

NPF Submissions,  
Forward Planning Section,  
Department of Housing, Planning,  
Community and Local Government,  
Custom House,  
Dublin D01 W6X0

**Name: Robbie Grace**

**Details of any organisation, community group or company you represent:**

REA Grace - Estate Agents

**Address:**

**Green Street, Callan, Co. Kilkenny.**

**Submission on relevant planning issues:**

I wish to express my strong views in relation to the proposed boundary changes to the South of the County between Kilkenny and Waterford which I am totally opposed to.

As a business owner in Kilkenny I recognise that a strong and vibrant Waterford City is a vital component for the South East Region to achieve its full potential economically. If the region flourishes then the effects will be felt across the entire business community.

However I object to a change in the boundary and feel that the region can operate successfully through a mandated cooperation model. The way forward can be achieved through;

- The preparation of a Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy to coordinate across local authorities.
- Implementation programmes developed on a cross-local authority basis within the Regional Assembly structure.
- Strengthened legislative Cooperation on planning.

The adverse implications for Kilkenny City and County, in circumstances where this boundary extension for Waterford is approved, are considerable.

The Boundary Committee found that, if there was a boundary change, there were no savings in day to day operations of the local authorities, so it makes no sense to have a boundary change if the above mandated co-operation model is established.

The loss of rates and property tax will reduce the income of Kilkenny County Council and its ability to maintain and improve services. Lack of financial resources will undoubtedly have an adverse effect on the rural road network, hindering the progress of business and the rural farming industry. Investment in capital projects will be reduced placing further challenges to the local economy generally most particularly small businesses and start ups. The Boundary Committee have failed in their terms of reference to address such issues.

The loss of Ferrybank will reduce the population and financial base of the South of the County, both of which are key ingredients to the critical mass required to attract future industry into the County. Ferrybank is a primary strategic development area which has seen much investment from Kilkenny County Council and has been a further source of income to the county through development contributions, rates, property tax etc. The loss of the urban area of the south of the county will result in a sprawling rural and aging population placing a further financial burden on council resources.

Rates, for comparative businesses, in both counties are not comparative. Waterford rates are considerably higher. This added financial pressure for businesses in the affected area may well be the catalyst that sees their demise especially in relation to small business.

Politically this boundary change will result in the loss of two local councillors in the South of County Kilkenny and a consequent requirement for a further electoral boundary review across the entirety of County Kilkenny. Such a scenario is woefully inefficient particularly given the fact that it is only since 2014 that the existing electoral arrangements have come into place together with the associated economic and community development plans that the business community of County Kilkenny have helped to develop.

I reject the Boundary Committee recommendations and instead the mandated co-operation model, which I have set out above, should be established.

**Signed:**  \_\_\_\_\_ **Date: 10/03/2017**