Kilkenny County Council Submission to Waterford Boundary Committee
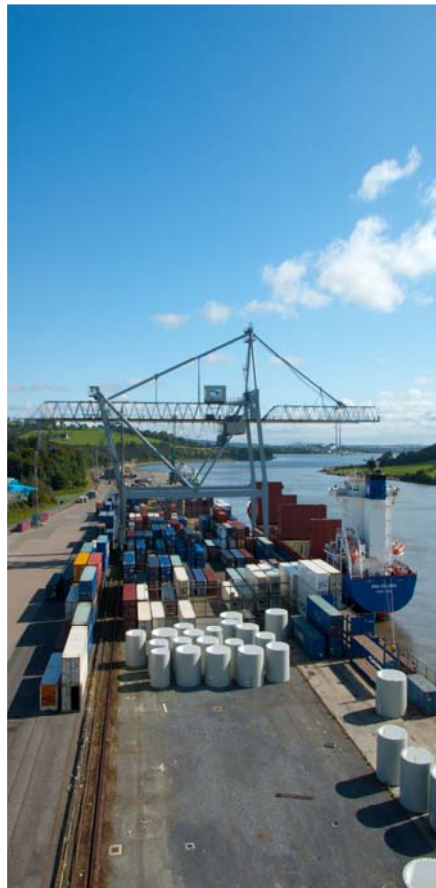
22nd January 2016

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Executive Summary

I.   Legislative Background

In June 2015, under Section 28 of the Local Government Reform Act, 1991, the Minister for Environment, Community and Local Government established the Waterford Boundary Committee (the Committee).

In accordance with Sections 32 and 33 of the Local Government Reform Act, 1991 the Committee is required to carry out a review of the boundary between the City and County of Waterford and County Kilkenny. The Committee has specified an Area of Interest for the review which covers an area of 7000 acres and a population of 6,500.

II.   Kilkenny County Council's Summary Submission Overview

Kilkenny County Council is strongly of the view that there should be no change to the existing County Boundary for the following reasons:

(i)   A boundary change will significantly damage the economic development prospects of County Kilkenny and adversely affect the role of Kilkenny City as an effective Hub within the   Region.

- Loss of primary strategic development area.
- Not financially sustainable for Kilkenny County Council.
- Detrimental to economic growth of County Kilkenny.
- Incapacitates Kilkenny City to fulfil the role of Hub.

(ii)   A boundary change will damage the culture and identity of County Kilkenny.

- Area is steeped in the social, cultural and heritage fabric of County Kilkenny.
- In excess of 18,000 submissions objecting to any change to existing boundaries.
- Boundary change will <u>not</u> have regard to the identity and cohesion of local communities.

(iii)   A boundary change will increase the cost of public services in County Kilkenny.

- Loss of Local Property Tax, Commercial Rates and Development Contributions.
- Increase the cost of local authority services in County Kilkenny.
- Increase in Local Property Tax Rates and Commercial Rates.
- Will <u>not</u> facilitate delivery of efficient and good value local authority services.

(iv) A boundary change will damage co-operation in the Region.

- South East Action Plan for Jobs Strategy 2015:
  - does not reference a need for any boundary changes.
  - emphasises the need for existing counties to work better together.

(v) There has been no public demand for a boundary change, there is little or no support for a boundary change and there is considerable resistance to any change.

- No pre-consultation.
- No public calls for a boundary review.
- Public outcry in County Kilkenny opposing any change to county boundaries.
- Not an issue for Elected Representatives prior to June 2015 announcement.

(vi) The level of compensation for a boundary change is not affordable to Waterford City and County Council and will result in increased subvention.

- Preliminary estimate of the value of lost income to Kilkenny County Council is €110,000,000 (€0.110 billion).
- Provision of this level of compensation will present significant challenges to Waterford City and County Council.
- Will result in an ongoing additional cost to Central Government.

(vii) A boundary change is inconsistent with Government Policy.

- Putting People First recognises established citizen allegiance and established county-wide identities.
- Unbalancing and redrawing of recently established Municipal District Areas.
- Negates advancements to date under the local government reform agenda.

(viii) The Terms of Reference are concerned with considerations for local government in Waterford only, at the expense of effective and convenient local government for County Kilkenny.

- Terms of Reference only focus on the need to ensure effective and convenient local government for Waterford.

III.   Kilkenny County Council's Summary Submission

III. (i) A boundary change will significantly damage the economic development prospects of County Kilkenny and adversely affect the role of Kilkenny City as an effective Hub within the Region.

There are two key areas identified for significant economic development in County Kilkenny, namely Belview Industrial Zone and Kilkenny City.

These two key areas provide for distinctive development, industry and employment needs. Each area is critical to Kilkenny County Council's capacity to;

- deliver efficient and convenient local / regional development
- enable Kilkenny City to fulfil its role as a Hub under the National Spatial Strategy and Regional Planning Guidelines
- generate funds to advance required infrastructure projects throughout County Kilkenny

A preliminary estimate of the value of lost income to Kilkenny County Council is €110,000,000 (€0.110 billion).

Kilkenny County Council is engaged in the proactive development of the Belview Industrial Zone and has an in depth knowledge of the Port, the Belview Area and its development potential. The Council had the foresight to plan and develop the area as a strategic zone to generate and support the wider development of the entire County. Along with the strategic sites in Kilkenny City, the Belview Port Industrial Zone provides the foundation for the future economic development prospects of the County.

Kilkenny County Council has planned for, including the financing, of the critical infrastructure projects identified for future development based on retaining both these areas.

The biggest investor (€180 million) in the Belview Industrial Zone to date is Glanbia PLC, a company that is synonymous with County Kilkenny with its global headquarters in Kilkenny City.

The ICT in Agriculture Strategy, a joint strategy between Kilkenny County Council & WIT, while focused on Kilkenny City, offers synergies with agri-based industries in the Belview Industrial Zone. These activities are mutually exclusive but complimentary.

The Terms of Reference specify that the Committee must *'take full account of the need to ensure that the arrangements recommended are financially sustainable and will not result in an ongoing additional cost to Central Government through increased subvention*.'

The financial implications associated with the potential loss of lands within the Area of Interest are not sustainable for Kilkenny County Council and are detrimental to Kilkenny County Council's capacity to deliver economic growth and, in turn, to Kilkenny City's capacity to act as an effective Hub.

The transfer of such a strategic asset as the Belview Industrial Zone to Waterford would represent a major disincentive for Local Authorities to invest in infrastructure in areas which may in the future be arbitrarily transferred to other counties.

> "Today marks a key milestone in the promotion and development of the South East Region and IDA's Strategic Land bank at Belview. The development of this Belview Strategic Water Supply Scheme better enables IDA to compete on a global scale for capital intensive advanced manufacturing projects for the Belview site. As demonstrated with this scheme, IDA will work with all other stakeholders in the Irish system to ensure that Ireland and the South East Region provides a uniquely attractive environment in which multinational companies can succeed and grow".
> Barry O'Leary, CEO of IDA, speaking at the opening of the Belview Strategic Water Supply Scheme in February 2012.

> "Kilkenny County Council had the foresight in partnership with the IDA to establish Belview as an outstanding location for a Food & Infant Formula facility.
> The approach to planning approval, while challenging within planning guidelines & regulations, was both proactive & efficient."
> Jim Bergin, CEO and Executive Director, Glanbia Ingredients Ireland Ltd.

III. (ii) A boundary change will damage the culture and identity of County Kilkenny.

The Terms of Reference specify that, in carrying out the Review, the Committee must *"take full account of the need to have regard to the identity and cohesion of local communities"*.

County Kilkenny and its people have a unique and clear social, cultural and sporting identity.

The Area of Interest includes an area of 7000 acres and a population of 6500 and is as important as any other area of County Kilkenny in shaping the unique social, cultural and sporting identity that County Kilkenny retains.

A boundary change will undermine the structure and social fabric of County Kilkenny. It will change the County identity. It will change the provincial identity. A boundary change will seriously damage the social, cultural and sporting identity of County Kilkenny.

In excess of 18,000 submissions have been made during the consultation process for this boundary review. The overwhelming concern of the citizens of County Kilkenny with this boundary review is the adverse impact it will have on the identity and cohesion of local communities individually and County Kilkenny collectively.

Families, couples and individuals who live in the Area of Interest do so by choice and, in so doing, have entered the social fabric of County Kilkenny. Should a boundary change proceed the people of Kilkenny will not have been afforded the same choice.

If one is to have regard to the identity and cohesion of local communities there will be no alteration to County Boundaries.

III. (iii) A boundary change will increase the cost of public services in County Kilkenny.

The Terms of Reference specify that the Committee must *'take full account of the need to ensure that the arrangements recommended are financially sustainable and will not result in an ongoing additional cost to Central Government through increased subvention.'*

The Area of Interest includes the second largest centre of population in County Kilkenny and one of the two strategic development areas in the County.

Commercial rates and property tax from the Area of Interest, collected annually, contribute significantly to the provision, by Kilkenny County Council, of county-wide local authority services including Roads, Fire & Emergency Services, Libraries, Housing Maintenance, Parks and Open Spaces.

A change in boundary will reduce the income base of Kilkenny County Council to provide the services it currently provides. Given the importance of the Area of Interest to the financial income of the Council year on year, a change in boundary will either result in;

a)   reduced services to the balance of the county
b)   an increase in the cost of services so as to retain current service levels

III. (iv) A boundary change will damage co-operation in the Region.

The Terms of Reference require the Committee to *'take full account of any weaknesses in current local authority arrangements or operations that need to be addressed.'*

The South East Action Plan for Jobs Strategy, launched by the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation in November 2015, identifies 197 actions, none of which relate to any requirement for changes to County Boundaries.

On foot of the Minister's announcement the South East Action Plan for Jobs Implementation Committee was established, consisting of all the key stakeholders in the Region, in particular eminent private sector business owners. The Committee is consolidating the 197 actions into six key objectives and will oversee the implementation of the Jobs Strategy. In turn the South East local authorities are funding a Director of Services to report to the Committee on the implementation of the Plan.

None of the six key objectives relate to any need for boundary changes.

Rather, the Action Plan notes that *'developing scale at European level is increasingly important and counties need to work together to operate as an effective and cohesive region, so as to promote the South East as an internationally attractive location of scale and as a City Region.'*

A prerequisite therefore to successful regional development is the capacity of local authorities to work together to operate as an effective region.

The Action Plan for Jobs highlights the need for *'a cohesive overall identity and brand offering for the south east region is developed. This should incorporate a clear set of messages that can*

differentiate and position the south east as a distinctive and innovative region. This will require the full commitment and co-operation of all stakeholders in the region. In particular the 5 local authorities that will be expected to provide the necessary leadership to drive a unified branding initiative.'

The launch of the South East Action Plan for Jobs Strategy post dates the establishment of the Boundary Committee by six months. Yet there is no objective in the Action Plan calling for a change in County Boundaries. Rather the objectives focus on the need for the creation of a cohesive brand for the South East, stimulation of economic activity and job creation. In turn the delivery focus is based on co-operation, co-ordination and cohesiveness.

Effective co-operation, collaboration, co-ordination and cohesiveness are already evident in the delivery of a range of projects by way of Shared Services, Lead Authority, Section 85 Agreements, land exchanges. Such projects include;

- European Capital of Culture
- N25 Waterford City By-Pass
- Waterford City Wastewater Treatment Plant
- Regional Director of Services to drive the implementation of the Action Plan for Jobs

Changes to County Boundaries are divisive and serve to pitch one community against another.

Such changes are contrary to the principles of co-operation, co-ordination and cohesiveness.

Referring to the Terms of Reference, the weaknesses in current local authority arrangements will not be addressed by a boundary change. Rather, existing weaknesses will be addressed by more cohesiveness, cooperation and a greater Regional focus. Discussions on boundary changes are detracting from this focus.

III. (v) There has been no public demand for a boundary change, there is little or no support for a boundary change and there is considerable resistance to any change.

In the period leading up to the establishment of the Waterford Boundary Committee there were no public calls for such a Committee to be established. There was no consultation in the formative stage of the current process nor was there any consultation in respect of the identification of the Area of Interest. Furthermore there was no reasoning for the proposal and/or the Area of Interest prior to the publication of the Terms of Reference. The absence of any such consultation and reasoning is, in the view of Kilkenny County Council, contrary to the requirements of the Public Participation Directive (Directive 2003/35/EC).

There have been instances of proposed public policy that, following preliminary soundings and/or feedback, have been reconsidered in the face of public opinion. Kilkenny County Council considers that this is one such issue.

III. (vi) The level of compensation for a boundary change is not affordable to Waterford City and County Council and will result in increased subvention.

The Terms of Reference specify that the Committee must *'take full account of the need to ensure that the arrangements recommended are financially sustainable and will not result in an ongoing additional cost to Central Government through increased subvention.'*
The preliminary estimate of the level of compensation required in relation to the Area of Interest is €110,000,000 (€0.110 billion).

This level of compensation is unsustainable for Waterford City and County Council when considered in the context of that Council's current financial position.

Therefore it is inevitable that a recommendation for a boundary change is not financially sustainable and will result in an ongoing additional cost to Central Government contrary to the Terms of Reference.

III. (vii) A boundary change is inconsistent with Government Policy.

The Terms of Reference require the Committee to *'take full account of Government Policy in relation to local government as set out in the Action Programme for Effective Local Government, Putting People First.'*

Additionally the Committee are required to take full account of *'representational implications.'*
Putting People First, by its very title, provides that, if the views of the citizens of County Kilkenny are heard, there will be no boundary change.

Putting People First recognises (S7.1.3) that;

- *'....there is an established citizen allegiance to the county....'* (S7.1.3)
- *"Some strengthening of city/county structures is desirable and consolidation of city and county structures will be pursued where it is considered that this would strengthen local government ... while respecting established county-wide identities..."* (S7.1.4)

Putting People First recognises established citizen allegiance and established county-wide identities. A recommendation for a revision to the Kilkenny/Waterford Boundary is therefore at variance with Government Policy at this point in time.

Reforms, required on foot of stated Government Policy, have been implemented further to provisions of the Local Government Reform Act, 2014, including;

- changes to electoral and representational arrangements,
- establishment of Municipal District Committees,
- enhanced local government roles in the promotion of local community, social and economic development.

These new reforms, together with the Plans to underpin them, are now embedding. A change in Boundary will negate the advancements to date under the local government reform agenda. In particular, in consideration of the Area of Interest, a change in Boundary will;

- Disrupt the recently established balance of representation and population.
- Provide a requirement for follow on reviews and revisions to other, recently established, Municipal Districts.
- Require a complete re-consideration of Local Economic and Community Development Plans, County Development Plans etc.

A boundary change is at variance with current Government policy and will contribute to ineffective and unaccountable democratic representation contrary to the commitments in Putting People First.

III.(viii) The Terms of Reference are concerned with considerations for local government in Waterford only, at the expense of effective and convenient local government for County Kilkenny.

The Committee is to make *'such recommendations with respect to that boundary and any consequential recommendations in respect of the Metropolitan District of Waterford that it considers to be necessary in the interests of effective and convenient local government'*.

Furthermore the Committee is required to *'take full account of the need to ensure effective local government for Waterford.'*

Effective and convenient local government is also a key consideration for the people of County Kilkenny and for Kilkenny County Council. The Terms of Reference provided to the Committee make no provision for the Committee to consider same.

As such it could be argued that the Terms of Reference do not take full account of the issues arising from the Review or, in the extreme, it could be argued that the Terms of Reference are flawed and biased.

Kilkenny County Council absolutely accepts the bona fides and independence of the Committee established by the Minister to review and report on the boundary between County Kilkenny and County Waterford.

However, the Council is concerned with respect to the press statement (dated 19th June, 2015) that accompanied the establishment of the Committee in which the Minister appeared to infer the outcome anticipated from the review process;

"Bringing all of a town or metropolitan district within a single local authority area eliminates anomalies and distortions of divided administration, service provision, regulatory/enforcement responsibility and electoral representation, including problems such as competitive policies and practices between authorities in relation to planning, rating and charges, which can impact negatively on town centres. Consolidation of administrative responsibility can also strengthen the economic performance of the town or metropolitan district, both by eliminating the anomalies I have referred to and ensuring that there is a single authority working on its behalf."

IV.   Signed Statement of Council & Oireachtas Members
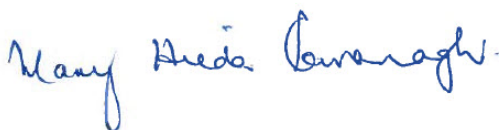
KILKENNY – WATERFORD BOUNDARY REVIEW

We, the Elected Representatives for County Kilkenny, support the development of County Kilkenny, Waterford City and the South East Region. The successful development of the South East Region is facilitated by effective working relationships, co-ordination and partnership. Changes to County Boundaries are divisive and are not required to ensure that the South East Region develops to its full potential. Accordingly we, the TDs and Elected Members for County Kilkenny, will not support any proposal to alter the County Boundary between Kilkenny and Waterford.

John Paul Phelan TD	Cllr. Ger Frisby	
John McGuinness TD	Cllr. Peter Cleere	
Ann Phelan TD	Cllr. Michael Doyle	
Bobby Aylward TD	Cllr. Patrick O' Neill	
Senator Pat O' Neill	Cllr. Breda Gardner	
Cllr. Pat Dunphy	Cllr. Fidelis Doherty	
Cllr. Eamon Aylward	Cllr. Tomas Breathnach	
Cllr. Melissa O' Neill	Cllr. David Kennedy	
Cllr. Mary Hilda Cavanagh	Cllr. Matt Doran	
Cllr. Pat Fitzpatrick	Cllr. Joe Malone	
Cllr. Pat Millea	Cllr. Malcolm Noonan	
Cllr. John Brennan	Cllr. Patrick McKee	
Cllr. Michael McCarthy	Cllr. David Fitzgerald	
Cllr. Kathleen Funchion	Cllr. Maurice Shortall	
Cllr. Andrew McGuinness		

Executive Summary Key Points

- Boundary changes had not been the subject of any public discourse prior to the establishment of the Waterford Boundary Committee.

- There was no consultation with the affected communities in advance of establishing the Committee. Following its establishment there are now in excess of 18,000 submissions demanding that there be no change to county or provincial boundaries.

