

The allocation of a smaller number of seats than the minimum recommended in each case is justifiable on the basis of the extremely low population density from Bangor Erris running Eastwards, and from Westport running Southwards towards Leenaun.

Municipal Districts

We propose 4 Municipal Districts as it is currently the case in Mayo. Details as follows:

Castlebar	7 seats.
Ballina	6 seats.
Belmullet/Westport combined	7 seats.
Swinford/Claremorris combined	10 seats.

The following represent our specific proposals (see enclosed map) for each electoral area:

Belmullet - 3 seats

Total population: 14,012, representing 4,671 per elected member.

Westport – 4 seats

Total population: 16,966, representing 4,241 per elected member.

Ballina – 6 seats

Total population: 27,048, representing 4,508 per elected member

Castlebar – 7 seats

Total population: 28,241 representing 4,034 per elected member.

Swinford – 5 seats

Total population: 22,912 representing 4,582 per elected member.

Claremorris – 5 seats

Total population: 19,657 representing 3,931 per elected member

In forming our opinions we have been conscious of the necessity to comply with your Terms of Reference, to protect existing Community Links, Parish Boundaries, Sporting Organisations and Urban Catchments and to keep as close as possible to the recommended ratio of one elected member to every 4,348 head of population in Co Mayo.

We hope that our suggestions are of assistance to you and we wish you well in your deliberations.

Signed

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