



KILKENNY PPN

Public Participation Network

Community • Social Inclusion • Environment

Giving The Public A Voice In Local Authority Matters

To: NPF Submissions,
Forward Planning Section,
DHPCLG,
Custom House
Dublin D01 W6X0

Minister,

The PPN was established in Kilkenny in 2015 in line with the Government reform Act 2014. As a network we have been growing consistently with 240 member groups with good spread across the County. Should this boundary extension of Waterford be enacted then we believe it will have detrimental effects on the workings of the PPN as a whole. The PPN is the main link through which the Local Authority engages with the community.

The Municipal District of Piltown in the South of the County is a well represented district with 75 groups registered. There are 11 registered groups in the area of proposed Boundary change with active PPN participation. Should the proposed boundary extension go ahead these members will be lost to the Kilkenny PPN and result in a change in dynamic for the whole of the PPN district. Not only will the Municipal District of Piltown be disrupted but all four districts will need to be re structured as a result of the population loss of the Ferrybank area. Yet again this will disrupt the dynamics of the PPN structure County wide.

The loss of the urban area of ferrybank with a predominantly young population will result in a rural and aging population in the South resulting in the under representation of views of the younger generation on issues of interest or concern. The socio economic status of Kilkenny does make it difficult to access resources for young people and other groups as most of the resources are now being targeted



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towards centres of population and information from Pobal maps. We fear is that those living rurally will be further isolated and marginalised simply because they live in less populated areas.

The Local Economic & Community Plan for County Kilkenny includes the area of proposed change. Will this mean a new plan will have to be drafted at both considerable cost and delay in progress to the rest of the County?

Politically this boundary change will result in the loss of two local councillors in the South of the county resulting in underrepresentation and lobbying power for communities in the South.

From the perspective of communities the obvious loss of financial resources available to Kilkenny County Council will reduce and impact upon services not only provided by the council but by community groups that rely on grant aid from the local authority to function.

Larger capital grants that facilitate the improvements to community facilities thus improving services may also face cuts, to the detriment of many local community services. This Minister is not the message the Government gave in the programme for a Partnership Government. Where will Kilkenny fit into the 'revitalisation of rural Ireland' plan?

Ferrybank has the largest secondary school the Abbey College in the South of the County which is the feeder school for the rural towns and villages of South Kilkenny. Should this school end up in Waterford then it will undoubtedly become another City school for the children of Waterford. Where will the rural Kilkenny Children go to school? Do you propose to build a new secondary school in the South of the County



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to accommodate these children? Or will the cost of transport to schools in other parts of the county be borne by families and the extended travel time to school borne by children.

Identity is another key issue that you must consider before a decision is taken on this issue. Minister you identified in your summary speech on the National Development Plan 2040 that 'the thing that sets Irish people apart is our sense of belonging to community and place and our unique artistic and cultural inheritance', Inheritance being the acquisition of a possession, condition or trait from a past generation. That sense of belonging and pride you refer to is something that Kilkenny families have been passing on from generation to generation. Should these same families now be denied their sense of belonging to the community and place they have inherited? This proposed change will not only change the county that people identify with but the province, changing the geographical history of generations of Kilkenny people.

As the collective representative body of hundreds of Community Groups in Kilkenny we urge you to consider less destructive measures to resolve the development issues faced by Waterford. We propose that you introduce legislative changes that will facilitate cooperation between counties that foster growth and build relationships without having to force boundary changes. Other counties reviewed in this process have arrived at solutions for cooperation and so can Kilkenny and Waterford. An excellent example of cross County cooperation between Kilkenny, Waterford & Wexford and the enthusiasm generated, can be seen particularly within the cultural sector, in relation to the Three Sisters submission for European Cultural Capital. It would be a great shame to squander this shared social capital between the people of these counties with a divisive proposal which will be regarded as the plundering of the territory of one county by another.



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Submitted on Behalf of the Kilkenny PPN for Consideration

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PPN Development Officer

On behalf of the Secretariat of the Kilkenny PPN