

18.084

KERRY INDEPENDENT ALLIANCE

Clasheen,  
Killarney.

13/02/2018

A Rúnaí Uasal,

I was a Killarney Town Councillor from 1994 until its dissolution in 2014 and a member of Kerry County Council from 1983 to 1991 and from 1999 to present. I have, therefore, observed at first hand the previous system and the post 2014 one.

As you are aware under the post 2014 structure the Municipal Districts have no real executive power as they do not formulate and pass an annual Budget. They are in essence an almost exact replica of the former Area Councils who met 5 or 6 times per year to discuss matters of relevance to their own area and to make proposals for consideration and hopefully implementation by the full Council.

I wish to confine my proposals in the context of the present review of boundaries to Killarney and its situation post the 2014 dissolution. I have no wish or right to generalise from the particular that is Killarney other than to say that I believe now as I strongly believed then that the universal dissolution of Town Councils was a mistake that created a democratic deficit.

Killarney as many will know is one of Ireland's prime tourist towns and it annually generates very large revenue for central exchequer. It does so because it provides a very high standard of tourism product that appeals to large numbers. It does so also because it strives might and main to constantly enhance the visitor experience by constantly developing new and attractive facilities.

One of the core principles of the European Union is that of Subsidiarity which espouses and seeks to promote Local Democracy. The abolition of the Town Councils was most certainly a denial of that principle. The denial continues and I believe that wrong usurps the democratic rights of communities. Centralisation for its own sake is neither a virtue nor politically progressive.

Prior to the 2014 dissolution, Killarney raised considerable revenue for its own purposes, primarily through the collection of rates on commercial properties. Some of this money, quite fairly, went to the County Council through the County Demand. The rest was wisely used to progressively transform the urban area into a location worthy of being an international tourist destination.

Since the dissolution, access to revenue is from and through the County Council which is charged with treating all parts of the county with equal regard and respect. This sounds excellent in theory but there is another vital reality that should not be forgotten or side-lined.

Killarney as a tourist town gives much employment. Many of those workers reside outside of the immediate Killarney area and are, therefore, through the wages earned in Killarney, helping to maintain the vibrancy of their native places, locations that are sometimes rural and isolated. It could be said that vibrancy radiates from Killarney to the betterment of many other parts of rural areas in an already peripheral county.

Killarney, because of the high standard of hotels and guesthouses, accommodates many hundreds of visitors nightly. During daytime these visitors travel outwards to and through other towns and villages. On their travels they enrich the economic life of these locations that would otherwise be in mortal danger of terminal decline. I scarcely need to say that maintaining vibrancy along the west coast of Ireland is a major challenge. Killarney's success is helping many other places to survive.

For Killarney to continue to provide and indeed to constantly improve on its standards it is vital that it should have a fair and reasonable degree of control over the raising and utilising of its own finances. Otherwise its capacity to be the dynamic driver for the wider economy of a large part of Kerry will inevitably over time be diminished with a resultant loss to the county and to a degree to the country. Sometimes The Cake can be spread so thinly that it feeds nobody!

I am aware that there is a realisation among some national politicians that the dissolution of 2014 was too universal and too damaging. Some have even spoken of an intention to restore the previous reality. I cannot envisage that happening in the short term. But I do believe that Killarney's case is worthy of very, very serious consideration. The present situation may not be

'Killing the Goose' but it will I'm quite certain restrict Killarney's potential to constantly improve its product and enrich a wide and disparate area.

In the context of the above it is quite clear that I believe that Killarney Town Council should be re-established with powers at least equal to those that it had up to its dissolution in 2014. Worthwhile arguments could be propounded seeking further real power for the re-established entity and indeed for some other towns in somewhat similar situations of being the dynamic economic hub for wider communities. The harsh reality is that if a decline occurs in Killarney as a vibrant dynamic 'driver' for the wider communities that it enhances, then all of those communities will experience proportionately a greater economic collapse. I say this not from a standpoint of selfishness or grasping for some additional little bit of authority but out of concern for the future welfare of the entire region of South Kerry. Rural depopulation is already a cause for great concern, should it continue the area will become almost totally denuded. The stronger Killarney becomes the greater will be the benefit to many other parts of the county.

If there is a reluctance or total antipathy to restoring Killarney Town Council within its previous boundaries I wish to formally request/propose that what might approximately be described as Killarney Parish would be established as a political entity with executive function. I refer to the inclusion of the following DEDs : Coolies, Lissyvigeen and Teernaboul. Such a decision would over time have an enormous benefit for very many people.

