

Submission to Local Electoral Area Boundary Committee No.1 by Elected Members of Bray Municipal District

Dear Secretary of the Local Electoral Area Boundary Committees,

The Cathaoirleach and elected members of Bray Municipal District welcome the opportunity to engage with this process and wish to make the following observations and requests in relation to the Bray area.

Under terms of reference No.7 Bray should be classified as a Municipal Borough District

- CSO 2016 census figures show a population of 32,600 for Bray and ranking it the 4th largest urban population centre (outside of the 5 cities) after Drogheda, Swords and Dundalk
- The Bray Local Area Plan determines the population of Bray (under Wicklow Local Authority) to be 29,624. This is derived by using SAPS that most closely match the area.

Under terms of reference No. 6 Kilmacanogue and Enniskerry (including Powerscourt) should remain in the Bray Municipal Borough District

- Kilmacanogue and Enniskerry are socially, culturally and economically linked to Bray
- There is historical association between the three areas and residents of Enniskerry and Kilmacanogue significantly rely on Bray for social, recreational, educational, transport and employment needs
- Geographically, the Enniskerry and Kilmacanogue core population centres, are located far closer to Bray than they are to the next nearest urban centre of Greystones.
- The natural boundary of the Sugarloaf Mountains to the south and the County boundary to the northwest places Kilmacanogue and Enniskerry within the Bray Municipal Borough District and maintains historical local community identity
- To place either of these areas outside of the Bray electoral area, to Greystones or Wicklow for example, would create a largely extended, unconnected and illogical electoral area

Under terms of reference No.3, No.7 & No.8 the number of seats should remain at 8 in Bray Municipal Borough District

- Under compelling circumstances there is scope to retain 3 or 4 seat electoral areas. That scope should, under equally compelling circumstances, permit an electoral area such as Bray to retain 8 seats. In the best interest of local communities, efficiency of local government and public representation, the full electoral area should be retained as an 8 seat area.
- The committee must make their recommendations based on the terms of reference but the Minister has scope to vary that recommendation in line with other Government policy. The 2014 Local Government Act which abolished Bray Town Council and centralised funding and resources has had a detrimental impact on local government and public representatives in carrying out their duties. The aim of the Act was to improve local government. To further modify the local government structure by reducing the number of elected representatives or by splitting an electoral district would increase that negative impact and therefore be contrary to the aim of the Act.

- The terms of reference do not provide specific detail or description of a Municipal Borough District or how it differs from a Municipal District. It is suggested for the purpose of this review, that a Municipal Borough District should be defined as an urban centre with a population of approximately 30,000. It should consist of a single electoral area and include areas which are reasonably close and generally connected to the core urban area.

Submitted by Bray Municipal District Elected Members

Cathaoirleach – Cllr Christopher Fox

Councillors – Joe Behan,
Steven Matthews,
Oliver O'Brien,
Michael O'Connor,
John Ryan,
Brendan Thornhill,
Pat Vance.