



KILMACOW SPORTS COMPLEX

Dun Romain,
Dangan,
Kilmacow,
Co. Kilkenny
06/01/2015

The Secretariat,
Waterford Boundary Review,
Kilkenny County Council,
County Hall,
John Street,
Kilkenny

**Re: "Review of the administrative boundary between Waterford City and County
Council and Kilkenny County Council"**

Dear Sir,

On behalf of Kilmacow Sports Complex I write to outline our concerns regarding the above. Like my fellow committee members, I was astonished and saddened that such a proposal could be contemplated or even considered by any Public Authority in Ireland.

At the outset I must point out that we are a community group of local volunteers. It is our mission to manage and promote the local amenity known as Kilmacow Sports Complex on behalf of the wider local community. While Kilmacow Village and our facility is outside the area of the review above, we are acutely aware of the hurt, upset, and disappointment that this review has already caused to our near neighbours and friends who reside within the scope of it. Like our committee they are at a loss to understand why a boundary extension would be imposed on them.

We welcome the opportunity to make a submission to the review process and as a community group made up of local volunteers we would stress that the proposal to extend the administrative boundary of Waterford City and County Council into the designated area of south Kilkenny is without merit, unnecessary, and inconsiderate. If allowed to progress, the proposed extension would set to nought, the planning endeavours and cooperation of both authorities and both communities for many years. We would outline the following and ask the review group to reject the proposed extension.

Committee Members : Charlie Gaule, Owen Sheehan, Ger. Duggan, Barry Twoomey , Paul O'Hanlon, Mike Dolan, Martin Cashin, Richard Moore, David Williams, James O'Neill, James Aylward.

a) Sense of Place and Sense of Community

People everywhere have a place and neighbourhood they call home. It is their own distinct and definitive space. It is the place they identify with, it is a community into which they have integrated and assimilated and it is the place where they have invested their lives and resources.

Together with their neighbours and friends the people of South Kilkenny have built communities throughout the area covered by the proposed boundary extension. It is only natural that they identify with their locality and community of South Kilkenny. It is part of who they are. It is their home, their refuge, and their identity in this corner of the Island.

If it were to progress this boundary extension would see our friends and neighbours alienated in an extended Waterford City Borough. Within this enlarged and contrived new entity their heritage and tradition will have little sway. Within this same contrived entity their sense of place, sense of community and culture will be undermined.

b) Failed Approach to Planning and Management.

People locally accept and understand that the demography and topography of the shared boundary area holds many challenges for both public authorities. The policies and objectives needed to address these challenges into the future can only succeed with full public support. Extending the boundary will alienate and antagonise one section of the shared community that exists here. It is a failed and divisive approach to the management and further development of the area.

c) Missed Opportunity

Both local Authorities have an opportunity and responsibility to put in place a cohesive and holistic set of structures to properly plan and manage the future growth of the South East region for all its people. The communities of the region deserve and expect their public bodies to cooperate and progress their objectives and policies for the region in an innovative, creative and imaginative manner. Extending the administrative boundary is nothing more than the re-introduction of a failed policy from the past.

d) Set a Precedent

If this boundary proposal were allowed to progress it would set a precedent for more divisive extensions of administrative boundaries throughout the country. If the proposal is advanced it would establish a reference for this very short sighted approach to the administration of shared boundaries. The option to change the administrative boundary, if successful would be against the will of the people. It would be a change for which they were not consulted and a change for which they did not give their consent. This would have serious consequences for local democracy.

e) Erosion of Trust

The peoples trust in and confidence in Public Bodies and Public Representatives has taken a battering since the recession in 2009. Local people have the right to expect that their wishes, and identity are respected by the neighbouring local authority. Public bodies and representatives must not only be accountable to the communities they serve but they should also lead the way and set the highest standards for cooperation and social inclusion in all the policies, proposals and objectives they bring forward. In bringing forward this proposal, scant regard and respect is being afforded to the residents of south Kilkenny.

f) Planning and Development Act 2000 and Terms of Reference

Part 11 Chapter 1 in section 10 (2), (d) stipulates concerning Local Development Plans refers:

“The integration of the planning and sustainable development of the area with the social, community and cultural requirements of the area and its population”

Should this proposed boundary extension succeed, we would ask how any future local development plan drawn up by Waterford City Council for this part of County Kilkenny could ever be reconciled with the policy and objective above. The cultural requirements of the area and its population is that they remain part of County Kilkenny.