Killarney parish is a relatively compact well- defined entity with a vibrant population and the potential to continue to grow and expand economically and therefore socially. If it is given the status of being a definitive political area with powers to generate revenue it will without doubt have an enormously beneficial impact on a very wide area, far wider than its own physical size.

It has been my privilege to have been both Chairperson and Mayor of Killarney Town Council. For visitors to the town the term Chairperson is meaningless and for some even off- putting. The term Mayor resonates hugely with American and Continental visitors and the fact of being met or hosted by the Mayor is for them an enormous honour. Americans rate their local Mayor as second only to their White House President. For us to have legislation or a Ministerial order side-lining the use of the term Mayor is an

indication of how poorly thought out the entire matter of Local Government reform/deform is. As a public representative for a tourist town I deeply resent what has been done as it has undone some of the great work to promote tourism and the local economy. Surely the primary obligation of everyone in high office is to work for the betterment not to the detriment of local communities striving might and main to enhance and develop themselves.

Guím gach rath oraibh agus súil agam go mbeidh toradh fóna ar bhúr gcuid oibre.

Commented [41]: Súil agam go

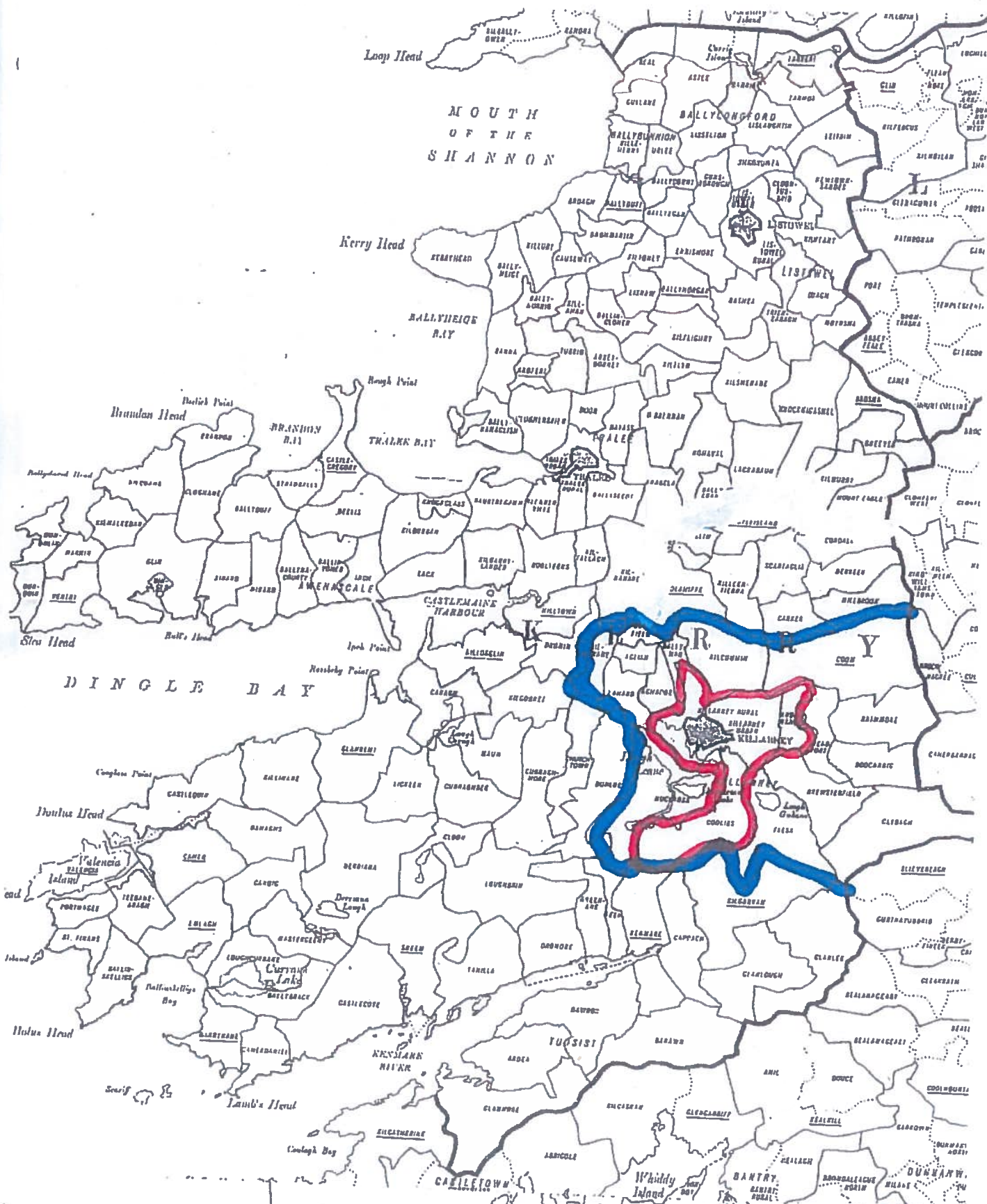
Mise, le meas.