- Local citizens, businesses, voluntary organisations and sporting clubs do not want any change in Boundary.

- Local Oireachtas Members and Elected Members are unanimously opposed to any change in Boundary.

- A boundary revision is not financially sustainable and will require Exchequer subsidies. The preliminary estimate of the value of lost income to Kilkenny County Council is €110 million.

- The transfer of such a strategic asset as the Belview Industrial Zone to Waterford would represent a major disincentive for Local Authorities to invest in infrastructure in areas which may in the future be arbitrarily transferred to other counties.

- A boundary change will cause an increase in the cost of public services in County Kilkenny and militates against effective and convenient local government.

- The Area of Interest is synonymous with the social and cultural heritage of County Kilkenny and of Leinster.

- There are no significant anomalies or distortions that justify a boundary change. Any issues which exist reflect issues that arise with any boundary line irrespective of its location.

- Weaknesses in administration in the South East relate to a lack of cohesiveness and the absence of an identifiable regional brand. Cooperation, coordination and cohesiveness are the solution to this weakness.

- A boundary revision detracts from the key issues of developing the economic potential and improving efficiencies.

- A boundary change will reduce County Kilkenny's population below the critical mass of 100,000 needed to develop as a County.

- The natural boundary line between the Counties is the River Suir.

Cllr. Mary Hilda Kavanagh,
Cathaoirleach.

Colette Byrne,
Chief Executive.

1   Introduction

On the 19th June 2015 the Minister of the Environment, Community and Local Government established the Waterford Boundary Review Committee under Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1991. The Committee is required to carry out a review of the boundary between the City and County of Waterford and County Kilkenny and to make recommendations with respect to that boundary and any consequential recommendations with respect to the area of the Metropolitan District of Waterford that it considers to be necessary in the interests of effective and convenient local government. The interests of effective and convenient local government in the Kilkenny administrative area must also be considered and preserved in any recommendations made by the committee as part of this process.

Kilkenny County Council welcomes the opportunity to prepare and present this submission to the Waterford Boundary Review Committee. The stated task of the committee is to assemble the widest possible amount and range of information related to the issue to best inform its recommendations and to gather the views across the spectrum of society upon whom any change in the administrative arrangements for the provision of local authority services may have an impact.

This submission reflects the views of the elected members, democratically elected to represent the people of Kilkenny, the officials, and the wider community representing a broad section of the communities and society upon whom the proposed boundary review and consequent administrative changes would have the largest impact. This submission builds upon the information already supplied to the Boundary Review Committee, see Appendix 1.

1.1   The Terms of Reference

The Boundary Committee has a huge responsibility to consult, consider and report, within a very short timeframe, on a matter that has not been debated, sought or explored fully by any of the parties affected by it prior to the commencement of this process.

The Waterford Boundary Committee is to make *"such recommendations in respect to that boundary and any consequential recommendations in respect of the Metropolitan District of Waterford that it considers to be necessary in the interests of effective and convenient local government"[1].*

The Boundary Committee is required to "*take full account of the need to ensure effective local government for Waterford*." **This submission also requires that the Committee take full account of the need to ensure effective local government for Kilkenny.** The published terms of reference require the Committee to consider the boundary and any consequential recommendations in respect of the Metropolitan District of Waterford only, to the exclusion of other affected areas and groups. Equality requires that every effort is made to ensure that individuals or groups of individuals are treated fairly and equally and no less favourably, specific to their needs, rights or opportunities. Promoting equality should remove discrimination in all areas. In this case the needs, rights and opportunities of the people of the affected area and the people of County Kilkenny must be considered on the same basis as those of the Metropolitan District of Waterford in the interests of equality and fairness.

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[1] **Waterford Boundary Committee Terms of Reference**

In carrying out its review and formulating its recommendations, the terms of reference require the Committee to address and have regard to the following matters in particular;

- Current demographic, spatial and socio-economic factors
- Relevant local authority structures, services, finances, operations and other matters
- Government policy in relation to local government as set out in *Action Programme for Effective Local Government, Putting People First*,
- The need to maximise efficiency and value for money
- Financial sustainability independent of central Government subvention
- Effective and efficient local government, economic performance, effective democratic representation
- Identity and cohesion in local communities
- Weaknesses in current local authority arrangements

Kilkenny County Council accepts the bone-fides and independence of the boundary committee but has a concern that the Minister clearly indicated the outcome he expects in his press statement announcing the establishment of the statutory committees (on 19 June 2015) when he stated: *"Bringing all of a town or metropolitan district within a single local authority area eliminates anomalies and distortions of divided administration, service provision, regulatory/enforcement responsibility and electoral representation, including problems such as competitive policies and practices between authorities in relation to planning, rating and charges, which can impact negatively on town centres. Consolidation of administrative responsibility can also strengthen the economic performance of the town or metropolitan district, both by eliminating the anomalies I have referred to and ensuring that there is a single authority working on its behalf."*

The Terms of Reference for this review are in favour of Waterford and its interests, at the expense of Kilkenny.

This submission sets out the observations of the Council on all of the matters in the terms of reference, addressing the terms of reference of the Committee and the standard framework for evaluation for local authority boundary reviews by outlining the potential impacts of the proposed boundary as advertised for public consultation.

1.2   Public Consultation

It is noted that there was no consultation at local level prior to the announcement of the review either with the democratically elected Council or with the residents (of the county or of the area of interest). The public consultation held around the proposed boundary review is considered to be inadequate by Kilkenny County Council and does not conform to the European Directive 2003/35/EC on public participation.

This matter was not debated locally or considered widely in any context or forum prior to the commencement of this consultation. The number of submissions opposing the proposal (in excess of 18,000) is significant and the realisation of the potential impacts of the proposal are only now beginning to be understood by affected parties.

Kilkenny County Council, reflecting the views of the communities, requires that the Committee, not alone have regard to the submissions received during the relatively short consultation period but also exercise their right to hold an oral hearing to hear at first-hand the passion and emotion of the ordinary people who would be affected by any boundary change.

The best practice by the Review Committee in Galway is worth noting[2]. The Committee, having received the submissions, prepared a factual paper on the issues which was disseminated for further consultation. This would be in keeping with the most recent best practice on the preparation of the County Development Plans.

1.3 Area of Interest

The area of interest stretches across southern Co. Kilkenny from the M9 in the west to the River Barrow in the east, see Figure 1.1. A detailed analysis of the social and demographic profile of County Kilkenny, and the area of interest, is included in Appendix 2 and Appendix 3 respectively.

Figure 1.1: Area of interest
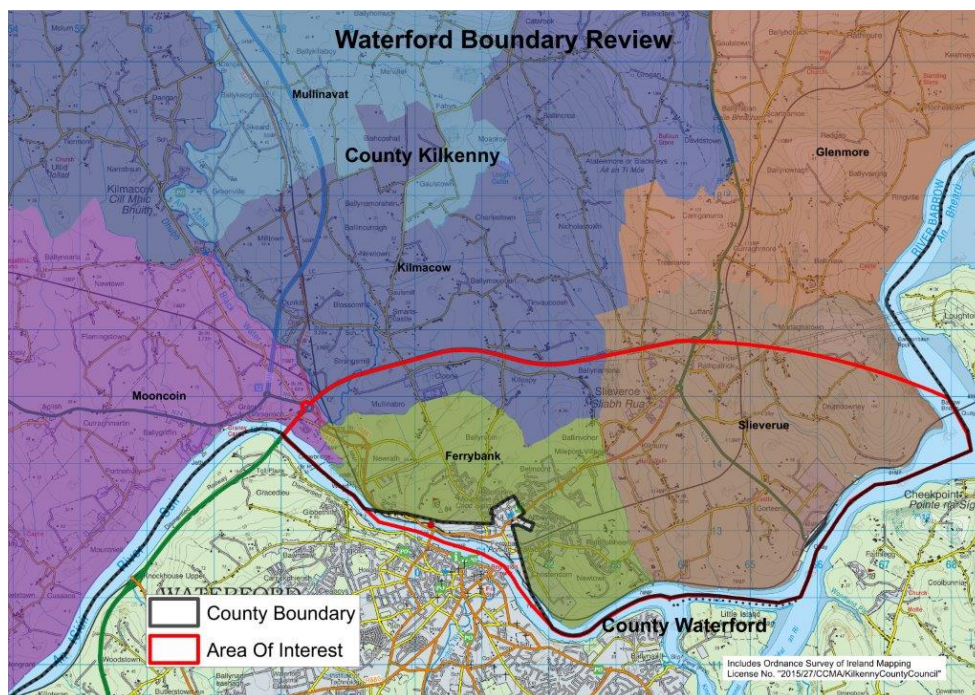
1.4 SEA and AA

The proposed boundary change may have the potential to result in significant environmental effects, including those in relation to European Sites, if unmitigated. This stage of the boundary review process is the stage at which the environmental effects of the changes (including in-combination effects and effects in relation to European Sites) can be most effectively assessed.

Changes to the boundaries will result in the need for changes to be made to multiple land use plans – and possibly other sectoral plans. Consequently – as per Directive 2001/42/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2001 on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment - the process should be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), or at the very least SEA Screening, in order to rule out potential significant environmental effects.

In addition, the output of the process should be subject to Appropriate Assessment (AA) screening and where necessary subsequent stages of AA, as per Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora.

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[2] The Galway Local Government Review Committee Report August 2015.

1.5   Recent History of Boundary Reviews

Waterford City has had a number of boundary enlargements over the last 150 years.

1.5.1   The 1980 Petition

The most recent boundary extension into Waterford County to be granted to Waterford Corporation (now Waterford City and County Council) was in 1980. The request for a boundary extension was presented to the Minister for Local Government in the 1979 *'Corporation of Waterford Petition for Boundary Extension'* (the Petition). The Petition requested an extension of the boundary into areas administered by both Kilkenny and Waterford County Councils as follows:

- Kilkenny County - 1,564ha
- Waterford County - 2,394ha

The Petition was considered by the Minister for Local Government. Kilkenny County Council objected to the principle and detail of the proposed extension into its administrative area for the following reasons:

- The removal of the area would upset the balance of the population of County Kilkenny;
- The area will become a major industrial node and therefore the exclusion of the area would influence the employment profile of the County;
- The Environs of Waterford represents the second largest urban area in County Kilkenny. The removal of the area would involve a major rethink of the development intentions which Kilkenny County Council considered would be to the detriment of the County as a whole and the south of the County in particular;
- The loss of an urban area would affect the competitiveness of County Kilkenny to attract industry; and
- There was a range of interwoven political, social and historical factors that, whilst emotive, have major significance for the people of Kilkenny.

The proposed extension into County Kilkenny did not proceed.

1.5.2   The 1992 Petition

In 1992 Waterford Corporation reassessed the need for a boundary extension north of the River Suir into south Kilkenny. The petition failed to define the area for an extension and the petition itself was never formally pursued by Waterford due to other pressing local government issues at the time[3].

1.5.3   The 2005 Petition

In 2005 Waterford City Council (WCC) made an application under Part V of the Local Government Act 1991 to alter the boundary of Waterford City.

Kilkenny County Council made a statement of response to WCC on the 2nd December 2005 rejecting the proposal. The following reasons were put forward by Kilkenny County Council for rejecting the proposal:

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[3] Proposal for City Boundary Extension by Waterford City Council 2005

- It was not needed to provide development capacity in the City,
- It ran contrary to the current regional, national and international best practice approaches to planning and development which are based on inter-authority co- operation, not boundary changes,
- It did not make financial sense,
- It demonstrated absolutely no vision or practical benefits for the people and businesses in the area,
- It was based primarily on the City's financial interests, not on its potential contribution to developing the area in particular, or the South-East region as a whole.
- It would alter the community, cultural and sporting identity of the area and the County, and
- It would not provide for "convenient and effective local government".

Waterford City Council did not proceed with the application to the Minister due to the need to focus on   other priorities.[4]

1.5.4   Summary

The last three petitions for a boundary extension did not find merit in the extension of the boundary of Waterford City on either efficiency, economic or representational grounds. There is no evidence to establish that such a boundary extension would be any more beneficial or necessary to the area now than it was then. Taking into account changes in local government service delivery structures, improvements in infrastructure, SLAs, lead authority arrangements, Office of Government Procurement, and the stated challenges facing the wider area, it can be argued that the case is actually less justified.

Waterford City Council's 2005 submission places much emphasis on the need for Waterford to have 'control' of the area. For Waterford to fulfil its role as the Gateway it must, like all good leaders, be able to lead and influence without control of the area.

It is of note that a Planning and Land Use Study (PLUTS) was formally adopted in May 2004 by Kilkenny County Council, Waterford City Council and Waterford County Council. This committed the relevant local authorities to:

1. agree a joint implementation and monitoring structure to facilitate efficient cooperation and co-ordination,
2. ensure that all relevant agencies and major stakeholders commit to the PLUTS,
3. co-ordination across a range of capital projects as well as in management,
4. provide staff, technical and financial resources for rapid implementation of projects demonstrating the vitality of the PLUTS and the plan process.

It is the view of Kilkenny County Council that the initiation of a boundary application in June of 2005 was fundamentally against the principles adopted under the PLUTS. The preparation of the PLUTS was led by Waterford City Council as the Gateway for the Region.

1.6   The Boundary Review in the National Context

In recent years a number of significant national policy developments have been introduced which affect the traditional functions of local government arrangements, and provide a context for the deliberations of the boundary committee.

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[4] Letter from Waterford City Manager to Kilkenny County Council

These include *The Report of the Local Government Efficiency Review Group (2010)*, which identified areas for expenditure savings including through the sharing and in some cases full merging of staff complements between local authorities. Also, the *Report of the Steering Group for the Alignment of Local Government and Local Development*[5] seeks to enhance the role of local authorities in local and community development.

The most influential and relevant policy development occurred in October 2012, when the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government published *Putting People First: An Action Plan for Effective Local Government*. The Action Plan covers functions, structures, funding, operational arrangements, governance, the role of the executive and the elected council, and engagement with local communities. **A Guide to Putting People First, current Government policy, states that "*The identity of each County will be maintained*"[6].**

In addition to these reports and programmes for reform, local government has been affected by a number of public service wide developments.

The main rationale for these reports and programmes was to provide for more efficient and effective local government, and the associated reform agenda has resulted in significant changes to the functions and role of local authorities in the delivery and cost of services. Shared services have become more prominent. For example:

- Laois County Council is providing shared payroll and superannuation services for all local authorities.
- Kerry County Council is the lead authority for the Local Authority National Procurement Office.
- The consolidation of controls for the internal movement of hazardous waste is managed by Dublin City Council on a national basis.
- Offaly County Council is the designated lead authority in charge of waste collection permitting for local authorities.
- Tipperary and Kilkenny County Councils are the lead local authorities for the National Water Framework Directive.

Some service provision elements carried out by local government have been transferred to national agencies such as:

- responsibilities for waste management, and waste management planning (EPA)
- responsibility for water services (Irish Water)[7]
- student grant applications (SUSI)
- driver license issue and renewal (NDLS)
- provision and maintenance of the national roads network (NRA in the 1990's)
- collection of Local Property Tax

Local authorities no longer have responsibility for the provision of any door to door services.

Recognising this changed environment, a vision for local authorities was set out in *Putting People First* within the confines of the existing county boundaries and recommending that a "**more positive

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[5] Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, *Report of the Steering Group for the Alignment of Local Government and Local Development* 2012
[6] *A Guide to Putting People First, Action Programme for Effective Local Government* p11
[7] Services are provided by local authorities under service level agreements reached with Irish Water

approach will be taken to address current weaknesses and anomalies such as town/county duplication, inconsistencies, boundary issues and mismatch between functions and resources. Towns and their hinterlands will form a comprehensive sub-county system, corresponding more closely to municipal arrangements that apply in many European countries"[8] **.**

There has been significant additional reform in Waterford as a result of the merger of Waterford City Council and Waterford County Council. While the issue of the boundary between County Kilkenny and County Waterford was not included in the terms of reference of the Review Group, it is nevertheless notable that the issue was not raised and included in their list of recommendations.

Putting People First", recognises that: "... there is an established citizen allegiance to the county.[9].." and that "Some strengthening of city/county structures is desirable and consolidation of city and county structures will be pursued where it is considered that this would strengthen local government ... while respecting established county-wide identities[10]".

While the policy document indicates that in some case a more prudent long-term approach may be to consider boundary adjustment, it implies this should be as the exception rather than the rule, and in any event does not apply in the case of Waterofrd City: *"In Cork, an alternative option would be available in the form of boundary adjustment to define an appropriate metropolitan area incorporating allowance for a suitable future development horizon. This is feasible in Cork because of the scale of the county in contrast with the position in Limerick and Waterford"[11].*

> "Our Politicians and those who negotiate for us, whoever they are, would do well to listen to the sportsmen. Head for where the ball is going, not where it's been."
> Economist David McWilliams

It is the view of Kilkenny County Council that there has been detailed analysis, focus and review on local government reforms at national, regional and local level in the past five years and the issue of boundary review in this area has not been raised. *Putting People First* was the biggest reform programme for Local Government since the foundation of the State. The current pre-occupation with boundary and territorial considerations detracts from the real opportunity that exists, under the adopted PLUTS, to provide for more effective local government; and to develop and promote the area under the adopted PLUTS strategy with practical arrangements for optimising services.

1.7   Impact on Political Representation

The population of the county is estimated at 100,721[12]. In line with the criteria set out in the *Local Electoral Area Boundary Committee Report 2013* this would result in a reduction in 2 councillors in the Piltown Municipal District of Kilkenny County Council, currently made up of six councillors. In effect such a change would result in a requirement to reconfigure the Municipal Districts of Kilkenny County Council due to the Piltown Municipal District dropping from 6 to 4 members.

For Waterford Metropolitan District the same criteria would require an increase of one councillor. The representation of the people of the affected area, both urban and rural, would be transferred to a lesser number of representatives within a larger and more diverse area extending from Waterford

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[8] *Putting People First* pvii
[9] Ibid p76
[10] Ibid p76
[11] Ibid p86
[12] The 2015 figure is obtained by disaggregating the RPG figures and applying the same growth rates to the 2011 Census figure

City to Tramore, Dunmore East and Faithlegge. The area and its communities, particularly the rural parts such as Slieverue, Rathpatrick and Dunkitt, would be marginalised by its small representation within this group competing for resources, including the developing neighbourhoods of Gracedieu and Carrickphierish.