In its consideration of this proposal we note that the Waterford Boundary Committee has been asked to take full cognisance of government policy in relation to local government. In point 6 of its terms of reference they are asked to take full account of government policy as set out in the ***“Action Programme for Effective Local Government, Putting People First”*** We would again ask how the objective of “Putting People First” could ever be reconciled with this proposal.

Furthermore in section 6 (f) of its terms of reference the Waterford Boundary Committee is asked ***“to have regard to the identity and cohesion of local communities.”*** We would ask how this objective in the terms of reference is to be met. In its deliberations on this matter we would ask the Committee to put the people first and have due regard for their wish to live in their community in County Kilkenny.

If this proposal is allowed to progress the objectives and policies for the proper and sustainable planning as set out in the Planning and Development Act 2000 will not be met.

g) Future Sustainability and Future Implications for Kilkenny County.

It has long been recognised that the Waterford City Environs which lie within County Kilkenny have a role to play in Waterford achieving its potential as a Gateway Town into the future. This fact is documented and reflected in the planning objectives and policies of the Kilkenny County Development Plan and in Regional Planning Guidelines. These same Regional Planning Guidelines foresee Waterford achieving its true potential as a strategic hub in the overall context of a thriving and prosperous South East Region.

The acquisition of a further 6000 acres of land from South Kilkenny by Waterford City Council is not a prerequisite to the proper development of Waterford City. On the contrary if this proposal were to succeed it would have a de-stabilising effect on the whole of the South East Region. Waterford’s true potential will only be realised with the full collaboration and cooperation of the surrounding Local Authorities. There is a shared interest here and the interests of Waterford City would be better served by the nurturing and development of a partnership approach.

Furthermore it is not in Waterford’s best interest that it pursues policies and objectives that would negatively impact on the well-being and prosperity of its neighbouring Public Authorities in the South East Region. In this context we would highlight the following:

- I. Kilkenny County Council has made significant investment in the south Kilkenny Area in recent years. Should this proposal succeed the planned for benefits and return from such

investment will not now be recouped? Kilkenny County Council and the people of the whole county are entitled to reap the reward of their investments.

- II. There will be a significant loss of rates, planning contributions and income from other charges to Kilkenny County Council. The resulting deterioration and shrinking to its income base would impede and stagnate the proper and orderly development of the County into the future.
- III. A boundary extension of Waterford City and County into county Kilkenny would see parishes split and lead to the division of existing sporting catchments.
- IV. The people of South Kilkenny within the designated area have invested their time and skills in the improvement and development of their communities. Their active participation in the life of their communities, their selfless dedication, and volunteering spirit within those communities must not go unrewarded. They have put up the "Social Capital" and their voice and their view on the proposed boundary must be the primary consideration.

The proposal to extend the boundary is divisive, contentious and unwarranted. It is proposing the division of an existing and long established community in South Kilkenny. Its impact on residents and the community cannot be overstated and we would ask the Review Committee to have due regard for the strong ties and genuine affiliation of the local people with County Kilkenny.

This proposal lacks vision and is insensitive. It is unfair to the people of South Kilkenny and its Local Authority. Such an unfairness would irrevocably damage the sense of partnership and cooperation that currently exists between both Local Authorities. If allowed to progress it would initiate a new sequence of challenges and problems which would impact negatively on the working of both Public Authorities into the future.

The proposal to extend the boundary is in fact a policy of last resort. It is a failed policy from the past. Proper planning for this area will require a sensitive and innovative approach. The people of Kilkenny and Waterford deserve no less. The best outcome in the planning and management of the shared boundary will only be achieved when both Local Authorities cooperate and collaborate to maximise the potential for both counties.

.....*Owen Sheehan*.....

Owen Sheehan

Kilmacow Sports Complex.