Michael Gleeson [Cllr]

Printed copy and Maps to follow in post.

OPTION: 1

Michael Gleeson: Kerry INDEPENDENT Alliance



KILLARNEY [RED]: 4 SEATS. KILLARNEY [BLUE]: 3  
The SECTION enclosed in Red is KILLARNEY PARISH in its totality.



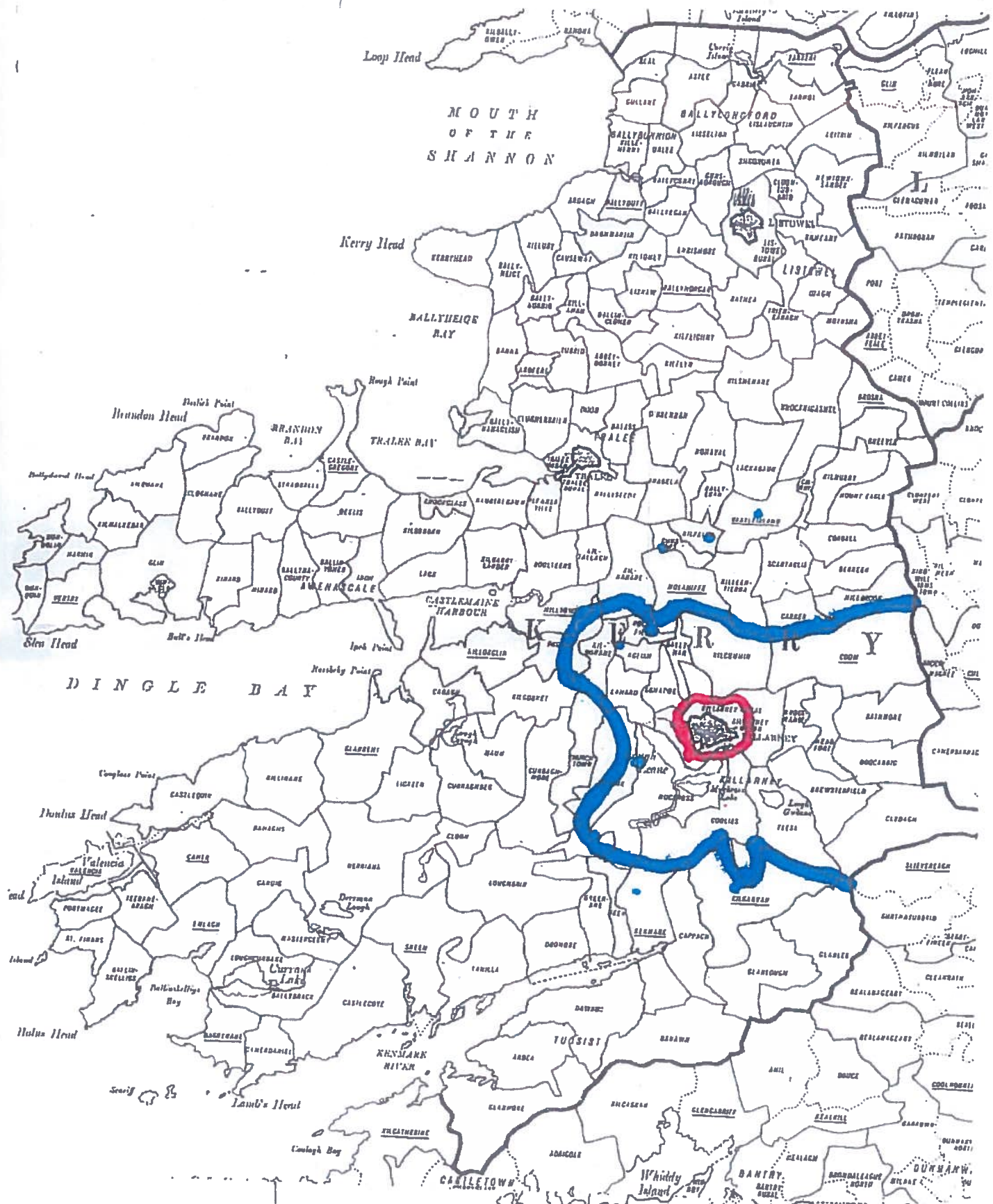
Michael G. Larson

- Lea Bowron within ND.