This does not represent improved or effective representation for the people of the affected area and is not in keeping with the principles of *Putting People First,* essentially disenfranchising the residents of the affected area both urban and rural.

Figure 1.2: Waterford Metropolitan area
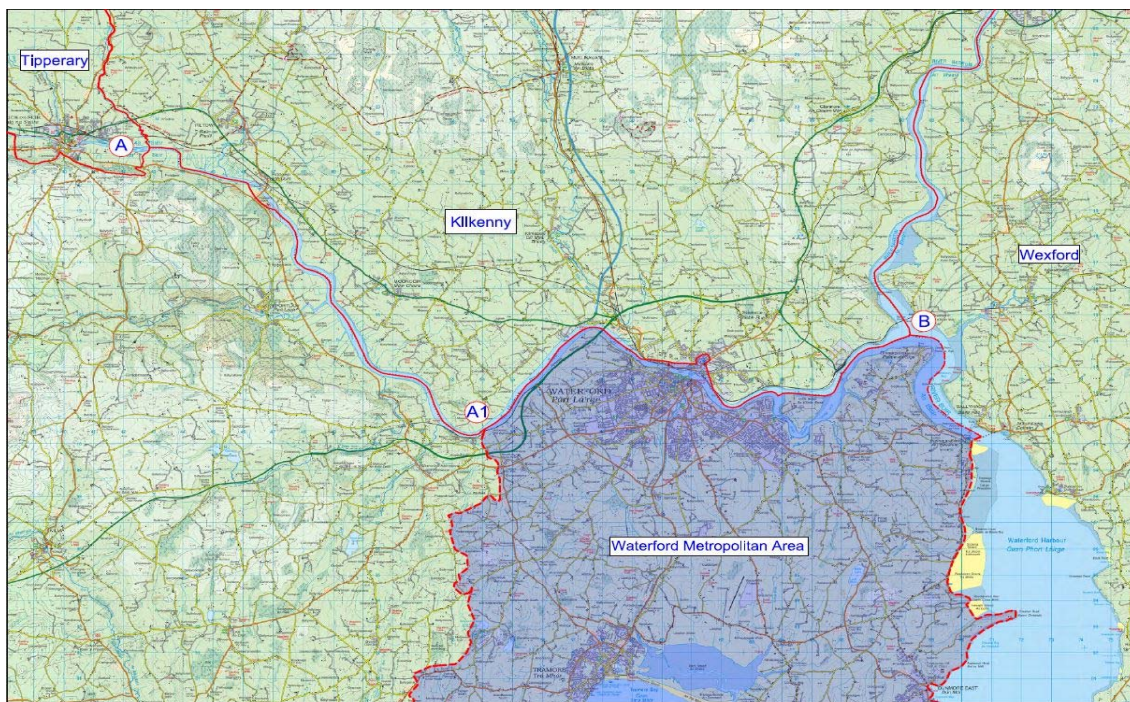
The population disenfranchised from Kilkenny will find themselves in electoral areas to which they will never have common cause or allegiance e.g. Tramore (Waterford City west).   Such an outcome is not considered to be in the interests of effective and convenient local government.

> *"Local democracy is democracy at work and no amount of potential administrative efficiency, could make up for the loss of active participation by capable, public spirited people[1]*

1.8   Kilkenny County Council's Position
In summary the position of Kilkenny County Council in relation to the boundary review is that:

- It was unexpected given that the current Government has ruled out county boundary alterations under *Putting People First, Action Programme for Effective Local Government*.
- An oral hearing is required.
- It is an unnecessary and unwarranted distraction from the critical issues facing Waterford, Kilkenny and the South East Region.
- The proposal as made is inequitable and contrary to the spirit of Government Policy as outlined in *Putting People First.*
- It will not provide for more convenient and effective local government.

- It will have a significant negative effect on the identity and cohesion of local communities.
- It would reduce the population of Kilkenny County below the 100,000 figure necessary critical mass to ensure Kilkenny can maximise its part as a Hub in supporting the Waterford Gateway and the South East Region in line with Government policy.
- It would undermine the income, revenue base and financial stability of Kilkenny County Council, especially in terms of commercial rates, development contributions (for future development) and the local property tax.
- It would be divisive and detrimental to a process for more effective collaboration and cooperation to deliver a cohesive South East region of 500,000 people in particular in relation to:
  - Growing the regional economy.
  - Regenerating the urban core of Waterford.
  - Preparing and delivering of a joint retail planning strategy.
  - Preparing and implementing PLUTS II 2020-2040.
  - Championing sustainable urbanism.
  - Developing skills and attracting talent.
  - Establishing a Technical University for the South East.
  - Implementation of the Water Framework Directive.
  - Winning the European Capital of Culture 2020 bid for the Three sisters.
  - Supporting the work of the **Implementation Committee for the South East Action Plan for Jobs** established Nov 2015.
  - Tackling the issue of flooding, which knows no boundaries.
- It is totally unnecessary and unwarranted.
- The 'practical' housekeeping issues can be addressed by use of Service Level Agreements/Lead Authority/ Section 85 agreements, all of which are regularly used in the sector.
- No united voice for the south East Regional Economic and Social Strategy in the preparation of the National Planning Framework and

The critical issue for the entire Region is the positioning and performance of Waterford as the Gateway city supported by the Hubs of Kilkenny and Wexford to enable the entire region to fully realise its potential within the national framework for recovery. A negative impact on any of these constituent parts will militate against the overall ability of the region to realise that potential.

Kilkenny County Council is a positive organisation, a regional player and opposes any boundary change knowing the significant negative impacts this will have on the county and the region.

This submission has been endorsed unanimously by the elected members of Kilkenny County Council and by the Oireachtas members of County Kilkenny (see Appendix 4, signed statement of Council & Oireachtas members).

Chapter 1 Key Points

- The Terms of Reference for this review are biased in favour of Waterford and its interests, at the expense of Kilkenny. Government policy references co-operation, collaboration and coordination and balanced regional growth.
- Any alteration to a county boundary is inconsistent with the current Government's policy in *Putting People First*, which confirms County Boundaries will be respected.
- The process is in contravention of the **European Directive** 2003/35/EC on **public participation** and an oral hearing is required.
- A boundary alteration for Kilkenny residents which results in a change of county and province for residents will leave them disenfranchised, having to compete for resources within a much larger Metropolitan area and a local authority area that spans from Waterford bridge to Youghal Bridge.
- A boundary change will result in representational disparity and impact on the democratic system.
- A boundary change will be divisive and detrimental to co-operation, collaboration and coordination within the Region, making it more difficult to deliver a cohesive region and reverse the Region's well documented underperformance.
- The sense of loss to Kilkenny from a boundary change will result in poor relationships between authorities, poor shared service delivery and minimise the potential for achieving further savings on service provision.
- Having considered all of the issues Kilkenny County Council is firmly of the view that a boundary alteration is **not** in the interests of Kilkenny or Waterford and the citizens of the area and will have a negative impact on service delivery and community development.

2   Impact of a Boundary Revision on Critical Mass & Strategic Development.

2.1   Strategic Capacity

Critical mass relates to the size and concentration of population that enables a range of services and facilities to be supported. In the South-East Region critical mass is achieved through Waterford performing as a "gateway", supported by Kilkenny and Wexford as "hubs."

Kilkenny County Council acknowledges the role of Waterford City as the gateway to the South East, and its status in the National Spatial Strategy, the Regional Planning Guidelines and the PLUTS. This is evidenced by the various policies and objectives contained in the current and previous Kilkenny County Development Plans and the Ferrybank/Belview Local Area Plan. It is also evidenced by the level of investment and support given by Kilkenny County Council to projects of a regional nature, many of which are led by Waterford which could be considered to have provided disproportionate benefits across the region. (See section Ch 6.3)

2.2   Impact on Kilkenny

In considering the impact on the performance and potential of Kilkenny and Waterford and of the wider South East Region, it is crucial to consider the significance of population numbers.

The importance of population in economic development was noted in the recent *Action Plan for Jobs for the South-East Region*. This is summarised in the box below which discusses the impact of population on foreign direct investment and similar factors relating to infrastructural provision and to the establishment of indigenous industry. This highlights the importance of critical mass in population as a driver of economic potential.

Importance of Minimum Population Scale
"IDA Ireland promotes locations that are a good fit between the investor's requirements and the region's ability to meet these exacting criteria. These criteria include a critical mass in population terms, the existence of clusters of companies in specific industry sectors / activities, the ability to attract and develop appropriate skills (talent), well developed infrastructure, property solutions and place-making" Source: South East Action Plan for Jobs 2015-2017

It is useful to consider three categories of population and the economic impact of each.
- Large scale population centres   1m – 10m +
- Mid Scale Population centres (Kilkenny + Waterford)   100,000 – 1m
- Small scale centres   < 100,000

The evidence for Waterford and Kilkenny shows that neither county is in the large scale category. Both are currently in the mid-scale. To transfer any net population numbers from Kilkenny to Waterford would result in Kilkenny's population being significantly below the 100,000 minimum scale needed for the county to be a serious component of the South East regional engine for growth, and yet would not have a commensurate positive impact on Waterford, as it will not move

Waterford into the large scale category. Kilkenny County Council has invested, encouraged, and provided for its population growth over the last decades, with this strategy in mind. Any change of boundary would reduce Kilkenny's ability to perform effectively. To evaluate this it is useful to consider why population size matters.

It is important for the Boundary Committee to note that large scale population centres are increasingly attracting economic activity. This was highlighted in the *Action Plan for Jobs 2015-2017*. Indeed, the challenge for economic performance in Ireland is to encourage a wider dispersion of economic activity from the major centres.

The recent IDA Strategy for 2015-2019 notes that critical mass of population and clusters of industry activity are crucial for both attracting and retaining industry.

Table 2.1: Key Factors for Economic Development
"There is an increasing trend of FDI locating in larger urban areas" "the key factors crucial to attracting and retaining FDI" [includes]:   ❖ A critical mass of population **and urban centres.**   ❖ **The** existence of clusters in specific industry sector **/ activities.**

Source: Extracts from Winning foreign Direct Investment 2015 – 2019 IDA Ireland

Very small population centres with populations of less than 100,000 are likely to be below the minimum scale needed to attract many projects.
At a national level it is generally accepted that a population of 100,000 is desirable to deliver efficient services[13]. The threshold is also important in relation to marketing Kilkenny as a place to do business and attract investment.

In light of the above it is important to consider the population size of Kilkenny currently and to consider the impact if the population of the area of interest was transferred to Waterford County Council.

Table 2.2: Impact of Boundary Revisions on Minimum Population Scale	
Estimated Current Population of Kilkenny 2015[1]	100,721
Population if area of interest was transferred administratively to Waterford.	94,221
[1] The 2015 figures are obtained by disaggregating the RPG figures and applying the same growth rates to the 2011 Census figure	

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[13] *Putting People First* p76

The transfer of 6,500[14] people would knock the population of Kilkenny significantly below the 100,000 level. Considerable investment and development would be required to regain such a population deficit which is unlikely to happen in the current development environment, leaving Kilkenny at a distinct disadvantage during a crucial time of economic growth. It could take ten years to recover that population.

The analysis suggests that if a boundary revision resulted in reducing Kilkenny's population below the symbolically important minimum population scale of 100,000 just as it has reached this level, it would damage the economic prospects for Kilkenny stunting its role in supporting the Waterford Gateway with knock-on negative effects for the wider region.

2.3   Regional Perspective

It is a matter of record that Waterford, along with the South East, is significantly underperforming in a national context. As referenced by Mr. Michael Walsh, Waterford City Manager in 2013, **"*Waterford and the South East region in general are under performing economically. Relative to other regions there has been a decline*"[15].**

The South East is a city region of scale with a population base of 574,750[16], across five counties. There are three strong higher and further education institutions in the region and there is greatly improved digital and physical access to and from the region in particular with the completion of the M9 and the M11 projects, there are also three significant sea ports and a regional airport. The region has much to offer and under-performance in the national context is a complex matter. Mr Walsh has referenced both external and internal pressures in examining possible reasons for underperformance. With reference to internal pressures "*the region is unique in the country in that it contains four significant urban areas within a 30 mile range which are competing with each other. That is a good thing in some respects, but it sometimes means we are all fighting over the same cake*".[17] Such competition is not conducive to collaborative use of resources in a regional approach. Mr. Paudie Coffey TD cited his greatest concern in 2013 as "*lack of coherence within the region*" pointing out that the "*first thing we need is a coherent regional strategy*." Kilkenny County agrees with the Minister on the need for a collaborative approach.

A boundary revision will not support or build upon levels of co-operation within the region, or deliver "a coherent regional strategy". It could potentially inflame internal tensions perceived to be fighting over the same cake and could damage currently good working relationships between local authorities in community and economic fora. We support Mr. Coffey TD in his view that **"*until we come together as a region and adopt a coherent regional strategy, we will not make the progress we need to make*"[18].**

To be competitive at a medium sized level across Europe a base population above 500,000 is required. This concept has been reinforced at European and National Level by published research.

The administrative boundaries of cities no longer reflect the physical, social, economic, cultural or environmental reality of urban development.[19] The area of influence of the Gateway extends

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[14] Estimate based on 2006 CSO data

[15] Michael Walsh at **South-East Economic Development: 18 Jun 2013: Oireachtas Joint and Select Committees**

[16] South East **ACTION PLAN FOR JOBS DJEI 2015 p5**

[17] Michael Walsh at **South-East Economic Development: 18 Jun 2013: Oireachtas Joint and Select Committees**

[18] **Joint Committee on Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation Debate** 18th June 2013

[19] European Union Regional Policy, *Cities of Tomorrow Challenges, visions, ways forward*, 2011, Executive summary pvi.

beyond the administrative boundaries into Tipperary, Kilkenny, Carlow and Wexford reflecting the concept of the city region.

The South East with over 500,000 people has that level of population which gives it critical mass. A very significant issue identified in all plans and strategies is the need for the South East to operate as a cohesive region.

It has been recognised in Ireland that cities play a critical role as drivers of economic activity, of regional and national competiveness and of economic and social development[20]. The National Competitiveness Council highlights that as people become more mobile and firms more selective about where they locate, competitive city regions have emerged as magnets for talent and investment. Competition will increase amongst city regions and their ability to attract and retain businesses, visitors and talented people will be critical to their sustainability.

International experience indicates that successful regions are driven by successful cities. Therefore there is a strong case to establish collaborative arrangements at a wider South East level, reflective of the aspirations of Waterford as a Gateway and of the National Spatial Strategy. While the South-East Region is a dynamic region offering an attractive quality of life, the Regional Assembly identified five areas (in the RPGs), where targeted investment would support and attract new economic development in the region. These are:

1.   **Develop The Smart Economy**, including: the development of a University of the South-East; the development of Strategic Employment Locations at the Gateway, Hubs and County Towns with first-class infrastructure capable of facilitating new indigenous start-ups in advanced sectors and attracting Foreign Direct Investment against competing locations nationally and internationally.

2.   **Improve Transport Infrastructure and Services**, including development of public transport services along the main transportation corridors in the region, and supporting the development of the seaports at Belview, Rosslare and New Ross and air access at Waterford Regional Airport.

3.   **Deliver First-Class Energy and Communications**, including development of broadband technologies and development of renewable and green energy sources.

4.   **Foster Urban Regeneration and Improved Quality of Life** in the region, including investment in key strategic sites and the public realm of towns and city centres in the region.

5.   **Full Implementation of the Joint Waste Management Plan for the South East**.

Furthermore, the Regional Assembly has identified the Limerick - Waterford transport corridor, under the Atlantic Gateways Initiative - Corridor Development Framework, to be of critical strategic importance.

Kilkenny County Council is committed to supporting the development of the critical regional infrastructure outlined above, and reiterated this commitment most recently in its *Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021*. The Council believes that strong collaboration within the region will be required to successfully deliver on these developments and this should be the priority focus of the constituent local authorities of the South East. The boundary review is deflecting attention from the real issues to be addressed in the region.

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[20] National Competitive Council: *Our Cities: Drivers of National Competitiveness*, April 2009

Chapter 2 Key Points

- A boundary alteration will reduce Kilkenny's population to below 100,000, impacting severely on its capacity to perform as a hub, which will inevitably damage the region's performance.

- Effective regions need critical population mass. The South East can only achieve the threshold of 500,000 if the region is cohesive and united and speaking in a "united voice".

- A boundary alteration will weaken the ability of the South East to speak with "One Voice" on National and Regional issues.

- The South East region is now part on the much larger Southern Region and needs to present a "United Front" to reverse its underperformance.

- "*The first thing we need is a coherent regional strategy*" Minister Paudie Coffey, at the **Joint Committee on Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation Debate** Tue 18th June 2013. A boundary alteration will not address this necessity.

- "*We are fighting over the same cake*" Michael Walsh Chief Executive of Waterford City & County Council at the **Joint Committee on Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation Debate**. A boundary issue will exasperate an already challenging problem.

- The current process is a waste of time and resources. With finite resources we should not, as public bodies, be spending time, energy and public money on an issue that will not deliver a positive outcome for the people we serve. The public expect and deserve better.

- Good leaders lead without control. Waterford as the Gateway must provide leadership to the region by working in genuine partnership.

- Waterford and Kilkenny must deliver on the commitment in the European Capital of Culture bid to "*pioneer new models of regional partnership*".

3   National Planning Context & Development Capacity

3.1   Planning hierarchy

PLANNING HIERARCHY		
NATIONAL	**National Spatial Strategy 2002**	
REGIONAL	**Regional Planning Guidelines for the South-East Region 2010 – 2022 PLUTS**	
LOCAL	Kilkenny County Development Plan 2014 – 2020 ↓ Ferrybank/Belview Local Area Plan *(in effect until 2020)*	Waterford City Development Plan 2013- 2019 ↓ Gracedieu/ Carrickphierish Action Plans

In accordance with Section 10(1A) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the Kilkenny County Development Plan 2014 – 2020 includes a core strategy which demonstrates that the development objectives in the Plan are consistent with national and regional development objectives, as set out in the National Spatial Strategy and the Regional Planning Guidelines.

