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Cllr. Johnny Healy-Rae Submission on Boundary Changes

I wish to make a submission to the Electoral Boundary Commission regarding the Electoral Boundaries in County Kerry. I specifically want to make a submission in relation to the South West Municipal District.

The terms of reference for this Commission do not in any way suit the South and West Municipal District which currently has a 9 seat municipal area. I do acknowledge the geographical size of this area but I also argue that it is adequately served by 9 Councillors spread out across it.

The 2 peninsulas have the exact same characteristics which include 2 Gaeltacht areas and are mainly driven by and dependant on tourism, fishing and small farm holdings, with some larger mountain landholdings mainly for sheep farming. Additionally, these areas would have small industries created locally and would have been developed by local families and entrepreneurs.

The similarities of the people, their culture and their way of life combined with the rugged natural, unspoilt scenery of mountains, valleys, rivers, lakes and the Atlantic Ocean hitting from every side. All of these qualities make for cohesive compatible and a natural municipal district in terms of economic, social, cultural and environmental strategies and development of this entire area.

I believe it is more advantageous for the population of South and West Kerry to remain as one electoral division.

I want to stress my reasons for leaving this as one. The Municipal will still cover both areas even though there will be 2 divisions and members in both areas will have a say in both areas for any decision making but under the new terms of reference have a vote only in one electoral division be it South with 6 seats and West with 3 even though essentially they are still represented at Municipal level by the 9 Councillors.

It is clear no matter what way you break up South and West Kerry that the 2 divisions cannot meet the terms of reference, therefore, would it not be obvious to make an exception to the terms of reference and leave South and West Kerry as a 9 seater area.

My submission as outlined above is pleading with you not to divide these two areas as the similarities and ties cannot be divided as they are connected in every way. It is also felt that smaller districts will give a monopoly to larger political parties and this should not be the case as a Municipal with 9 seats at present and I'm sure in the future will represent all of its people across the political divide.

Regards,

Johnny Healy-Rae MCC