

To: Waterford Boundary Committee, c/o The Secretariat, Waterford Boundary Review, City Hall, Waterford City and County Council, Waterford, X91 PK15.

Dear Sirs,

I would like to express my strong opposition to any proposal to alter the existing boundary between Waterford City and County and Kilkenny County. I do so for the following reasons:

- 1 I am very proud of my identity as a Kilkenny person. Part of that identity is the heritage and culture associated with that part of south Kilkenny which is under consideration by the committee. This is something that I do not wish to lose. This proposal will take away that sense of belonging to County Kilkenny which all of us living in the area feel strongly about. I am strongly opposed to that part of South Kilkenny moving into a different County and Province.
- 2 Kilkenny County Council has made significant investment in the South Kilkenny area over recent years which has brought considerable benefits for development of Waterford City and Ferrybank/Belview area. These include:
 - The construction of the N29 which facilitated port development and the provision of the Belview Water Supply scheme as an extension of the Mooncoin Regional scheme serving the industrial port area and south Kilkenny generally. Development of well fields as part of the scheme will cater for future water needs.
 - Development of a new library and meeting rooms and local Kilkenny County Council Area Office at Abbeylands which has provided essential community facilities locally and is a good example of effective and convenient local government.
 - Kilkenny was the lead authority in delivering the M9 motorway from Powerstown in Carlow to Granagh Waterford which has benefited Waterford City and the Region generally.
- 3 There have been many examples of cooperation between Kilkenny County Council and Waterford City Council and other agencies in the delivery of essential infrastructure for the greater Waterford area. Kilkenny County Council provided the site for the Wastewater Treatment Plant located at Gorteens in county Kilkenny and the Waterford City bypass, which is partly located within county Kilkenny, but where Waterford City Council was the lead authority. These developments were developed by WCC or in partnership with Kilkenny County Council and other agencies such as the IDA and the Port of Waterford. These are clear examples of cooperation that is working and brings effective and convenient local government, through cooperation for the benefit to both South Kilkenny and Waterford City.
- 4 There will be huge financial implications for all of Kilkenny. There will be a significant loss of rates, planning contributions and other fees and charges to County Kilkenny. This will impact not only on people living in South Kilkenny but also in the rest of the county including impacting on the commercial vitality and viability of Kilkenny City.
5. In terms of financial support and investment, Kilkenny is entitled to reap rewards for the significant investment it has made in Belview, the real benefits only coming to pass now as we come out of recession. Financial support was provided from Kilkenny for Waterford Airport over the years when the airport was in serious difficulty. Kilkenny County Council is also currently leading development of the Greenway from Waterford to New Ross and they will be the main beneficiaries.
- 6 Any proposal to alter the boundary will split religious parishes and sporting catchments such as the GAA. People will not only move counties but will also move provinces as a result of a boundary alteration. This will greatly impact on the viability of sporting clubs and organisations in the area. A boundary extension of Waterford city & county into county Kilkenny would mean that part of the Diocese of Ossory would be in Munster instead of Kilkenny.
- 7 This proposal will greatly damage the spirit of cooperation that needs to exist if Waterford is to prosper as a 'Gateway' city for the entire South East Region. In essence this proposal is a negation of the concept of the 'gateway / hub' strategy as it is against the vision of Gateway development set out in National Spatial Strategy the Regional Planning Guidelines.
- 8 Kilkenny is classed a medium sized county in terms of area and population. Within the ED's of Kilculliheen and Rathpartick there is approximately 6000 people at present and there is sufficient land

zoned within the current County Development Plan for the targeted expansion of the area. In the longer term there is potential for 12,000 additional people within the current local plan area. Thus Kilkenny will potentially suffer the loss of a significant amount of land and of population if there is a boundary alteration which will as a consequence result in a significant financial loss now and into the future.

- 9 The financial loss to the revenues of County Kilkenny as a result of the loss of this population and economic base will greatly impact on the provision of services and infrastructure in the South Kilkenny area. For example, the monies received from the Department of the Environment for road surfacing and maintenance will be reduced from the potential amount given the projected decrease in population. The road network in Kilkenny will thus be starved of funding vital to the sense of safety and well being of local people.
- 10 The interests of Waterford City would be better served by developing this relationship on a partnership basis. There is shared interest in each other's progress.
- 11 There has been on-going collaboration between the two councils since 2004 in relation to Community Development within the Ferrybank area. The Ferrybank Development Project was a co-ordinated attempt to respond to identified needs with a particular emphasis on social inclusion. The project involved co-operation between Waterford Area Partnership, Waterford City Council, Kilkenny County Council, Department of Social and Family Affairs, Health Service Executive, FÁS(Solas), Kilkenny VEC, BNS Rural Development, Foróige, Waterford Regional Youth Services, Ferrybank Childcare Committee and Ferrybank Community Development Group.
This is another good example of cooperation delivering for the local community.
- 12 There are Regional bodies set up to progress the development of the South East in a coordinated and cooperative manner. These bodies allow for progress to be made while at the same time respecting existing boundaries and the sense of identity of the peoples living within those boundaries. Examples include the Southern Regional Assembly, South East Tourism and South East Regional Drugs Task Force, Southern Waste management Plan, South East River Basin Management Plan and the Three Sisters 2020 capital of culture bid.

At a time when the region is trying to unite with the Three Sisters bid for the Capital of Culture and trying to bring communities on that journey, the current proposal will prove divisive instead of uniting, and may impact on the regions capacity to deliver the project if it is successful in its bid.

Kilkenny County Council since the publication of its first County Development in 1969 has specifically addressed the planning and development of the area north of the River Suir. As development of Waterford progressed there has been a history of co operation on strategic issues which has included development planning. The process has evolved since the first development plan in 1969 through documents such as the The Waterford Environs Principles Study and Structure Plan 1974 (joint report), The Waterford City and Environs (Rodger Evans Plan) 1999, the Waterford Planning and Land Use Transportation Study 2004, the Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022.

The Strategic importance of Waterford City and Belview port at National Regional and Local level has been recognised in these documents over the years. Kilkenny County Council has through these documents forged the strategic importance of Waterford as Gateway and Belview as an economic driver for the area and the region.

- 14 I consider that a boundary review is unwarranted and unnecessary given the current level of co operation between the local authorities and the potential for future co-operation in the delivery of services and growth and employment in the area and the region generally. Kilkenny County Council is fully competent to provide all the necessary services in the South Kilkenny Area in an efficient manner and to cooperate with Waterford in developing the City as a Gateway. I am strongly opposed to that part of South Kilkenny moving into a different County and Province.

Yours sincerely,

Name

Michael Grace

Address

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Co. Kilkenny.*