The Regional Planning Guidelines confirm that *"the Ferrybank/Belview Local Area Plan 2009-2015 will be a significant part of the implementation of the Waterford PLUTS objectives".*[21]

3.2   Waterford as a Gateway

The National Spatial Strategy (NSS) was launched in 2002 to span the period up to 2020. It was a national spatial planning framework and the objective of the strategy was to facilitate a better spread of job opportunities, develop a better quality of life, and better places to live in for all. The NSS established a framework of gateways and hubs to facilitate a balanced regional approach to development.

Waterford is designated as the regional Gateway. Kilkenny and Wexford are designated as Hubs and Carlow, Clonmel and Dungarvan are the County Towns. The Settlement Strategy places the Gateway, Hubs and county towns in the urban structure of the South East Region.

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[21] Regional Planning Guidelines 2010 – 2022 p22

Figure 3.1: National Spatial Strategy
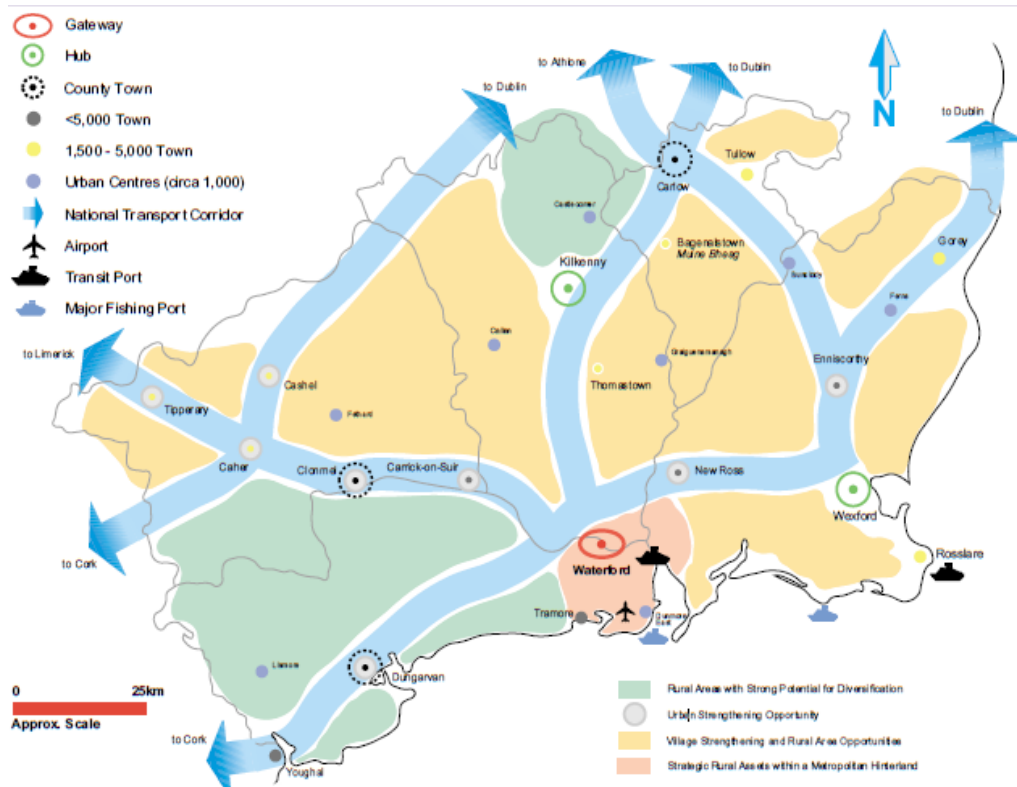
Source: National Spatial Strategy, 2002

Critical mass relates to "*the size and concentration of population that enables a range of services and facilities to be supported. This in turn can attract and support higher levels of economic activity and improved quality of life*"[22].

The philosophy behind the National Spatial Strategy is that Waterford as the Gateway, Kilkenny and Wexford as the Hubs and the County Towns of Carlow, Clonmel and Dungarvan would drive regional growth by providing a large and skilled population base, substantial capacity for additional residential and employment related functions and an improving transport network and work together to attract investment.

As with all gateway cities the area of influence of the gateway extends beyond the administrative boundaries reflecting the concept of the city region. This concept has been reinforced at European and National Level by published research.

The administrative boundaries of cities no longer reflect the physical, social, economic, cultural or environmental reality of urban development[23].

Waterford and the South East region have undergone a period of catch-up in terms of infrastructure investment and are now better positioned than at any time in the past to drive economic development. (Improvements include improved road connectivity, energy and infrastructure

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[22] *National Spatial Strategy for Ireland 2002-2020, People, Places and Potential*, Box 1.1, 2002
[23] European Union Regional Policy, *Cities of Tomorrow Challenges, visions, ways forward*, 2011, Executive summary pvi.

stock[24]). With the exception of the technical university, this has meant that previous impediments to investment, (including FDI) have been overcome. The global recession occurred just as these elements were delivered and with the upward economic trend, we now need to work together to harness the benefits for the Gateway and the region.

3.3   National Planning Framework (NPF)

The NSS will be replaced by the National Planning Framework in 2016. The National Planning Framework will reshape and focus the NSS to meet today's and tomorrow's challenges.   The NPF will also be informed by the *Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies* (RSESs), which are to be prepared in tandem with the NPF process, by the three new Regional Assemblies, comprising the Northern and Western Region, the Eastern and Midland Region and the Southern Region.

It is important that the South East is speaking with "one voice" in both of these processes.

Recognising the large geographical area of the three assemblies, their overall strategy will be developed taking into account inputs from smaller sub-regional *Strategic Planning Areas* (SPAs) that relate to key economic catchments within each assembly area.

The South East region consisting of Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary, Waterford and Wexford is designated as a Strategic Planning Area.

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[24] SOUTH EAST REGION EMPLOYMENT ACTION PLAN SPOTLIGHT ON THE SOUTH EAST DECEMBER 2011

Figure 3.2: National Planning Framework
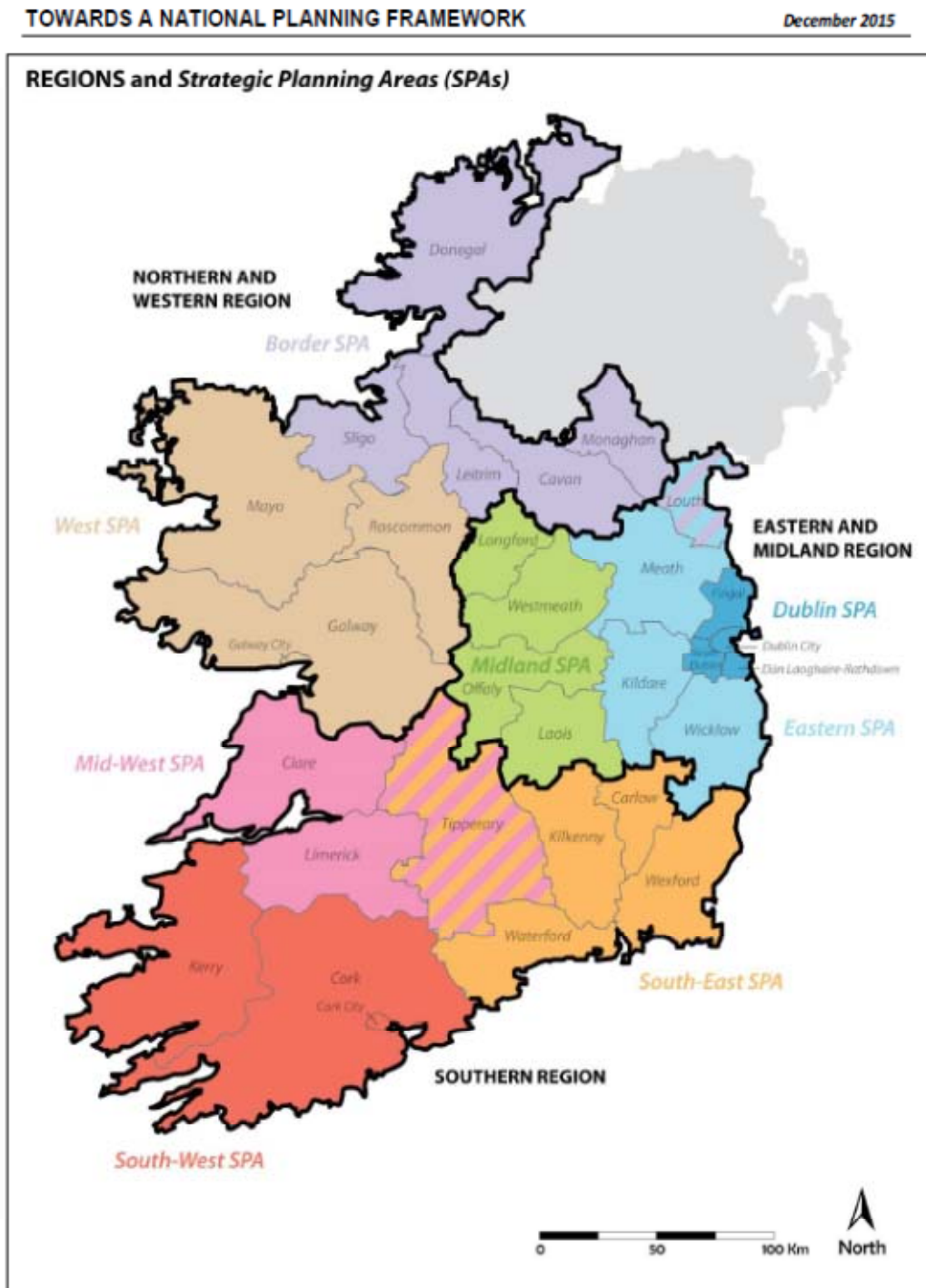
Ireland's Regions and Strategic Planning Areas (as per the Local Government Act 1991 (Regional Assemblies) (Establishment) Order 2014) [25]

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[25] DoECLG, *Towards a National Planning Framework,* December 2015

3.4 Regional Planning Guidelines

The Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) were first nationally implemented in Ireland in 2004 and reviewed in 2010. The principal function of the RPGs is to link national strategic spatial planning policies to the planning process at the local city and county level by co-ordinating all of the development plans through the guidelines.

The RPGs provide a strategic planning framework for the South East Region with the objective of implementing the National Spatial Strategy at regional level and achieving **balanced** regional development. The RPGs incorporate high level policies which inform and advise local authorities in the preparation and review of their respective Development Plans, thus providing clear integration of planning and development policy from national to regional to local level.

The Waterford Planning and Land Use Transportation Study (PLUTS) is incorporated into the RPGs as a sub regional document[26].

The objectives of Waterford PLUTS were incorporated into the last two Waterford City Development Plans and the last two Kilkenny County Development Plans. They were also incorporated into the Ferrybank/Belview Local Area Plan (LAP) 2009-2020 which is currently under review.

This is recognised in the RPGs 2010[27]. It goes on to state that *"the Ferrybank/Belview Local Area Plan 2009-2015 will be a significant part of the implementation of the Waterford PLUTS objectives."* The N25 Waterford by-pass and associated infrastructure and the new waste water treatment plant will support the development and expansion of the Gateway north of the River Suir in a co-ordinated way that is consistent with the adopted plans and PLUTS Strategy.

The RPGs recommended that the implementation group for the *Waterford PLUTS* Study Area continue in operation. This implementation group would drive the process of developing the full potential of the Regional Gateway as envisaged in the NSS taking account of the need to deliver a consistent approach across administrative boundaries and would advance detailed proposals for future incorporation into the development plan process. Kilkenny County Council remains committed to the role of the implementation group as envisaged in the RPGs.
(See 3.5.1 below and Appendix 5)

3.5 Planning Land Use and Transportation Study (PLUTS)

Waterford City developed principally to the south of the River Suir and in the 70's, 80's and 90's. A trend of low density residential growth prevailed, primarily to the south and east of the City.

Waterford City Council, Waterford County Council and Kilkenny County Council adopted the *Waterford Planning, Land Use and Transportation Study* (PLUTS) in 2004 to redress the unsustainable development trends and provide a strong planning framework for the future development of the City and Environs.

The principal features of the PLUTS are:

- More balanced growth between north and south sides of River Suir to 2020;
- Provision for a population increase of almost 30,000 people (or 57% population growth) in Waterford City and Environs by 2020;
- Investment needed for almost 12,800 new jobs or 46% growth by 2020;

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[26] Regional Planning Guidelines for the South East Region 2010-2022 p11
[27] Ibid p22

- Requirement for approximately 11,500 new dwellings;
- Significant retail expansion in the expanding City Centre;
- A new City Centre Bridge exclusively for pedestrians and cyclists linking the redeveloped North Quays with the existing City Centre;
- Travel demand growth of 170% in Waterford City and Environs with potential for increased traffic congestion in the City Centre;
- Potential for public transport to more than double its existing Modal Share in the City by 2020;
- Provision of a rail passenger platform on the North Quays as part of a new public transport interchange;
- Development of a high-quality bus-based public transport system in the City supported by Park and Ride facilities located north and south of the River.
- Development of a cross-city public transport corridor called the Green Route, which will link Belview, the North Quays, the existing City Centre and the new University of the South-East (currently WIT);
- Provision for non-motorised modes such as walking and cycling including an orbital route linking employment, residential and educational facilities;
- A downstream river crossing to facilitate the expansion of the Outer Ring Road northwards to the N25;
- Completion of the N25 Waterford Bypass and the Outer Ring Road to link into the Downstream River Crossing;
- Expansion and improvement of the South East Regional Airport with an extended runway, more operators and improved transport linkages.

Central to the delivery of PLUTS is the redevelopment of the North Quays which came into local authority control in 2015. The initial competition for a Design Framework for the North Quays was in 2002/2003, and this is now designated as a Strategic Development Zone[28]. This is the first SDZ designation in the South East and one of only two outside Dublin. Waterford City and County Council can now focus on the delivery of the regeneration of the North Quays as a vibrant and dynamic area full of employment, residential, commercial, community and amenity related development opportunities. This significant project is estimated to cost €60m to develop and in terms of scale is much larger than any other development project undertaken by the local authority.

3.5.1   Implementation
The following principles were set out in the PLUTS for implementation of the strategy.

1. Agreeing a joint implementation and monitoring structure that facilitates efficient cooperation and co-ordination between the relevant local authorities;

2. Ensuring that all relevant agencies and major stakeholders commit to the plan;

3. Co-ordination across a range of capital projects as well as in management.

4. Providing the staff, technical and financial resources for rapid implementation of specific flagship projects in order to demonstrate the vitality of the PLUTS and the plan process;

The PLUTS specified that the local authorities of Waterford City Council, Kilkenny County Council and Waterford County Council would agree on how best to co-operate and co-ordinate on implementation issues and agree on appropriate joint monitoring and review structures. In this

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[28] Press release by Minister Paudie Coffey Friday 22nd January

context, it should be noted that since the adoption of the PLUTS in May 2004 Kilkenny County Council was proactive in its attempts to set up the necessary joint implementation and monitoring structures. Kilkenny County Council wrote on two separate occasions seeking engagement on setting up implementation structures. (It should be noted that in June 2005 Waterford City Council initiated procedures under section 29 of the Local Government Act 1991 for a boundary extension.)

An Implementation Committee was subsequently established which met on three occasions with the most recent meeting in 2008.   A further request by Kilkenny County Council seeking the re-establishment of the Implementation Committee and co-operation on a joint retail strategy was sent in August 2011 during the preparation of the Waterford City Development Plan (see Appendix 5). No response was received.

3.6   Kilkenny County Development Plan

The Kilkenny County Development plan sets out a vision for the area as follows:

"*To ensure that the people of the Waterford City Environs in County Kilkenny enjoy a good quality of life with a high standard of education, excellent employment prospects and easy access to a full range of social, economic and cultural services. This will be achieved through integrated planning and cooperation with Waterford City Council, all the other authorities in the region and other agencies, ensuring that Waterford and its Environs can compete internationally and maximise its potential as a gateway city serving the entire South East Region*"[29].

It is an objective of the County Development Plan "*to implement the NSS and the South East Regional Planning Guidelines by encouraging developments into the designated Hub of Kilkenny and the environs of the Waterford Gateway*"[30].

Within County Kilkenny there are two nationally and regionally strategic locations identified for enterprise and employment. These are Kilkenny City and the Belview area. This is set out in the Core Strategy in the Kilkenny County Development Plan 2014 -2020 (see Appendix 6 for Core Strategy Map). To lose half of the county's strategic development zoning would have a severe impact particularly given the level of investment made to date in the Belview area.

3.7   Ferrybank/Belview Local Area Plan

The Ferrybank/Belview LAP outlines a strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of an area of land stretching from Grannagh to Belview and from the River Suir to the line of the Waterford bypass.

The objectives of Waterford PLUTS have now been incorporated into the Ferrybank/Belview Local Area Plan (LAP) 2009-2015.

Objective T5 of the LAP is to reserve lands free from development for a down-stream river crossing.

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[29] Kilkenny County Council, Kilkenny County Development Plan 2014-2020, p.17
[30] Objective 3B p17

3.8   Waterford City Development Plan

The Waterford City Development Plan set out a vision for Waterford as a compact city based on the PLUTS.

3.8.1   Waterford's performance as the Gateway

A key question that needs to be addressed is the long term development capacity of Waterford City and the location of such capacity in the context of the compact city[31]. The population of Waterford City was 46,732 in 2011, and the RPGs have now set a target of 53,000 for 2019[32]. Waterford City grew by 984 persons in the period 2006 – 2011.

According to the *Waterford City Development Plan 2013-2019*, there are 247ha[33] of land zoned within Waterford for residential development.   Applying a density of 34 units per hectare, this yields 8,398 units and a capacity of 21,835 persons. This level of population capacity far exceeds the projected population target of Waterford City as set out in the RPGs. There is therefore more than adequate provision of land zoned for housing in Waterford City to meet future population growth (see Appendix 7 for a detailed analysis.)

3.9   Development Capacity Ferrybank/Belview LAP

The Ferrybank /Belview Local Area Plan (LAP), adopted by Kilkenny County Council in 2009, states: "*the PLUTS predicts a population increase of 4,407 persons during the period 2009-2014*". The LAP used the population projections and phasing in the PLUTS as a basis for residentially zoned land.

A core strategy Amendment was made to the LAP in 2012 which provided for phasing of the land zoned in 2009.