OPTION: 3

Michael Gerson



KILLARNEY URBAN: 4 SEATS  
[RED]

KILLARNEY "RURAL" 3 SEATS  
[BLUE]

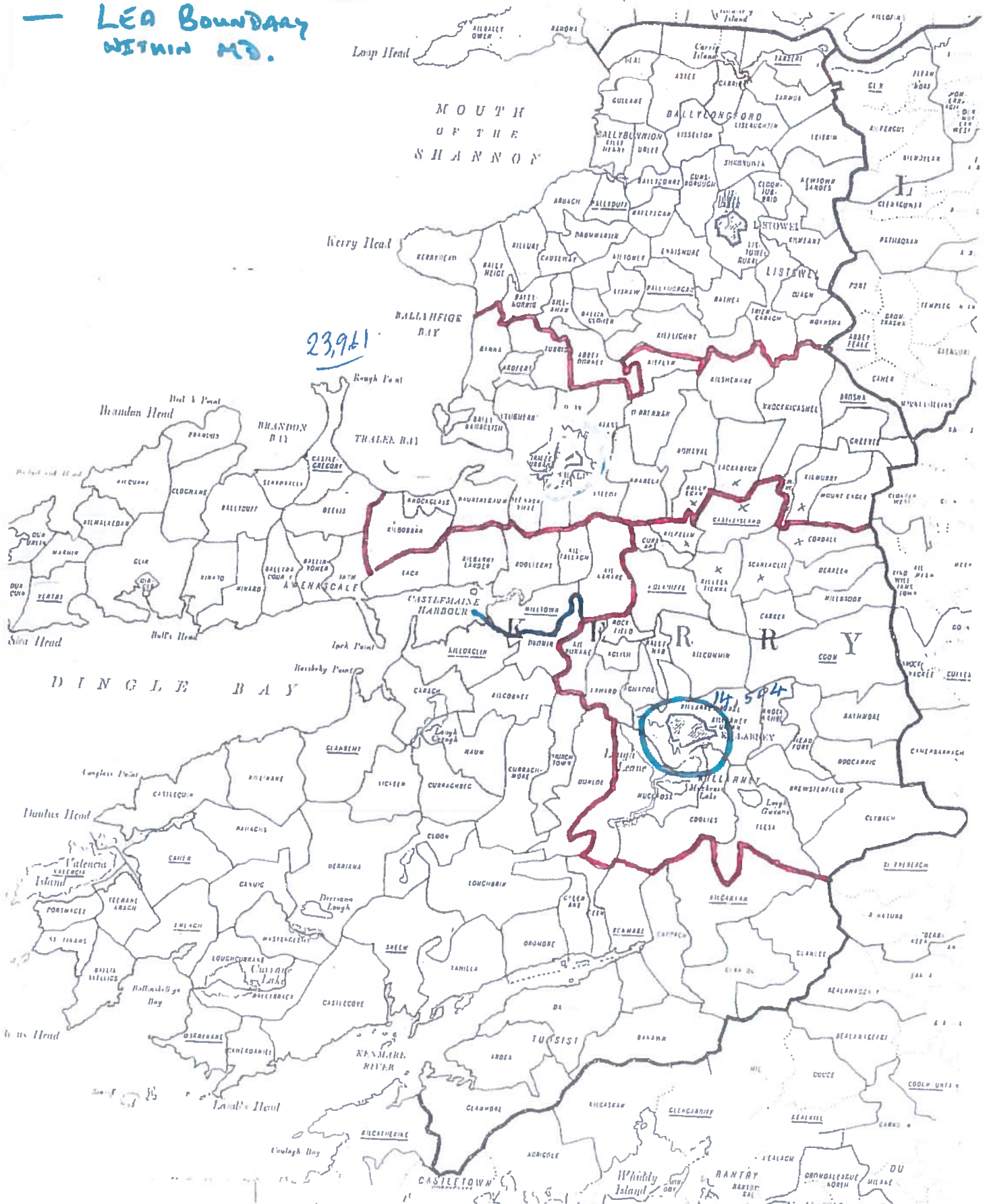


OPTION 4

Michael Gleeson

— MD Boundary.

— LEA Boundary  
WITHIN MD.



KILLARNEY "URBAN" 4  
[GREEN]

KILLARNEY/CASTLEISLAND: 4  
[RED]