

18.233

To the Members of Committee No. 1, Geraldine Tallon, Dr Theresa Reidy, Ned O'Connor, Virginia McLoone, Seamus Boland.

I, Cllr. Emily Wallace wish to make a submission on the review of the local election boundaries for the 2019 local elections. I propose a 4, 5 seater areas in Westmeath with reasoning below.

Area 1: Mullingar Area

In order to keep within the terms of reference and to make Mullingar town an electoral area both the present Mullingar Coole electoral area and the Mullingar Kilbeggan area will have to change from their present format, i.e. 6 seater and 7 seater.

Terms of Reference pt. 4. *"Except in the case of Metropolitan Districts (Limerick and Waterford), a distinct urban-focused local electoral area or areas, as appropriate, shall be designated in respect of each town the population of which within the county as ascertained at Census 2016, when rounded to the nearest 1,000, is equal to or greater than 15,000..."*

Specific implications of Terms of Reference (if any)

a district urban-focused local electoral area or areas...in respect of each town the population of which... is equal to or greater than 15,000 i.e. Athlone and Mullingar; min 5 seats each

The Mullingar town area has a population of 20,815 as per the 2016 Census. According to the Terms of Reference 4 & 5 it should have a minimum of 5 members . In order to achieve these figures and taking into account urban sprawl the following areas which would now be considered town based: Owel, Tullaghan, & Hopestown give a combined population of 22,232. These figures would break down in to 4,446 per head of population per member, which would be well in line with the figures given under summary of information for consideration re submissions to Local Area Boundary Committee (4,439) (Please refer to Map A below with visual reference coloured area **Pink**)

Area 2: Coole, Delvin, Kinnegad Area

Deciding on the other two areas around Mullingar town has its difficulties.

The areas south east and north east of the town would geographically be associated with Mullingar. It must be remembered the 8,681 people from Westmeath have been moved into the Meath West electoral area for General Election and feel very little association with the Meath constituency.

Considering this and taking into account point 6 in Terms of Reference the areas of Ballinlough, Ballyhealy, Ballynaskeagh, Belvedere, Bracklin, Carrick, Castle, Cloghan, Clonarney, Clonlost, Collinstown, Copperalley, Delvin, Derrymore, Enniscoffey, Faughalstown, Fore East, Fore West, Gaybrook, Griffinstown, Heathstown, Hilltown, Huntingdon, Kilcumny, Killua, Killucan, Killulagh, Kilpatrick, Kinnegad, Kinturk, Knockdrin, Milltown, Multyfarnham, Raharney, Riverdale, Rosmead, Russellstown, Stonehall, Taghmon and Woodland. These areas would share a community identity and the towns of Castlepollard, Kinnegad and Delvin form a triangle and service the hinterlands which all have an attachment to the capital town of Mullingar. The combined population of these areas is 22,717, which would make this area into a 5 seater and would have a population per member of 4,544 which is in keeping with the average ratio of 4,439

(Please refer to Map A below with visual reference coloured area **Green**)

Area 3: Athlone Area

Athlone town has a population on the Westmeath side and for the Local Area Boundary purposes according to the 2016 census of 15,202. In order to balance up the member per population ratio and give geographical coherence there would be a need to include the following areas, Ardnagragh, Athlone East Rural, Athlone East Urban, Athlone West Urban, Auburn, Carn, Castledaly, Doonis, Drumraney, Glassan, Killinure, Moydrum, Muckanagh, Noughaval and Tubbrit.

The population of these areas combined is 23,775 which if made into a 5 seater this would give a member to population ratio of 4,755 which is well within the variance plus 10% as given by the area boundary committee.

(Please refer to Map A below with visual reference coloured area **Blue**)

Area 4: Kilbeggan, Moate, Rathowen, Rochfortbridge Area

The final area would comprise of another 5 Seater and would form a triangle between Kilbeggan, Moate, Rathowen and Rochfortbridge. As this is the largest area geographically and would have a smaller population of 20,046 it would have a population ratio per member of 4,009 this would be the lowest population per member in the whole County but it would take into account the size of the area compare to Athlone or Mullingar and would be in keeping within the variance of -10% as given by the electoral boundary committee.

