

Submissions for Local Electoral Area Boundary:

Nicola Lawless Cllr – Wicklow.

I would like to make a submission on the LEA boundaries and how they would play out for County Wicklow.

In my opinion, I feel we should leave the LEAs as they are and I will give reasons for this below.

1. The new LEAs only came into play back in 2014 following on from the local elections. Wicklow has 5 LEAs. We are only in our 4th year of this new process of change from town councils to municipal districts and it would be worthwhile to leave them as they are for another term.
2. I have looked closely at the 5 LEAs in Wicklow and varies different options of change while trying to keep in accordance with the published terms of reference. In Wicklow we have a population according to the 2016 census of 142,000 this means the ratio of councillor to population is **4450:1** the following is an example:

Greystones MD: Population 26,326, If we split it to the areas of Greystones, Delgany and Charlesland that gives a population of approx. 18, 140 which would make this LEA a 4-seater. This goes against the terms of reference of minimum of 5 seats. So, this means out of a six-seat area 5 in the new LEA and 1 councillor to look after the rest.

Then you have Bray 28,522 say we round it up to 30,000. Again, this is an 8-seater area, if we just take in the Bray town and from a nucleus from Corke Abbey to Hills garage near the southern cross this would then become a 7-seater and then again like Greystones living one councillor to represent the remaining areas in the LEA.

The last part of this example; if the above was to take place, and move Enniskerry, Powerscourt. Kilmacanoge, Kilcoole and Newcastle together to create a new LEA this would be a population of 13,000 making it a 2/3-seater, which would be impossible for any councillor to represent and again it goes against the terms of reference.

3. By creating new boundaries and to abide by the terms of reference Wicklow would go from a 32 seat to 38 according to my calculations. This in its self creates a financial problem more salaries to pay for extra councillors and if new LEAs are created in the county will this then require new municipal districts offices which would require more staff. Also, the budget for the county would have to be increased.
4. The geography of the divide in some of the LEAs in Wicklow if changed would be problematic for councillors in terms of trying to cover and represent the areas as best as they can. It would/ could create a lot more travel.
5. On reflection the only really area in Wicklow worth splitting would be west Wicklow due to the size of it and because it is very rural. But again, it would become two 3 seaters and this again would not fit with the terms of reference.

In conclusion in the case of County Wicklow I feel it is best to leave all 5 LEAs as they presently stand for all the above reason stated above in this submission.