Phase 1 land of 53.3ha can be developed providing for **898 housing units** or 2,334 persons[34].
Phase 2 land of 188.5ha is dedicated as strategic reserve.

3.10 Housing capacity in the area

Table 3.1 Housing capacity in Waterford City		
Waterford City	**Houses**	**Population**
Waterford Residential zoning capacity is 247 x 34 units/ha	8,398	21,835
Waterford Mixed use capacity	375	975
Waterford Opportunity Site capacity	726	1,887
Total	9,496	24,689
Waterford Development Plan requirement 2013 – 2019	**1,930**	**5,018**

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[31] The underlying principle of the Core Strategy is based upon achieving sustainable critical mass in a compact city form. Waterford City Development Plan p16
[32] Table 2.2 Waterford City Development Plan 2013-2019
[33] Table 2.3 Waterford City Development Plan 2013-2019
[34] 898 x2.6 occupancy = 2,334 persons

Within the current Development Plan for Waterford there is capacity for almost five times over what is required.

Table 3.2 Housing capacity in Ferrybank LAP		
Ferrybank/Belview	**Houses**	**Population**
LAP capacity	898	2,334
LAP requirement	389	1,011

Within the Ferrybank/Belview LAP there is 2.3 times capacity available over what is required.

Waterford has the infrastructure in place and the plans to deliver the two neighbourhoods of Carrickphierish and Gracedieu. The 32 classroom school campus with public library and sports hall at Carrickphierish opened in September 2015 with significant capacity for student growth. Planning is complete for youth, childcare and park facilities. Carrickphierish is the first 'planned' neighbourhood in the City where community facilities were in place prior to residential development. This Carrickphierish neighbourhood is primed for development.

A boundary extension therefore is not justified by the need to accommodate population growth.

3.11 Retailing

The Ferrybank shopping centre was completed circa 2009. However it remains unopened for retail use. It has permitted convenience floor space of 4,577m^2 and comparison floorspace of 4,341m^2, i.e. 8,918m^2 in total.

It is designated as a District Centre within the county's retail hierarchy to meet the needs and potential of this significant expanding community. The role of the district centre is to perform an important function for the local community with a good range of convenience shopping and middle order comparison with a range of non-retail services such as banks, library, offices, public houses and restaurants serving the local community**. Ferrybank is also designated as a district centre within the retail strategy of Waterford City Council.**

Table 3.3 sets out the three existing district centres in Waterford as designated in the Waterford retail strategy.

Table 3.3 Existing District Centres in Waterford		
District Centre	**Gross Floorspace (sq. m.)**	**Net Retail Sales Space (sq. m)**
Kilbarry	6,317	5,054
Ardkeen/Farranshoneen	12,700	10,480
Lisduggan	8,458	6,766

Source: Table 8.1 Waterford City Retail Strategy, 2012

The net retail sales space granted permission in Ferrybank is 8,918m^2. This is smaller than the Ardkeen/Farranshoneen district centre permitted by Waterford City.

Table 3.4 Comparison of District Centres	
District Centre	Net Retail Sales Space (sq. m)
Ardkeen/Farranshoneen	10,480
Lisduggan	6,766
Ferrybank	8,918

The expanding Ferrybank and wider south Kilkenny area warrants a retail offering to meet its needs and potential now and into the future.

The absence of a joint retail strategy has left a vacuum. Failure to complete a retail strategy resulted in planning for shopping developments in close proximity to the city being dealt with by both Waterford County Council and Kilkenny County Council in the absence of an overarching policy.

It should be noted that the Ferrybank district centre has not commenced retail trading and so to date has had no impact, positive or negative on the vitality and vibrancy of Waterford city centre. During the planning process under Ref. 05/1287 Waterford City Council did not exercise its right of appeal when the application was under consideration.

It is recognised that the retail offer in Waterford City needs to be enhanced[35] and that the focus should be on the city centre. The prioritisation of the development of properties on Michael Street to deliver a large retail space in the city centre is recommended.[36] Planning permission exists for a mixed use development at Michael Street for 48,410m^2 with 630 car spaces.

An attempt to prepare a strategy in 2010 by Kilkenny County Council and Waterford City had its challenges and was not completed. The focus must once again be on the preparation of a joint retail strategy. In the absence of agreement locally, a mechanism for referral to An Bord Pleanála or another third party for a ruling on outstanding points should be considered. This may require a legislative change.

The limitations of the retail offer of the City has many causes. The pull of spend by substantial district centres such as Ardkeen has impacts. For example the opening of "NEXT" in Ardkeen District Centre resulted in the closure of both "NEXT" shops in the City Square shopping centre.

The resolution to the retail strategy issue, whilst extremely important, does not warrant nor can it be solved by a boundary change.

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[35] Waterford Re-Organisation Implementation Group report and economic strategy Oct 2011
[36] Ibid p4

Chapter 3 Key Points

- The Regional Authority through the RPGs confirms that "*the objectives of Waterford PLUTS have now been incorporated into the Kilkenny County Development Plan 2008-2014 and, more recently, the Ferrybank/Belview Local Area Plan (LAP) 2009-2015*" The Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government raised no issue with the adopted plans of Kilkenny County Council.

- A boundary alteration is not required to meet the needs of the NSS, RPGs, the PLUTS and the visions set out therein or for Waterford to perform as the Gateway for the South East Region.

- Waterford needs to commence the preparation of PLUTS II 2020-2040, and a Joint Retail Strategy for the five Local Authorities in the Region, to provide the Planning Framework for the Gateways development for the next 20 years.

- A successful region needs a successful City and the Gateway needs to address the issues of:

  - population growth with particular focus on the two planned neighbourhoods of Carrickphierish and Gracedieu which can accommodate upwards of 4,000 households ,
  - the retail offer in the City Centre (Michael Street Shopping Centre is 15 years in gestation). There is no new shopping development of scale in Waterford City Centre since 1995.
  - Waterford City & County Council should concentrate Economic Development on its opportunity sites, with particular focus on the North Quays which now has designation as a Strategic Development Zone.

- A boundary change would necessitate a change in statutory Development Plans, Core Strategy, and LECP necessitating public consultation and incurring unnecessary expense.

- The effects of the economic upturn, currently experienced in Dublin, is only beginning to reach the Regions. Discussion of boundary changes gives rise to uncertainty and indecision that will impact negatively on the Region winning its share of growth.

4   Identity and cohesion of local communities

Waterford City and South Kilkenny are neighbours interacting and inter-dependant on one another on a daily basis but they are different places, with their own histories and identities. These histories and identities and sense of place are very important to local people and they are part of what makes Waterford and South Kilkenny distinctive.

"*CULTURE IS WHAT MAKES LIFE WORTH LIVING*". T.S. Eliot

The cultural heritage of Kilkenny is unique to the county, has been passed down from generation to generation and makes a significant contribution to the identity and social cohesion of the community. This view is supported by international and national research and studies.

According to UNESCO, cultural heritage is the legacy of physical artefacts and intangible attributes of a group or society that are inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations.

'Living heritage' is another term for intangible cultural heritage and "...*refers to the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge and skills transmitted by communities from generation to generation. It provides these communities with a sense of identity and continuity, while promoting creativity and social well-being, contributing to the management of the natural and social environment and generating income*".[37]

The shared cultural heritage (built, natural and 'living heritage') of Kilkenny has been handed down for generations and is a key component in defining the county's identity. It has shaped our past and informs how we see ourselves and bond as a community.

This concept of a shared cultural heritage that defines and binds a community together is also recognised by the European Commission, who say that our cultural heritage is, a "...*major contributor to social cohesion and engagement as a way of bringing together communities*".[38] This cultural heritage must also shape our future and administrative boundaries must have regard to the rights and requirements of all established social groupings.

Whilst the culture of south Kilkenny is very much embedded in the culture of County Kilkenny, there are some aspects of our cultural heritage that we share with our neighbours in Waterford. In particular, the heritage (both natural and cultural) associated with the River Suir, which acts as not only the county boundary but also the boundary between Leinster and Munster, is a shared heritage. Historically the river was also the border between the two ancient kingdoms of Osraige in Kilkenny and the Déise Muman in Waterford.

Fishing, boating, industry, flora and fauna and the landscape along the River Suir have been enjoyed and shared over thousands of years. Before road transport was the norm, the River Suir was the main route way that connected the medieval port of Waterford with County Kilkenny and the fertile midlands. A ferry operated at the site of Granny Castle during the medieval period. The river was vital in the history of settlement of County Kilkenny and indeed some of the earliest known human

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[37] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
[38] *Getting cultural heritage to work for Europe 2015*. Report of the Horizon 2020 Expert Group on Cultural Heritage.

settlements and houses in County Kilkenny were built nearly 6000 years ago at Newrath, along the banks of the River Suir.[39]

This shared heritage is captured in the Ferrybank Oral Tradition and Storytelling Project commissioned **jointly by Kilkenny LEADER Partnership, Kilkenny VEC and Waterford Area Partnership.**

Historic England[40] recognises that "...*heritage has a positive impact on sense of place and personal development. It is seen as making a positive contribution to community life by boosting social capital, increasing mutual understanding and cohesion and encouraging a stronger place*".[41]

This sense of place is the foundation on which viable and sustainable communities are built.

Recent research conducted by the Institute for British Irish Studies (IBIS) at University College Dublin states that identity with local place is very strong and that in increasingly geographically mobile and globalised societies like Ireland, "*a sense of place is still a strong marker of identity and central to people's knowledge and understanding of themselves and others*". In fact, it has been found that for Irish people**, "....after family, identity with the place is almost as significant as any other identity, including religion and nationality"[42].**

There is a *"high level of awareness of, and pride in, Kilkenny's heritage and its contribution to the identity of the county"* according to IPSOS MORI, in a study undertaken for the Heritage Office of Kilkenny County Council on heritage awareness and attitudes. Heritage was considered '*very important*' by 80% of respondents for '*teaching us about our past*' and by 56% for '*Helping to promote regeneration in our city, towns and villages.*' When asked what they considered the best symbol of the county 31% of respondents cited 'Hurling', showing the significant role that GAA plays in people's county identity. This reinforces the incredibly strong role that GAA plays in the lives and identities of Kilkenny people. According to Kilkenny poet Carmel Cummins **"Hurling is probably the perfect metaphor for the rhythms by which life is lived in Kilkenny: its antiquity, its 'bred-in-the-boneness', its yearly fire".**

A further 20% of the respondents in the IPSOS MORI survey cited 'local history' as the best symbol of the county, thus showing the importance of local cultural heritage and history in identity and belonging. (IPSOS MORI. 2007. Market Research on Heritage Awareness and Attitudes in County Kilkenny. Kilkenny County Council)

Thus it is clear from international, national and local studies that the people of Kilkenny, through a shared cultural heritage, have a unique and clear social, cultural and sporting identity resulting in a strong sense of place, identity and belonging.

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[39] Stuijts, I. *Plants, pollen and people: reconstructing Kilkenny's historic landscapes.* In *Monument, Memory and Maps- Discovering Kilkenny's Landscape Heritage.* Kilkenny County Council (in preparation)

[40] Historic England is the public body that looks after England's historic environment
[41] Historic England *Heritage Counts*, *The Value and Impact of Heritage and the Historic Environment,* 2014

[42] Inglis, T. *Local belonging, identities and sense of place in contemporary Ireland.* IBIS Discussion Paper No. 4. Institute for British Irish Studies

Any alteration by the Waterford Boundary Review Committee of the current county boundary would completely alter the sense of identity, belonging and social cohesion, for the residents of South Kilkenny. It would shatter the connections that people have with their area, their culture and sense of identity and have a devastating effect on the community in South Kilkenny. The area of interest incorporates significant rural areas with no tradition of urban or metropolitan values. The needs of the residents and communities must be recognised and their cultural identity preserved.

It would also see the area changing county and province and this would result in very significant impacts on the area's community and social identity. The proposed revision seeks to redefine Counties and Provinces as well as turning rural areas into metropolitan ones. Cultural heritage should not and cannot be changed by administrative intervention without the consent of the people affected.

South Kilkenny's culture is deep rooted in the history of County Kilkenny

South Kilkenny has a very strong cultural heritage, deep rooted in the history of County Kilkenny, and one that can be traced back to ancient times. This is illustrated in the numerous studies and publications on aspects of the cultural heritage of South Kilkenny which have been undertaken.

One publication of particular note is "*Sliabh Rua. A history of its People and Places*"[43]. This book traces the history of the modern parish of Slieverue (which up until 1970 included Ferrybank) back to the 7th century when the lands of the ancient tribe of Uí Dheaghaidh (O'Dea) formed part of the ancient and powerful kingdom of Osraige. Osraige, which corresponds to the present diocese of Ossory, comprised most of present-day County Kilkenny and western County Laois and it existed from around the first century until the Norman invasion of Ireland in the 12th century. The O'Dea land gave its name to the modern barony of Ida, which now occupies south east Co. Kilkenny extending from Ferrybank to the Rower. So the roots of south Kilkenny are deeply embedded in County Kilkenny over thousands of years.

4.1   Parish Structure

Derived from the diocese of Ossory is a well defined parish structure. The three parishes affected by the area of interest are Kilmacow, Ferrybank and Slieverue.

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[43] Walsh, J. *Sliabh Rua. A history of its People and Places,* 2001

Figure 4.1: Map of Parishes in the Area of Interest
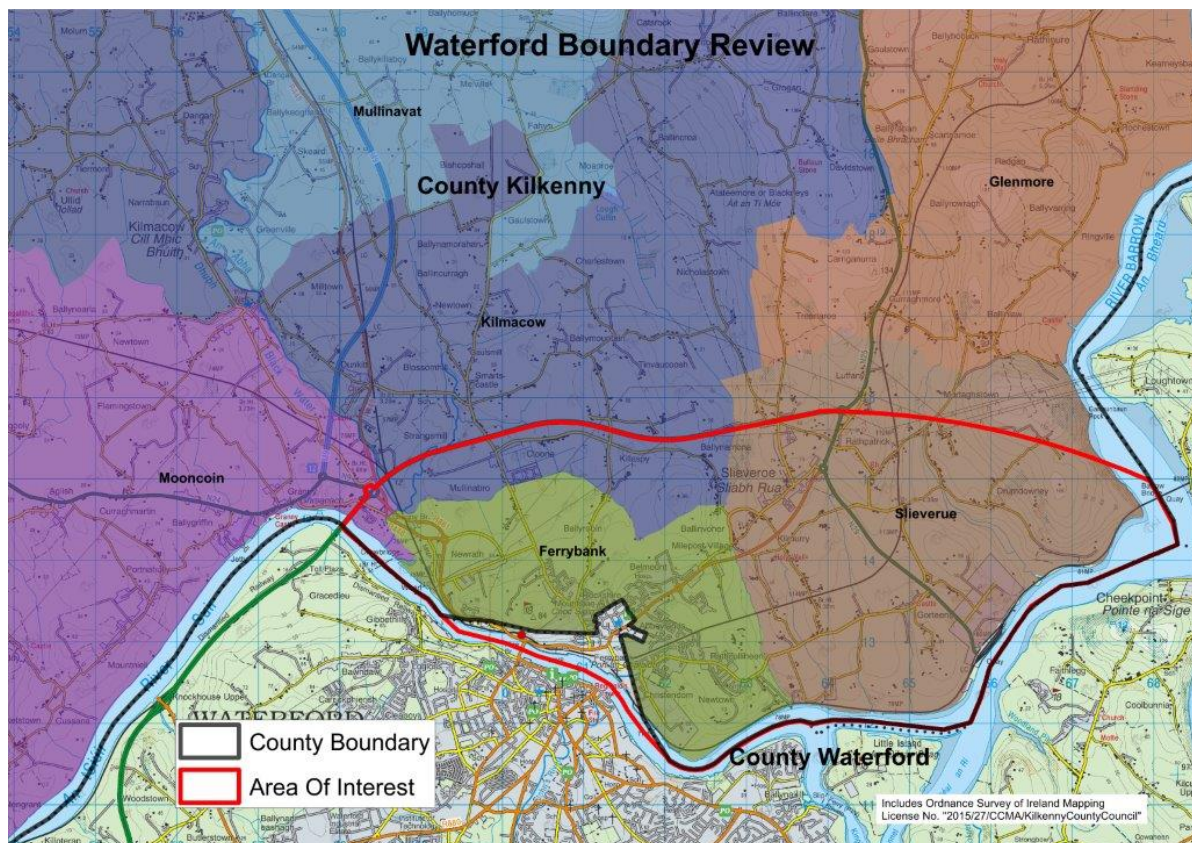
County Kilkenny is a distinct geographical unit and as can be seen from the figure above has a well established parish structure. This demarcation gives people a sense of place, identity and community. Identity revolves around two key questions: **who you are** and **where you come from**. Commitment to an area revolves around family, historical, sporting and culture. A recent discussion paper by Mr Tom Inglis, Professor of Sociology, UCD, entitled "Local Belonging, Identities and Sense of Place in Contemporary Ireland" explored the importance of "place" in a global environment. This paper concludes that **"It may be that increased globalisation has had the unintended consequence of binding people to the particular place in which they reside or grew up."[44]** When identity is threatened people may become more entrenched in their defence of it.

> **WHERE DO YOU COME FROM?**
> **WHERE DO YOU HAIL FROM?**

A boundary alteration would have a serious negative impact on the sense of place and identity of the people within the area of interest. This is an aspect of the living heritage referred to above. It would split the existing parishes of Slieverue and Kilmacow. It would transfer the entire parish of Ferrybank to Waterford. Given that sense of place remains a critical element of contemporary Ireland, the impact of such a change cannot be overestimated with the unintended outcome of conflict and disaffection.

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[44] Tom Inglis Discussion paper No. 4 Series: *Politics and Identity*

4.2   South Kilkenny's Heritage is rich and vibrant

The communities of South Kilkenny recognise and value their shared cultural heritage and are actively engaged in documenting and celebrating it.

Éigse Sliabh Rua and the South Kilkenny Historical Society have been very active in identifying and documenting the heritage of South Kilkenny, and through their work, informing and strengthening identity. Both have very active programmes and attract a wide membership.

Eigse Sliabh is a traditional festival based in Slieverue and surrounding villages.   The festival celebrates the history and culture of South Kilkenny and includes seminars on local music and national history, children's historical tour, poetry readings and tours to historical locations. It is an annual event.

