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Our Ref **KBC-WBR**

You're Ref:

**The Secretariat,
Waterford Boundary Review,
C/O Kilkenny County Council,
County Hall,
John St.
Kilkenny,
R95 A39T**

**Submission by Kilkenny Business Club,
Regarding Proposed
Waterford Boundary Review**

Dear Sir/ Madame,

On behalf of Kilkenny Business Club, we wish to formally submit our observations related to the current boundary review related to the possible extension of Waterford into south Kilkenny.

Kilkenny Business Club was set up to promote and help develop the commercial opportunities in Kilkenny City and County and their environs. It is constituted of a broad range of business interests in County Kilkenny and surrounding counties. Its member companies employ circa. 1200 staff directly in the south east. We act as a lobby group on matters affecting our membership's interests and also to offer a local contact to facilitate direct foreign investment to the region.

The topic of the possible extension of Waterford into south Kilkenny, was discussed at our most recent board meeting and following the broad concerns raised by the membership, it was voted that we should record our concerns and objections to the current proposals.

The following are the primary areas of concern.

1. Social and Community issues.

The proposal to effectively annexe communities from south Kilkenny into Waterford, without the democratic input of the communities' involved, seems contradictory to proper electoral governance and harks back to a darker period in this country's history. We believe that the overwhelming if not total population of the area, for very valid reasons of established community identity and ties, vociferously oppose the current proposal. We believe that this is matched by a lack of support for the proposal by the residents of Waterford.

This point has been made eloquently in the submissions of other community groups, and while it should not as such be the concern of a business group such as ours, we would feel that it would be remiss for us to ignore the significant and very real cross community tensions that this proposal would nurture, and the real crises of identity that it would create.

We strongly believe that this would create tensions and difficulties for businesses working in both jurisdictions as many of our membership do.



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2. Extent of area proposed :

Our group broadly support the context of Ferrybank and its environs being planned and developed in a more cohesive fashion with Waterford City than heretofore.

It is to the advantage of all parties that Ferrybank grows in tandem with Waterford, as outlined in the current Kilkenny County Development Plan which positions Ferrybank as the second urban growth area in the county after Kilkenny City.

It is hard to reconcile this reasonable objective, with the proposed annexation of 2800 hectares, roughly equivalent to 1.6 times the current area of Waterford City. The ambition of this plan would propose the possible tripling of Waterford's urban population if developed to current recommended density patterns. This is not justified or in any way evidenced by any population projections for this century.

It is an artificial and contrived boundary singly designed to take the rates base of Belleview port into Waterford's control and the expense of the community's interests, and any rational of proper planning and development control. We would strongly suggest that in the absence of the port facility the proposed revised boundary would be less ambitious.

3. Impact on rates and viability of scale for Kilkenny County

This proposal will remove circa 20% of Kilkenny rates base to the benefit of Waterford. There is no considered proposal as to how this inordinate damage to the structures and operations of Kilkenny County Council will affect existing services, and employment.

Ultimately commercial rates levied in the county are likely to rise as a direct result

4. Waterford's record of lack of support for the development of North Quays / Ferrybank and its environs.

Waterford City Council has jurisdiction over the North Quays and the original core of Ferrybank. This is the crucial urban centre of Waterford City and hugely important to both the city's visual presentation and its commercial viability.

Despite this recognised critical role, all proposals for the development of this crucial site and the development of commercial infrastructure in the environs of Ferrybank have been vociferously opposed by the incumbent Waterford business community.

This is evidenced by the series of planning objections and challenges to all significant development proposals on the North Quays, which ultimately caused such delays that the projects failed and the opportunity was lost.

It is a critically damaging to Waterford that the lack of development of the North Quays has created an urban blight in the city.

It is unfortunate that the elected officials of Waterford City Council and its administrative staff have aided and supported its rate payer's anti-development position rather than supporting proposals for the development of Waterford City in its wider context.

With this lack of support for development proposals within their current boundary on the crucial North Quays, it is difficult to envisage a change of tactics by the established business community of Waterford to assist development in the proposed extended area at the expense of their established hinterland.

5. Special area of Development Control

In the context of the concerns set out above, we believe that the proposed boundary extension will not aid the development of Waterford city, but further hinder the city's development and the regions advancement.

We fully recognise that development of a cohesive development strategy for the development of Waterford city to better include the North Quays is critically important.

But will this be best achieved by allowing a constituency that sees its development as a direct threat to their own commercial viability achieve any meaningful results- particularly with a disaffected and reluctant incumbent population.

We would recommend that a special area of development control be established with associated National Government support and legislation to aid the development of the North Quays. This would work in tandem with but separate from both local authorities similar to the successful model of the Dublin Docklands Authority.

This would see the meaningful advancement of this critical areas development, advance Waterford as the South East main urban centre, but avoid the protracted social division of a change in County boundary primarily driven by Waterford's ambition to obtain a valuable revenue generator.

We are available to meet and discuss the matters raised if this is of any assistance to your deliberations.

Yours Sincerely.



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