(Please refer to Map A below with visual reference coloured area **Orange**)

Taking into account the border County of Offaly which has a member per population of 4,036, according to the 2013 boundary commission report and Roscommon which has a member per population of 3,559 and also taking into account Longford which has a member per population ratio of 2,167, it would be well justified in having an area of such.

In conclusion I recommend that the committee take into account the facts provided and the historical linkages with the areas above and not just divide the County areas for convenience for the committee but to take heed of local knowledge with proven data to support this submission. Otherwise the only other alternative according to the Terms of Reference would be to use exceptional circumstances and divide the County into two 4 and two 6 seaters.

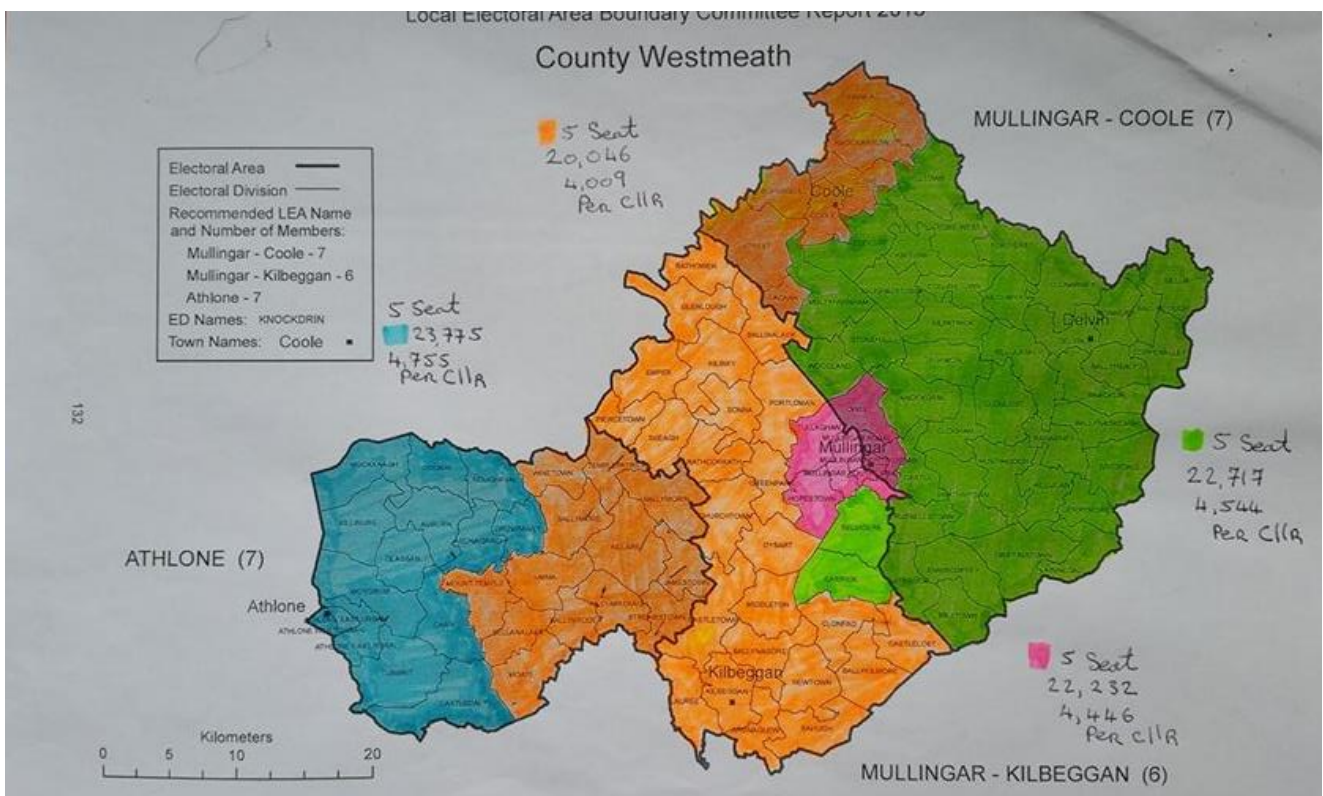
Please see Map B attached below.

Kind Regards

Cllr. Emily Wallace

Member of Westmeath County Council
Member of Mullingar Municipal District Council
Member of Planning and Transport Strategic Policy Committee
Member of Longford/Westmeath Education and Training Board

Map A:



Map B