The Heritage Office of Kilkenny County Council has been working with the communities in South Kilkenny over the years to identify and record their cultural heritage. Projects undertaken to date include:

i.   Kilkenny Fieldname Recording Project (recording and mapping the old names that farmers once used to identify their fields)

ii.   Kilkenny Military Heritage Project (mapping and recording aspects of Kilkenny's military heritage. See http://kmhp.ie/

iii.   Historic Graves Project http://historicgraves.com/

iv.   Oral history training

v.   National Heritage Week

vi.   Granny Castle Interpretive Project

Interpretive panel for Granny Castle, prepared by the Heritage Office of Kilkenny County Council. The illustration shows ancient hurlers from Kilkenny and Waterford engaged in a game of hurling

The progress made to-date on such projects as listed above, at Parish level, through direct engagement with Kilkenny County Council would be lost within the restructuring requirements of a boundary revision. The profile of such initiatives would be overshadowed by the larger scale and profile heritage projects of Waterford City.

The three affected Parishes of Kilmacow, Slieverue and Ferrybank have their own social identities. The area of south Kilkenny has a rich cultural heritage that cannot be divorced from its county roots. These are long established and core social organisations that make and sustain the area and its communities. Social organisations should and must influence administrative boundaries.

The success of the Three Sisters – European Capital of Culture 2020 bid has been built upon the recognition of diversity in cultural heritage across three counties with **"*our philosophy in the three sisters that we can achieve much more together*"**. County boundaries have not been an issue in this initiative which has a regional focus. There is no reason to attack or diminish the cultural heritage of the communities and individuals within the area of interest to deliver effective and convenient local government or to achieve stated regional and national economic and social objectives.

Chapter 4: Key Points

- A boundary alteration is a change to county and to province which is unprecedented since the foundation of the state.
- Cultural heritage should not and cannot be changed by administrative intervention without the consent of the people affected.
- The proposed boundary change would split the existing parishes of Slieverue and Kilmacow and would transfer the entire parish of Ferrybank to Waterford and Leinster.
- Over 18,000 individual submissions opposing any alteration is a reflection of people's strong and deeply held views. Any alteration to the boundary in the face of such opposition would be against the very essence of *Putting People First*.
- Cultural heritage contributes to one's sense of community. A boundary alteration would be detrimental to social cohesion in the area with unknown and potentially damaging outcomes.
- South Kilkenny is a distinctive area, separate to Waterford City, with its own history and identity which must be respected.
- Social organisation should determine administrative development. Administrative development should not seek to redefine social organisation

5   Provision of Services

5.1   Structure

Following the recent reforms in local government, Kilkenny County Council has an elected council with 24 members. There are three Municipal Districts:

- Municipal District of Kilkenny City
- Municipal District of Castlecomer
- Municipal District of Piltown

The council executive work in partnership with the elected council who represent the views of their constituents and develop and monitor strategic policies and work programmes across the services. The proposed review directly affects the configuration of Kilkenny's recently established municipal districts resulting in a requirement to review and restructure them again. This is not a desirable outcome in the interest of effective local government where both elected members and the public are still learning to work with these changed structures. It is difficult to establish leadership and confidence in a new system that provides no certainty and requires review after a very short time. The significant changes necessitated by Putting People First are just embedding, further change will hinder this process.

5.2   Staff Numbers and Profile

The Senior Management Team of the County Council is comprised of the Chief Executive and four Directors of Service (including the Head of Finance). The Senior Management Team has delegated authority and responsibility for individual portfolios.

There has been a significant reduction in staff resources available to the Council since 2008, with numbers dropping by 25% since then. The Council has managed to provide all services during this time due to reductions in capital programmes and reduction in demand due to the economic downturn.

The Council examines its workforce requirements and deployments on a regular basis in line with corporate priorities. The Council accepts that the upturn in the economy will result in greater demand for increased capital expenditure and with greater activity generally the staffing levels will need to increase. The public expectation for services will inevitably increase with payment of Local Property Tax. The potential loss of revenue from the area of interest would have a significant impact on the ability of the Council to recruit and maintain the necessary level of staffing. A boundary alteration would require the local authority to replace projected loss of earning through other revenue streams such as LPT, commercial rates, parking charges or compensatory exchequer funding. As the Committee may not make recommendations which would "*result in an ongoing additional cost to Central Government through increased subvention*"[45], Kilkenny County Council, in the event of a boundary alteration, would be forced to either raise local charges or reduce services. This would represent a disproportionate negative impact on the people of Kilkenny.

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[45] Waterford Boundary Committee Terms of Reference

5.3   Local services

There is a significant level of services delivered locally through the Council's area office and library which are both located in the Ferrybank District Centre. In addition to services provided centrally, through the area office the following services are provided to Ferrybank and the wider Piltown Municipal District.

ROADS
- Road maintenance and improvement works
- Hedge cutting
- Road Opening and other Licences
- Temporary Road Closures

PLANNING
- The Executive Planner for the area is based in the Ferrybank office for three days per week, and advises, assists and provides information to the public, various committees, community groups and elected members on planning matters
- Pre-planning clinics are held in the Area Office

ENVIRONMENT
- Issue of licences
- Monitoring illegal dumping
- Facilitate litter cleanups & collection and liaise with Environment Section
- Maintenance of burial grounds
- Street cleaning – urban areas
- Farm surveys and pollution investigations

PARKS
- Executive Landscape Architect is based at the Area Office
- Overseeing design, development and maintenance of Parks and Playgrounds
- Oversee tidy towns and amenity related work and providing advisory service to residents groups and tidy towns groups
- Currently working in the development of the proposed 'Greenway' from Waterford to new Ross along the old railway line
- Urban tree management
- Roundabout sponsorship programme
- On Coastal Walk working group proposing development of Coastal Walk from Wexford through Kilkenny and in to Waterford

The Library
The Ferrybank library was developed and opened in December 2012 at a cost of circa €1m. In 2014 there were:

- 1,951   members
- 43,487   items borrowed
- 48,191   visits to the library
- 2,930   Public Internet/PC sessions

There are three schools in the immediate vicinity and within 1km of the library there is a population of approximately 6,000. The library has excellent facilities, and is a modern, bright space with a dedicated, heavily used, community area. It is a focal point for the area, acting as a community hub and along with the area office provides a very visible and strong presence for Kilkenny County Council.

There is active engagement with the local schools with visits to and from the library. The Good Counsel School have included regular class visits as part of their School Improvement Plan for Literacy and there is evidence that an increasing percentage of their pupils are using the Library on a regular basis outside of school hours. The boys' school has reported a marked improvement in reading scores since the library opened.

The benefits it has brought to the community can be gauged by the community reactions:

'Thanks to the free use of the Ferrybank library community room Ferrybank Lifestyle Links have grown in the community and delivered an abundance of outreach workshops' (Lifestyle Links)

School group at the Library

Meeting room use

'In only one year Ferrybank Library has made a huge contribution to the life of our school' (Principal, Good Counsel)

'A substantial asset to our services on a number of levels since opening, we consider the library & its staff an integral part of our community' (Brothers of Charity)
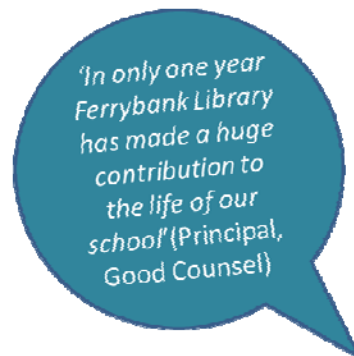
This facility and all the services delivered there, is the embodiment of effective and convenient local government.

5.4   Community Development

County Kilkenny has a very active and varied community sector and this is also true of the Ferrybank area. Kilkenny County Council works with a full range of community groups in the area of interest, often in partnership with other agencies. The Council has put enormous time and effort in to capacity building, empowering, supporting, funding, strategising and relationship building with the local community, which has undoubtedly lead to positive results and outcomes.

Any forced separation of the area in question from County Kilkenny would lead to a participation gap that would ultimately lead to reduced volunteering and cohesion within the community.

The primary community groups which are active in the area include:

- Ferryfun – this is a successful Ferrybank Childcare Initiative
- Community Allotment Project which also includes – Ferrybank Community Development Group
- Moving On – FÁS Employment Support Programme
- Ferrybank Combined Residents' Group
- Ferrybank Active Retirement Group
- U-Casadh Project (Winner of social inclusion sector at Kilkenny People of the Year Awards 2015)
- Lifestyle Links
- Foróige Youth Club
- Waterford Regional Youth Service

5.4.1   Community Plans

There is on-going collaboration between Kilkenny and Waterford local authorities since 2004 in relation to community development and the provision of community facilities and services within the Ferrybank area.

This collaboration includes the:
- Ferrybank Development Project (FDP). The FDP was aimed at providing a co-ordinated response to social inclusion, community development and service provision in the Ferrybank area;
- Ferrybank Community Development Strategic Plan 2015-2020 (jointly prepared by Kilkenny County Council and Waterford City Council); and
- Ferrybank-Belview Local Area Plan (LAP).

The LAP has been prioritised by Kilkenny County Council as the first plan to be reviewed following the adoption of the County and City Development Plans. Kilkenny County Council held (in conjunction with Waterford City Council) a public meeting in connection with the preparation of the draft Ferrybank-Belview LAP in early 2015.

Kilkenny County Council intends to continue to develop collaborative actions with Waterford City & County Council in order to achieve better outcomes for the communities of Ferrybank and South Kilkenny.

The **Ferrybank Development Project (FDP)** is an inter-agency/inter-community Steering Committee that was facilitated under the Cohesion Process 2004. Ferrybank has been identified as a key area

requiring significant community development work under various strategies by many agencies in Kilkenny and Waterford.

The Ferrybank Development Project responded to identified needs in a co-ordinated way with a particular emphasis on social inclusion. The central aim of the FDP was to enhance community development and service provision in the area and to enable a collaborative approach to the long-term strategic development of Ferrybank.

Three key elements to this particular project were:

- Ferrybank Community Childcare Initiative (Ferryfun)
- Family and Community Services and Supports
- The Development of a Public Park on undeveloped lands in front of the community building

Kilkenny County Council has invested €545,000 in this project with Waterford providing the site and funding of €250,000.

5.4.1.1   *Local Economic and Community Plan*

The Local Government/Local Development Alignment Steering Group, 2012 reviewed the role of local government in local and community development. The group made a number of recommendations in relation to approaches to local community development policy and the development of local community plans. These recommendations were given a statutory footing in the Local Government Reform Act, 2014, with the establishment of the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) charged with preparing the community aspects of the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP).

Through the establishment of the LCDCs local authorities are charged with responsibility for the management of local community development programmes. These programmes are delivered by the SICAP (Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme) which aims to tackle poverty, social exclusion and long-term unemployment through local engagement and partnership between disadvantaged individuals, community organisations and public sector agencies. The SICAP covers the entire administrative area of County Kilkenny. There are a range of programmes and measures that have been aimed at target groups in the Ferrybank and South Kilkenny area. The first SICAP contract was for the 9-month period ending 31 December, 2015. The next contract will be for a 2-year period. If there is to be a boundary change, then the current working structures and arrangements for the delivery of the SICAP will have to be redesigned. This would be unwelcome given the time and energy invested to embed SICAP and its critical stage in project delivery.

The LCDC is also currently preparing the Local Development Strategy (LDS) and plans for the delivery of the next LEADER rural development programme. The County has been allocated almost €8 million under LEADER. The LDS will cover the entire administrative area of County Kilkenny. The preparation of the LDS has involved extensive public consultation with local communities, including many groups in the area of interest. If there is to be a boundary review, then the particular needs and views of these communities will not be represented and incorporated in the delivery of the County Kilkenny LDS. Their inclusion in a Waterford strategy would require a review of other plans, at significant cost, by officials who have no relationship with, or understanding of, the communities, groups and issues concerned. Indeed, the local communities in the area of interest would likely be totally excluded from eligibility under the next EU LEADER Programme, given that the five main city areas in the country (including Waterford City), are not eligible for the purposes of LEADER. This would represent

a significant adverse impact on these communities, especially since they have been eligible for support under LEADER Programme since the first Programme was introduced in 1991. In the event of a boundary review, the local communities in the area of interest are also likely to be excluded from other rural development initiatives, such as the Rural Economic Development Zones (REDZ) for the same reason.

The statutory development of the LCDC in 2014 and the reinvigoration of the community fora through the Public Participation Network facilitate an opportunity for local authorities to encourage greater engagement in local communities and local development. Not to deliver projects which have resulted from increased levels of activity and engagement in this area has the potential to seriously disengage groups from participation in future programmes impeding social development in affected areas.

The LECP for Kilkenny was adopted in December 2015 by the elected members of Kilkenny County Council. The LECP was developed by the LCDC and Kilkenny County Council's Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) for Economic Development, Enterprise Support and Tourism. The plan represents the culmination of over nine months' work involving extensive research, public consultation, analysis, workshops and meetings. The Plan has been developed in consultation with all the key stakeholders concerned with Kilkenny's community, social and economic development and through widespread consultation with the public and takes account of the County's strengths and opportunities, as well as the constraints and threats.

It is notable that the issue of the boundary and/or potential boundary review between County Kilkenny and County Waterford was not raised during the public consultations on the LECP by any of the stakeholders, including the agencies with a role and responsibility for economic development.

The need to review this plan so soon after extensive consultation and inclusion of stakeholders would discredit the process and possibly mitigate against such successful levels of participation in future projects where the local authority would benefit from stakeholder involvement.

Belview Port and industrial zone has been identified in the LECP as a critical driver for economic development in the South East region in general and County Kilkenny in particular. Action 6.1 of the LECP states: "*Maximise the potential of the Belview Port industrial zone in terms of infrastructure and job creation opportunities*".

A boundary alteration would require the making of a new LECP especially given the significant impact that the loss of Belview Port and industrial zone would have on the Kilkenny's economic strategy.   Similarly, on the Waterford side a new LECP would be required to incorporate the new area. This would represent a waste of resources and would be at variance with the principles set out in *Putting People First*. This would also result in a lack of confidence in the process overall by those stakeholders who have made valued contributions to the policies and strategies formulated within their plans. Such an outcome is also contrary to the terms of reference of the Boundary Committee, i.e. the requirements for effective local government and value for money.

5.4.1.2   *Kilkenny's Public Participation Network (PPN)*
Kilkenny Public Participation Network (PPN) was established in 2014 and covers the county of Kilkenny. The PPN is the framework for public engagement and participation and is the main link through which the local authority connects with the community, social inclusion and environmental sectors. The aim of the PPN is to facilitate and enable public organisations operating within the wider

community to articulate and give voice to a diverse range of views, issues and interests within the local government system.

The Piltown Municipal District is well represented by groups within the Ferrybank area and is one of the strongest Municipal District structures within the PPN, with 63 registered groups and a large number of members from the Ferrybank area actively engaged with Kilkenny County Council on a number of committees.

The physical community infrastructure and established practice for consultations in South County Kilkenny is in Ferrybank. If this was to be brought under another authority's control, it would no longer be a viable location for successfully running South Kilkenny community events.

The high level of community engagement under the PPN is a reflection of the work and commitment given to the area by Kilkenny County Council through the Ferrybank Community Project.

5.4.1.3   Ferrybank Community Development Strategic Plan 2015 – 2020

Following on from the Ferrybank Development Partnership the Ferrybank Community Development Strategy was compiled after extensive consultation and the completion of a review of the previous strategy. The priority actions in the current strategy are based on local needs as identified by the residents of Ferrybank and those service providers and community groups working in the area. The Ferrybank Strategy feeds directly into the recently produced Local Economic and Community Plans of Kilkenny and Waterford counties.

The need for a playground facility for the area has been identified. Further funding and supports will be invested through Kilkenny County Council's 2016 Community & Cultural Facilities Capital Scheme as an outcome of a collaborative process involving Kilkenny County Council Parks Department, the local area office and local community groups.

The evidence of the success of this project, and other community initiatives, is borne out by the local community itself in a recent news paper article headline *"FERRYBANK THRIVES IN TWO COUNTIES.*[46]*"*

To the Council this is a strong indication that the local community have not sought a boundary change. Progress made in recent years in service delivery, relationship building and engagement in the area would be interrupted and damaged by any boundary change.

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[46] Waterford Mail 22nd October 2015.

5.4.1.4   Smarter Travel

Kilkenny County Council is committed to Smarter Travel principles. The Council has prepared a Smarter Travel Strategy for the Ferrybank Area to include for;

- Introduction of cycle tracks.
- New and improved footpaths.
- Enhanced inter-community connectivity and connectivity to playgrounds, libraries and other community services.
-

In 2016 Kilkenny County Council will advance a Part 8 Proposal for the Abbeypark Road Refurbishment Scheme and funds in excess of €300,000 have been set aside for such provision.
Kilkenny County Council will also advance a Part 8 Proposal for the Waterford New Ross Greenway in 2016 providing for a significant tourism asset and a local amenity in the Area of Interest.
Additionally the Council has purchased land for a community playground and intends to develop same following on from a review of the Ferrybank Local Area Plan will be completed in 2016.

5.5   Effective and Convenient local government

In terms of convenience, the establishment of the area office and the library by Kilkenny County Council in the district centre has ensured that any service being delivered locally is being delivered in a convenient and accessible manner. 'Convenient' also has a temporal dimension and similar to other local authorities the services are delivered through normal business hours but where it necessitates, to facilitate the consumer, appropriate arrangements are made, e.g. after hours public consultations or on site inspections etc..

The services outlined above are being delivered in an appropriately convenient and accessible manner to meet the needs of the local community. The removal of Ferrybank from Kilkenny County Councils administrative area would result in the termination of local service delivery at the area office currently located there. Waterford does not have area offices in the metropolitan area, having closed it's office in Tramore with the merger. This would impact negatively on the effective and convenient local government services available to the remaining residents of the Piltown Municipal District. The provision of an alternative area office in south Kilkenny would result in the duplication of investment previously made by Kilkenny County Council for that purpose in Ferrybank. This would not represent a value for money investment and may prevent other planned projects and investments in the area.

