



**Fine Gael Councillors Group,
Mayo County Council**

10th January 2017

Secretary, Constituency Commission,

Room 1.65 Custom House,

Dublin 1

constituency.commission@housing.gov.ie

Dear secretary,

On behalf of the Fine Gael group on Mayo County Council, I welcome this opportunity to make a submission to the Constituency Commission 2016.

This group shares the concerns expressed widely by the community of South County Mayo, and in particular the 9 District Electoral Divisions (DEDs) from Mayo that were transferred to the Dáil constituency of Galway West following the report of the 2012 Constituency Commission. From a comparison of Fine Gael tallies from both the 2011 and 2016 General Elections, it is clear that there was a drop in turn out from these 9 DEDs in the 2016 General Election, a fact attributed by people locally to the constituency re-draw. This was echoed in the canvass that was conducted in this area by Fine Gael. In this area, there is a palpable sense that the constituents living here do not feel appropriately represented by being a part of the Dáil constituency of Galway West.

As elected members of Mayo County Council, this group would like to see the entirety of County Mayo exist within a single Dáil constituency. Having regard to the constraints under which this commission is working, namely the public notice and the Electoral Act 1997, it is the preference of this group to see as much of the territory of South Mayo that was transferred to Galway West returned to the Dáil constituency of Mayo. It appears that due to population increase in Galway City,

this should be possible. Furthermore, this group would encourage the commission to be mindful of local parish boundaries in making any changes. As a result of the 2012 re-drawing of constituency boundaries some parishes in South Mayo have been divided, with one part of the parish in Mayo and the rest in Galway West. This should be avoided in any future changes.

If returning the entirety of the area transferred in 2012 back to Mayo results in a Dáil constituency too large by population to be a 4 seat constituency (as the terms under which the commission operates appears to suggest) consideration should be given to making Mayo into a 5 seat constituency. This could be achieved by adding a portion of County Sligo to the 130,425 population of Mayo. Considering that Sligo/Leitrim is currently a 4 seat Dáil constituency, that consists of 4 counties, there may be an opportunity to re-align the parts of counties Cavan and Donegal (back to the Dáil constituencies of Cavan/Monaghan and Donegal, respectively) and move a portion of the western part of County Sligo including the town of Inishcrone and its hinterland, that borders Killala Bay (of approximately 6-8000 people), Mayo could be configured as a 5 seat constituency (with a portion of Sligo that bears a strong geographic and social relationship to Ballina and North Mayo) with the remainder of Sligo and Leitrim forming a 3 seat Dáil constituency.

On behalf of my colleagues and I on Mayo County Council, I sincerely hope that your commission gives this proposal due consideration.

Mise le meas,

Cllr. Jarlath E. Munnelly

Whip, Fine Gael Group, Mayo County Council