Kilkenny County Council identified a need for the effective and convenient delivery of local government services in the south Kilkenny area. It invested heavily in the development of a library and area office facility. Having developed the physical infrastructure the local authority and local communities together established the Ferrybank facility as the consultation and engagement hub for the south Kilkenny area. This supports the implementation of the local community development agenda under LCDC, SICAP, LECP and the PPN. The removal of the Ferrybank facilities from Kilkenny County Council would have a profound impact on all service delivery for the Piltown Municipal District and on the areas capacity to fully benefit from current and future rural development initiatives such as LEADER and REDZ. Anything that might limit the areas capacity to maximise on rural development opportunities is not in the interest of effective local government.

There is no evidence that a boundary alteration will lead to improved service delivery, greater efficiency levels, economies of scale or more effective and convenient local government. It would

however result in additional costs and make newly operational and successful structures serving the affected area and much of south Kilkenny redundant.

The community have not sought a change to the boundary.   The newspaper article, and the level of submissions received, reflects the extent to which they not need it and do not want it.

Chapter 5: Key Points

- The Ferrybank community is thriving within current service delivery structures.
- The Council has established excellent working relationships in the area.
- Any forced separation of the area in question from County Kilkenny would lead to a participation gap that would ultimately lead to reduced volunteering and cohesion within the community.
- Local Authority services are already provided conveniently, in the Ferrybank Area Office and Library.
- The Council has put significant resources into capacity building and relationship building with the local community.
- There are a number of primary community groups active in the area, which would be negatively affected by the boundary alteration.
- A boundary alteration would require the making of a new LECP for both Kilkenny and Waterford at significant cost.
- The physical community infrastructure and established practice for consultations in South County Kilkenny is in Ferrybank.
- The issue of the boundary review was not raised during the public consultations on the Local Economic and Community Plan by any of the stakeholders, including the agencies with a role and responsibility for economic development.
- The local community have not requested it and clearly don't want it.
- A boundary alteration will not lead to more effective and convenient local government.
- The removal of the Ferrybank office would leave no service base or area office for the remaining Piltown Municipal District. Valuable resources would have to be diverted from service provision for the people of south Kilkenny to meet a need created by a boundary review only.
- If an alteration was to proceed, the Ferrybank/Slieverue area would be competing for resources in a City and County area that stretches all the way to Youghal Bridge.

6   Belview Strategic Area

6.1   Introduction

Belview is one of the two prime strategic investment locations in Kilkenny, the second being Kilkenny City.   Kilkenny County Council works pro-actively in collaboration with the Port of Waterford Company and other agencies to develop economic activity in the area since the early 1990's. Belview is a key strategic asset, not just for Kilkenny but for the entire South East region and supports the development of Waterford City as a gateway. A number of multinational companies have chosen to locate in Belview, the most recent being Glanbia Ingredients Ireland Ltd who opened a €180 million food & infant formula facility there in 2015.

6.2   History

The Belview port area is located five kilometres downstream from Waterford City on the western shore of the River Barrow where it is joined by the River Suir to form the Barrow/Suir estuary. It was here that the Port of Waterford chose, for commercial reasons, to relocate its port operations in 1990 from the quays in Waterford City.

1D2O9277 Photo: Peter Barrow Tel: 087-2559638, 7th January 2016

Figure 6.1 Aerial Photograph of Belview

The new port facilities opened in 1992, at a cost of £22 million, creating the closest Irish multi-modal port to mainland Europe, with quayside rail line access for cargo, good road network access and a shorter approach to open sea, turning and docking facilities for large ships including cruise liners. The quay was extended recently at a cost of €11 million.

Kilkenny County Council led a proactive partnership with the Port of Waterford to acquire a land bank to create an industrial development zone. A further partnership with the IDA saw the land bank increase to over 145 hectares. Waterford City Council was invited to join the partnership on a number of occasions. While constructive dialogue always existed the offer to become a partner was declined.

6.3   Planning Framework

Kilkenny County Council prioritised Belview as a key strategic development area since the County Development Plan of 1994. The most recent Local Area Plan adopted for the area in March 2009 is *The Ferrybank-Belview Local Area Plan* (See Section 3.7).   Belview has also been prioritised in the County Economic Strategy 2010 and the Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021.

The Local Economic and Community Plan for County Kilkenny 2016 – 2021 has been developed over 9 months of intensive analysis, evaluation, public consultation and strategic development. The plan has been developed based on Belview as a strategic pillar for the county providing jobs, investment and future potential to underpin the expanding economy of County Kilkenny.

A boundary revision will negate major elements to the economic strengths of the plan and will require re-drafting of the economic elements of the Local Economic and Community Plan.

6.4   Kilkenny County Council Investment

Kilkenny County Council had the foresight to acquire land in advance of industry coming in and had to secure loan finance to purchase a portion of the lands. This demonstrates the firm commitment of Kilkenny County Council to the development of the area. The cost of purchasing these lands at today's prices is estimated to be €7.17 million.

Infrastructural upgrades have been carried out, facilitated and supported by Kilkenny County Council and have been recognised as key factors in attracting industry into Belview. These include:

➢ Roads
  o N 29 Port link and access road network - cost €2m.
  o N 25 Waterford to New Ross improvement scheme - cost €18m.
  o M 9 Motorway construction.

➢ Wastewater
  o Waste Water Treatment Plant and sewerage scheme in partnership with IDA and Waterford City Council. Kilkenny County Council provided the land bank and a capital contribution.

➢ Water
  o Belview Strategic Water Supply Scheme – delivered in partnership with IDA – cost €23m.

> **Barry O'Leary, CEO of IDA**, speaking at the opening of the scheme in February 2012:
>
> *"Today marks a key milestone in the promotion and development of the South East Region and IDA's Strategic Land bank at Belview. The development of this Belview Strategic Water Supply Scheme better enables IDA to compete on a global scale for capital intensive advanced manufacturing projects for the Belview site. As demonstrated with this scheme, IDA will work with all other stakeholders in the Irish system to ensure that Ireland and the South East Region provides a uniquely attractive environment in which multinational companies can succeed and grow".*

6.5   Belview developed in partnership

Kilkenny County Council developed Belview in partnership with the Port of Waterford Company, Waterford Chamber, IDA and major employers. The main companies located in Belview include: Glanbia Ingredients Ireland Ltd, Smartply, Target Fertilizers, StoreAll, and Suir Shipping.

> **Jim Bergin, CEO and Executive Director, Glanbia Ingredients Ireland Ltd:**
>
> *"Kilkenny County Council had the foresight in partnership with the IDA to establish Belview as an outstanding location for a Food & Infant Formula facility.*
> *The approach to planning approval, while challenging within planning guidelines & regulations, was both proactive & efficient."*

Kilkenny County Council established the Belview Forum to drive development of the area and more recently an exporters forum had been established for the area.

6.6   Branding

This submission refers to Belview Port area and the Port of Waterford Company, physically located in Kilkenny. This is not unusual, as many large cities have key transport and infrastructure assets located outside of their functional area such as Dublin Airport located in Fingal County Council area and Belfast International Airport located in Antrim & Newtownabbey District Council. We do not believe that the location of the Port of Waterford in Kilkenny is a disadvantage to the operation or expansion of the port. The Belview brand and all that supports it is well established regionally, nationally and internationally. Unnecessary reorganisation at this time will potentially interrupt and limit its growth and development in the short to medium term. The regional strategy for the IDA set out a target of 44 new Foreign Direct Investment projects for the South East. With available IDA lands on site, it is highly likely that a sizeable number of this target will set up in Belview.

6.7   Strategic Importance

The proposed boundary revision would leave Kilkenny without a primed industrial development zone. The creation of a new industrial zone to replace Belview would require major capital investment and co-operation from a number of state agencies. **The uniqueness of Belview cannot be replicated.**

Belview accounts for 70% of the commercial rates income of the €2 million in the area of interest. The income has grown by 56% since 2005 when the last boundary revision was proposed despite the economic recession since 2008. Kilkenny County Council expect economic activity to at least double in size in the next twenty years. Based on the preliminary valuation of the loss of income as outlined in Chapter 7, the impact of the loss of Belview is estimated at €80 million.

The transfer of such a strategic asset as Belview to Waterford would represent a major disincentive for Local Authorities to invest in infrastructure in areas which may in the future be arbitrarily transferred to other counties.

Any private sector organisation investing in such a strategic asset would have a legitimate expectation for a return on its investment.

The North Quays Strategic Development Zone in Waterford will require significant investment of capital and workload by Waterford City and County Council, and there are still many industrial sites located in Waterford City that require investment, promotion and development as noted in this report. The most significant being the IDA parks on the Cork Road, where there is a significant Foreign Direct Investment presence and capacity to expand further.

The St. Francis Abbey Brewery site, in the centre of Kilkenny City, is not an alternative location to Belview. The Masterplan identifies commercial, office and education functions for this site and it is not appropriate for large manufacturing industry which would not comply with appropriate planning for city centre development.

Chapter 6: Key Points

- Kilkenny County Council has proactively invested in and developed Belview port in partnership with the Port of Waterford Company, state agencies and private sector companies.

- A number of large multinational companies have facilities there providing significant employment in the region.

- The transfer of such a strategic asset as Belview to Waterford would represent a major disincentive for Local Authorities to invest in infrastructure in areas which may in the future be arbitrarily transferred to other counties.

- The port plays a critical role in the support of Waterford as a gateway for the South East Region.

- Belview is a unique irreplaceable asset, the transfer of which would cause serious damage to the development of Kilkenny and the Region.

- The current level of commercial rates derived from companies operating in the port is €1.1 million per annum. This will increase by €300K during 2016 and 2017 as a result of new properties being added and revision to existing properties on the list.

- The Preliminary valuations of the loss of income from Belview area is €80m.

- Belview has significant capacity for future development and Kilkenny County Council expect commercial activity to double current levels over the next 20 years with significant capacity for development thereafter.

7   Financial Impact

7.1   Introduction

A boundary revision as proposed would have a detrimental effect on the finances of Kilkenny County Council. The Council has adopted a prudent approach to the management of its finances through the economic recession over the last eight years. A boundary change would result in the transfer of significant income streams on Commercial Rates, Local Property Tax and Development Contributions direct to Waterford City and County Council.   There would be no net savings opportunities arising to the Council in the cost of provision of services to offset this loss of income.   The loss of income would seriously impact on the amount of discretionary funding available to fund projects for community and voluntary groups and funding for economic development initiatives that have been introduced by the Council in recent years (example rates incentive for vacant properties). The loss of income would also limit the capacity of the Council to carry out key strategic capital projects that are necessary for the continued development of Kilkenny City and County.

7.2   Overview of financial performance

7.2.1   Income & Expenditure Account

Kilkenny County Council has managed its finances prudently over the years. In particular during the severe economic downturn of the last eight years the Council has maintained a balanced budget position with a small deficit of €68k on the Income and Expenditure Account as at December 2014. The forecast deficit at the end of 2015 is €38k on an annual budget of €65.5m. This is a major achievement given the reduction in funding available to the Council during this time. Total annual expenditure decreased from €88m in 2008 to €69.9m in 2014. The Local Government Fund decreased by €14.8m over this period of which €7m related to the transfer of Water Services to Irish Water.

The total commercial rate demand increased by €2.1m (12.6%) over this period due to the addition of new properties to the listing. Total staff numbers were reduced by 24% since 2008 yet the Council continued to deliver an efficient service to the public. The staffing level of 5.18 staff (wte) per 1000 of population compared with the national average of 5.69 (wte) per 1000 population[47]. The average spend per head of population based on Budget 2015 data in Kilkenny is €686 compared with the national average of €852. The economic upturn and the public expectation for enhanced services will necessitate increases in both of these figures as resources allow.

The National Oversight and Audit Commission (NOAC) issued a report in December 2015 reviewing Performance Indicators in all Local Authorities. Section 10 of that report presents Key Performance Indicators on Finance for the years 2010 to 2014. A copy of these tables has been included in Appendices 8 to 11 of this report for comparison purposes.   The five year summary of the balances on the Income and Expenditure Account from the NOAC Report is included in Appendix 8.   It is worth noting that fifteen of the thirty one Local Authorities had deficits greater than €100k at the end of 2014.

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[47] 2014 Service Indicator Returns.

7.2.2   Cash Collection

Kilkenny County Council maintains a strong focus on cash collection. The performance of the Council for 2014 is shown on Table 7.1. It is expected that collection levels for 2015 will be slightly ahead of 2014 levels.

Table 7.1 Cash Collection	Cash Available for Collection €m	Collection % Kilkenny	Collection % National Average	Ranking
Commercial Rates	17.9	89%	77%	2
Housing Rents	7.5	92%	84%	8
Housing Loans	3.2	77%	78%	7

Kilkenny County Council had the second highest collection level for Commercial Rates in 2014 out of the 31 Local Authorities. The comparable figures for all Local Authorities for the period 2010 to 2014 are included in Appendices 9 to 11 as published in the NOAC Report. Good collection rates are critical for cash flow management and minimisation of overdraft facilities.

7.2.3   Bank Loans

Total bank borrowings owed by the Council at December 2014 amounted to €50m, analysed as follows:

	€m
Housing Loans	40.4
Water Assets – Recoupable	7.6
Other Loans	2.0
	50.0

The housing loans were matched by loans receivable. The Mortgage Loan has been managed very well reducing the total arrears by 50% since 2012 to €660k as at December 2014. The water service loans were redeemed in 2015 funded by the DOECLG as part of the transfer of Water Services to Irish Water.   The other loans will be fully paid off by the end of 2016.   This ensures that Kilkenny County Council has the borrowing capacity to deliver key strategic capital projects in the coming years as detailed in Section 7.6 of this chapter.

The capital investment is essential for Kilkenny to fulfil its role as a Hub to support Waterford in its role as a Gateway.

A schedule of all loans payable by each Local Authority as at December 2014 prepared by DOECLG is shown in Appendix 12.   Only three Local Authorities including Kilkenny County Council had other loan balances of less than €5m as at December 2014.

These results demonstrate that the Council has consistently maintained a strong focus on prudent budget management and cash collection through a very difficult period for both business owners and the public in general.

7.3   Commercial Rates Income

7.3.1   Commercial Rates – County Profile

Kilkenny County Council currently has 2,477 Commercial Rate Customers throughout the City and County.   The total rates levied for 2015 amounted to €18.4m.   The forecast level of strike-off for vacancy and non rateable properties is expected to be in the region of €3.4m giving a net amount collected of €15.0m.

The actual rate levied is made up of the valuation issued by the Valuation Office multiplied by the Annual Rate on Valuation (ARV) set by the Council each year.   Kilkenny County Council has had one of the lowest ARVs of all Local Authorities for a number of years.   Appendix 13 sets out the historical ARVs for all rating authorities since 2008[48].   Both former rating authorities in Kilkenny did not increase the ARV between 2008 and 2015 in the interest of supporting businesses and economic activity throughout this period. This was in line with the strategy adopted by the majority of local authorities over this period. Following the Local Government Reform Act of 2014 with the abolition of the former Borough Council Kilkenny County Council are required over time to harmonize the ARVs for both former rating authorities.

As part of the harmonisation process the Council adopted a single ARV of 54.9 for Budget 2015, however as no change was allowed under the legislation for 2015 the actual ARV for 2015 remained the same as 2014.   The move towards harmonization commences in 2016.   Kilkenny County Council adopted an ARV of 54.65 for the former County Rate Payers and 58.95 for the former Borough Rate Payers for budget 2016. The comparable ARV for Waterford City Council prior to their merger with Waterford County Council was 66.22 which was 27% higher than the comparable Kilkenny County ARV.   Following the merger the ARV was reduced to 60.37% which is 10.4% higher than the ARV for Kilkenny County Council for 2016.   Despite the historical gap in commercial rates between Waterford City Council and Kilkenny County Council there is no evidence of any leakage to Kilkenny.

7.3.2   Commercial Rates – Area of Interest

There are currently 98 properties on the property valuation listing in the Area of Interest with a total rate demand for 2015 of €1.7m.   In addition there are a further eight properties to be valued by the Valuation Office with an estimated annual rates income of €400k. A number of these properties will be added to the listing for 2016 and the remainder will be added for 2017.   This will bring the total annual rate demand in the Area of Interest to €2.1m from 2017 onwards. The current level of strike off for vacancy/non-rateable properties in the Area of Interest is €103k per annum bringing the total net rates income to €2.0m per annum, which represents 13% of the total rates income for Kilkenny.

The Area of Interest currently has 190 hectares zoned for commercial development as follows:

Table 7.2 Zoned Commercial Development Land	
Objective	Hectares
Specialist Industrial Activity	53
Pharmaceutical Industry Technology	25
Development of Part Facilities & Industry	111
Total	190

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[48] Department of Environment Community & Local Government website.

Assuming a plot ratio of 0.5 this provides for potential future commercial development in the Area of Interest of 952,000 m^2 of floor area. Given the potential area available there is a projected increase of 50% in the commercial rates income over the next ten years and it is expected that income will double over the next 20 years.   The total Rates Income in the Area of Interest has increased by 67% since 2005 when the previous boundary revision was being considered.

The estimated value of the loss to Kilkenny County Council in the event of a boundary revision is considered in Section 7.8.

7.4   Local Property Tax

Local Property Tax (LPT) was introduced in 2014 to provide a sustainable source of funding for Local Authorities into the future.   2015 was the first year of the new funding structure using LPT. 80% of the LPT collected is retained locally.   The balance of 20% is transferred to an equalisation fund which is redistributed to Local Authorities.   The distribution of the equalisation fund is linked to the allocation from the Local Government Fund in 2014.   The allocation from the equalisation fund is apportioned such that no local authority would receive a lower allocation from LPT in 2015 than they received from the Local Government Fund in 2014 assuming no decision by the members to change the Base LPT rates up or down.

The number of residential units in the area of interest is estimated at 2,290.   Using the valuation bands for the County as a whole the total estimated Local Property Tax for the Area of Interest is €515k per annum as per (Appendix 14).   Applying the retention rate of 80% the annual loss of LPT on the current stock would be €412k per annum.

The area of interest currently has 228 hectares zoned for residential development as per Table.7.3. Applying the average density rates there is potential for development of an additional 6,171 housing units.

Table 7.3 Zoned Residential Development Land					
Zoning	**Objective**	**Density/ha**	**Area/ha**	**Average density/ha**	**No. of Units**
R1	Resi Low	15-20	2.86	17.5	50.05
R2	Resi Low Medium	20-30	12.74	25	443.5
R3	Resi Medium	30-40	16.31	35	570.85
C1	Urban Village	40-50	7.52	45 (over 60% of area)	203.04
Phase 1 Subtotal			*39.43*		*1267.44*
P2	Phasing 2		188.6	26	4903.6
Total			**228.03**		**6171**

The estimated value of the lost income from LPT in the event of a boundary revision is set out in Section 7.8.

7.5   Development Contributions

The Area of Interest has 190 hectares of land zoned for commercial development and 228 hectares zoned for residential development as previously stated.

Taking a conservative assumption that 25% of the commercial land and 20% of the residential land is developed over the next twenty years the net present value of the lost income from development contributions is €11m. This issue is dealt with further in Section 7.8 of this chapter.

7.6   Kilkenny County Council Capital Programme

Kilkenny County Council will be adopting a revised three year Capital Programme for the period 2016 – 2018 in the coming months.   The most recent Capital Programme adopted by the Council in December 2014 had a total budget expenditure of €75.4m for the period 2015 – 2017.   The budget capital expenditure for the next five years is expected to be in the region of €120m.   There are a number of key strategic projects for the county to be developed as follows:

1.   St. Francis Abbey Site
2.   Belview Development
3.   Completion of Ring Road for Kilkenny City
4   N76 Callan Road Re-alignment
5.   County and City Library
6.   Completion of St. Mary's Museum
7.   Development of critical infrastructure in the city to facilitate new residential development and also the development of the new schools recently announced for Kilkenny City
8.   Completion of the Central Access Scheme
9.   New Fire Station in Graiguenamanagh
10.   Development of a number of other strategic tourist attractions in the City and County
11.   Works to alleviate flooding problems (Local Contribution)

It is anticipated that between €30m and €35m of this budget will have to be funded from the Council's own resources/bank borrowings.   The loss of a substantial income stream in the event of a boundary revision would prevent a number of these critical projects progressing.

7.7   Review of Financial Impact on each Service Division

Kilkenny County Council like all other Local Authorities has undergone significant restructuring in the last eight years.   Staff reductions have been implemented and significant savings have been delivered in the procurement of goods and services, under local and national framework agreements.   The drive for savings/efficiencies will continue in particular with the introduction of shared services across a number of service areas.   A boundary revision will inevitably cause tensions in existing relationships and make the delivery of shared services more challenging.   Existing evidence would suggest that boundary revisions don't lead to savings/efficiencies in the delivery of services as outlined by the Galway Review Committee[49].

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[49] The Galway Local Government Review Committee Report August 2015 p27

A review of the financial impact of a boundary revision as proposed on the net cost of each service division has been carried out.   The estimated net annual loss resulting to Kilkenny County Council amounts to €86k as outlined in Table 7.4.

Table 7.4 Financial Impact of a boundary change on cost of services			
Service Division	Reduction in Expenditure €'000	Reduction in Income €'000	(Loss) Benefit €'000
Housing & Building	53	160	(107)
Roads Transport and Safety	136	228	(92)
Water Services	-	-	-
Planning and Economic Development	49	55	(6)
Environment Services	25	17	8
Recreation and Amenities	42	7	35
Agriculture, Education, Health and Welfare	-	-	-
Miscellaneous Services	76	-	76
Total	381	467	(86)

7.7.1   Housing & Building

The total number of houses owned by Kilkenny County Council in the Area of Interest is 46 which represents 2% of Kilkenny County Council's total stock.   The annual rental income from these units is €129k, and the annual maintenance cost is €35k of which only 40% would be saved in the event of a boundary revision amounting to €14k.   The only other area in housing impacted would be the grants for the elderly and disabled.   The average annual spend over the last four years on these grants in the AOI is €39k giving an annual net saving of €8k, representing the portion funded from the Council's own resources. Given the scale of the activities that would be transferred no other opportunities for cost savings would arise.   The net loss would be €107k per annum.

7.7.2   Roads, Transport & Safety

There are 10 kilometres of national primary roads in the area of interest (16% of the County total), 7 kilometres of regional road (2% of County total) and 65 kilometres of local roads (2% of County total).   The total funding provided by central Government in 2015 for the maintenance of these roads is €228k. This funding would be lost to Kilkenny if the area was transferred. Some savings associated with public lighting and the Council's own funding for public maintenance would accrue. The net loss is €92k.

7.7.3   Water Services
A boundary revision would have no financial impact on Water Services as the cost of the service is funded by Irish Water

7.7.4   Planning and Economic Development
This division incorporates a wide range of services from Planning to Economic Development, Community and Heritage.   The cost base is largely fixed in nature and a boundary revision would provide minimal opportunity for cost savings.   The estimated reduction in annual planning fee income is €55k.   Staffing levels would reduce by one FTE over time with an annual cost savings estimated at €49k.

The net loss would be €6k per annum.

7.7.5   Environmental Services
The only area for potential savings in this area relate to the fire service.   All other services such as street cleaning, litter management and maintenance of burial grounds are provided by the Council staff and equipment.   These costs could not be reduced in the event of a boundary revision. The contribution to Waterford Fire Service and to the East Regional Control Centre would reduce by approximately €25k in total.   The estimated reduction in income for Fire Certificate applications is €17k per annum. The net saving to the Council would be €8k per annum.

7.7.6   Recreation and Amenity
The only two areas impacted in this division in the event of a boundary revision are Library and Recreation and Amenities. The estimated reduction in Library costs would be €22k per annum consisting of maintenance costs and the cost of provision of books.   It is assumed that the library staff would not transfer to Waterford City and County Council.   The estimated reduction in library fee income is €7k per annum. The cost of maintenance of Parks and Amenities would reduce by €20k per annum relating to the cost of the external contractors. The net saving arising could be €35k per annum.

7.7.7   Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare
A boundary revision would have no financial impact on this division.

7.7.8   Miscellaneous Services
The costs included in this division cover income collection, rates strike-off due to vacancy etc., cost of Morgue and Coroner, Local Representation and Civic Leadership and administration of the Motor Tax Office. Kilkenny County Council have already put in place a centralised team to manage income collection for the whole county.   A boundary revision as proposed would not facilitate any further cost savings. A boundary revision would result in the reduction of two elected representatives with an annual saving of €56k.   A boundary revision would have no material impact on insurance premiums as the main liability premiums are not levied based on population.   A nominal saving of €20k per annum has been included for insurance premiums.   The net saving would amount to €76k per annum.

7.8 Value of Lost Income

As outlined throughout this chapter the loss of income would have a serious impact on the finances of Kilkenny County Council. A preliminary valuation of the loss of income has been carried out. PricewaterhouseCoopers were engaged to assess the valuation performed by Kilkenny County Council and their report is included in Appendix 15.

The net present value of the loss to Kilkenny County Council that would result from a boundary alteration amounts to €110m

The key assumptions used in the calculations are as follows:

1. Commercial Rates
   ➢ Annual Income in Year 1 of €2m
   ➢ Increase by 50% to €3m per annum by Year 10
   ➢ Increase by 100% to €2m per annum by Year 20
   ➢ Terminal value in Year 20 to provide for payment in perpetuity
   ➢ Provision for capital expenditure of €4m on Belview included.

2. Local Property Tax
   ➢ Annual Income of €412k in Year 1
   ➢ 38% increase in annual income to €570k by Year 10
   ➢ 63% increase in annual income to €671k by Year 20
   ➢ 80% retention rule to remain
   ➢ No change to the base rate of LPT each year
   ➢ Terminal value in Year 20 to provide for payment in perpetuity
   ➢ Impact of future increases in property values on LPT not included

3. Development Contributions
   ➢ Total contributions of €5.9 by Year 10
   ➢ Total contributions of €8.9m by Year 30
   ➢ Terminal value in Year 20 to provide for payment in perpetuity

4. General Assumptions
   ➢ Net present value calculated using a 4% discount rate as advised in the PWC report
   ➢ 0% inflation assumed
   ➢ Compensation required in perpetuity
   ➢ The net loss of €86k arising from the cost of service provision has been excluded from the calculations
   ➢ The estimated value of assets that would be transferred has not been included as a detailed valuation of all assets would have to be carried out in the event of a boundary revision

The net present value of the loss that would arise amounts to €110m.   This represents an estimate of the compensation that would be required in the event of a boundary revision in addition to the

value of any assets being transferred. These calculations are preliminary estimates only and would be subject to further detailed analysis.

Compensation will need to be paid in perpetuity. Such a level of compensation would present serious financial challenges to Waterford City and County Council and would require support from central Government. This is contrary to the terms of reference.

Chapter 7: Key Points

- **A preliminary estimate of the value of the income lost to KCC is €110m.**
- **A Boundary revision would not present any significant opportunities for cost savings.**
- **Loss of discretionary funding for local community groups and economic development initiatives.**
- **The provision of compensation to this level in perpetuity would present serious financial challenges for Waterford City and County Council and would require support from Central Government contrary to the terms of reference.**
- **The delivery of currently proposed capital projects for the people of Kilkenny would no longer be possible due to the projected financial impact of the proposed boundary review.**
- **The curtailment of capital projects as an inevitable outcome of this boundary review would represent inequality and lack of fairness which could be challenged by affected groups and individuals.**
- **The completion of key strategic Capital Projects is essential for KCC to develop and grow to fulfil its role as a Hub in order to support the growth of Waterford as the gateway and the growth of the South East Region.**

8   Future Challenges and Opportunities

8.1   Introduction

The South East is long acknowledged as being underperforming. Accepted analysis has established the following sectoral and infrastructural challenges and opportunities for Waterford and the region.

8.1.1   One Voice

There is a renewed national focus on the region in the last number of years following the downsizing and closure of some significant employers. This focus had resulted in significant job announcements for Waterford, (1,035 jobs in total)[50] all delivered with the current boundary arrangement.

Kilkenny's experience would be similar to Cork County in that **the boundary has not been raised as an issue by any Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) companies**. Nor has it been raised by any of the agencies tasked with attracting FDI to the region.

The focus on the regions has resulted in a dedicated IDA resource now based in Waterford. The government has established an Implementation Committee (chaired by Frank O'Regan) formerly of Bausch and Lomb for the South East Action Plan for Jobs, with a steering group appointed from eminent private sector representatives.

It should be noted that in examining the issues facing the Region and charting the way forward the issue of a **boundary alteration was not raised by the private sector, affected local authorities, state agencies or advisors**. Neither was it seen as an issue in the following:

- Regional Jobs Action Plan prepared and launched in late 2015, following a widespread consultation with stakeholders in the region.
- Waterford Economic Strategy prepared in 2014 only raised one threat the *"Lack of cohesive regional approach."*
- The Waterford Local Economic and Community Plan
- The Kilkenny Local Economic and Community Plan which was subject to a significant public consultation process, including consultation in the Ferrybank area.

The issue identified in all plans and strategies for the region is the need for the South East, with a population of 500,000, to operate as a more cohesive unit and speak with one voice.

The urban structure of the South East, with six competing urban centres within 45 minutes commute of Waterford is unique. The focus of the local authorities, state agencies and interest groups in the region should be to work collaboratively on unifying objectives such as:

- The University of the South East
- The Three Sisters Bid for the European Capital of Culture 2020
- Product development and marketing under a joint tourism strategy capitalising on the brand of Ireland's Ancient East
- A regional greenway network
- Development of Waterford Regional Airport
- Promotion and development of Belview strategic area.

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[50] 635 Ida supported jobs 2013- 2015, 430 Enterprise Ireland jobs 2013 - 2015

The South East is now operating within the Southern Region, one of three new regional assemblies. The Southern Region is made up of Waterford and two much larger cities and their respective catchments, Cork and Limerick. Anything less than a united voice will be detrimental to the South East and will inevitably result in the South East continuing to underperform. This unified voice must be heard when the National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy are being prepared. It is essential that South East speaks as one on key priorities.

> **"We are Better Together (Ní neart go cur le chéile)"[1]**
> **UNITED VOICE FOR THE SOUTH EAST**
>
> Source: The Three Sisters European Capital of Culture Bid Book

As stated by Minister Paudie Coffey: "*Creating conditions for sustainable regional and therefore national economic success must be built upon the foundation of the inputs of all key actors, private sector, public sector, infrastructure providers, innovation and skill providers, all working together to fully activate the key potential and strengths of the regions, so that they can contribute optimally to the performance of the state as a whole.*"[51]

8.1.2   Planning

The issues identified in planning and development are as follows:

- Implementation of the Planning Land Use and Transportation Study PLUTS.
- Preparation of a joint retail strategy.
- Development of an enhanced retail offer for Waterford centred on the Michael Street redevelopment.
- Support balanced regional development through the implementation of the National Spatial Strategy objectives within the gateway and hub structure.

The current PLUTS 2004 -2020 provides a framework for the planning of the wider gateway region as outlined in Chapter 3. Many of the key objectives in the PLUTS related to the North Quays, which came into Waterford City and County Council's control in 2015 and is now a Strategic Development Zone (announced January 2016).

The original master plan for the North Quays was prepared in 2008 and will inevitably require updating to reflect current economic realities and planning changes but the key principles remain unchanged. With focus and drive, the change to public ownership, and designation as a Strategic Development Zone will allow for unimpeded development of the site.

PLUTS II 2020-2040 should be the strategic framework embedding the principles of the emerging National Planning Framework and Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy in a cohesive manner into the local development plans.

The PLUTS II should provide for;

- Accelerated growth of Waterford as the Regional Gateway
- The preparation of the much needed joint retail strategy for the constituent Local authorities.

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[51] Mr. Paudie Coffey: Opening address to conference "Creating the Regions of Tomorrow" EPSON September 26th 2014 Maynooth University

- Urban Regeneration in Waterford based firmly on the opportunity sites[52] which will give a rebalance of development towards the city centre (see Appendix 16).
- Development of the North Quays.

Improved motorway access makes an agreed retail strategy essential to protect and enhance an already fragile Waterford City Centre. Waterford as the regional Gateway is competing with the other large cities of Cork, Limerick, and Galway as well as destinations such as Liffey Valley, Dundrum Shopping Centre and Kildare Village.

PLUTS II should establish the implementing Steering Group and agree a process for resolving issues or, failing agreement referral to an independent adjudicator such as An Bord Pleanála or possibly the Office of the Planning Regulator.

> **Implementation of current PLUTS**
> **Preparation of PLUTS II 2020- 2040**

8.1.3   Regional Economic Performance

The **Implementation Committee (chaired by Frank O'Regan) for the South East Action Plan for Jobs** was established in 2015. This recently established group, steered by eminent private sector business leaders, has agreed six key objectives for the **Region:**

a. Establish significant Global Business Services and ICT hubs in key urban districts in the Region.
b. Become the Leader in convergent technologies which design and develop AgTech, Engineering and MedTech solutions.
c. Inspire Innovation, Growth and Entrepreneurship in the Pharmaceutical/Biotechnology sector in the Region.
d. Re-inspire and support the Region to re-discover and to exploit it's entrepreneurial capabilities.
e. Brand and Market the region and enhance the marketing capability of sectors within the region.
f. Build appropriate skills and narrow the education gap between the South East and the leading regions in the country.

"For the South-East to succeed in generating economic growth and creating employment a sense of shared purpose to create real regional cohesion is prerequisite. This will involve inter-county and inter-agency collaboration to eliminate needless layers of bureaucracy and deliver effective change."[53]

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[52] Opportunity sites identified in Waterford City Development Plan 2013- 2019
[53] Joint Committee on Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation South East Economic Development Strategy 2013 -2020 p14.

In recognition of this unique challenge in the South East region the five local authorities have agreed to fund the post of a Regional Director for two years, to work with the Chair (Mr. Frank O 'Regan) and the regional stakeholders in an effort to create real regional cohesion to reverse underperformance and deliver critical objectives. In other regions of the country the delivery will be monitored and reported on, with only secretariat support provided for the chair.   The Implementation Committee for the South East Action Plan for Jobs has stressed the need for the region to speak with one voice.

Deliver the Regional Forum Objectives

8.1.4   Rebranding

As stated by the current Chief Executive of Waterford City and County Council, there have been "*specific issues with branding*" [54], for Waterford itself, as the gateway city, and also for the South East. This is an acknowledgment of specific issues with branding, arising from industrial strife or other issues such as socio economic factors that fed into it. A re-branding will assist in the promotion of tourism and inward investment.

This issue is high on the regional agenda (see point (e) above of the South East Economic Forum objectives). It is also raised as a significant challenge by the IDA. The "Sunny South East" is no longer an adequate calling card for FDI. Work on a brand is a priority; a difficult task could be made impossible if there is any further cause for division in the Region.

The amalgamation of the two Waterford authorities represents an opportunity for revitalisation and rebranding for Waterford and the South East. **A new brand to sell Waterford and the South East in both business and tourism terms is required irrespective of any boundary change.   Therefore rebranding the area will not be solved by a boundary change.**

Brand and market the South East Region

8.1.5   The European Capital of Culture

The bid for the European Capital of Culture 2020 has provided Waterford, Kilkenny and Wexford with a once in a lifetime opportunity to work in a ground breaking partnership. It uses culture as an economic driver for a unique region made up of cities and towns, together with the very rural areas of the three counties, and work on a cohesive strategy to act as a catalyst for change. The bid is based upon *"Recognising and understanding that we are better together"* within a *"new ambitious model of public policy and partnership which connects rural and urban areas, **puts cross-boundary sharing** and **cross-sectoral development** to the heart of planning"*.

The Bid Book is up front in acknowledging the poor history of co-operation and cohesion but commits to a new way of working putting aside competition for the greater good of the region.

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[54] Michael Walsh at **South-East Economic Development: 18 Jun 2013: Oireachtas Joint and Select Committees**

The Bid vision is:

"Three Sisters European Capital of Culture 2020 will enable us to focus our collective creative ambition to delivering an informed and sustainable culture-led development for our region. Harnessing the cooperative, collaborative and creative potential of our urban and rural areas, we will foster new ways of working that connect, support and transform the lives of our citizens and embrace our shared European heritage and future."

This partnership shows the commitment and leadership of the three Local Authorities to face well acknowledged challenges and this local leadership deserves and needs to be given an opportunity to work. This willing partnership could transform the South East.

The learning and experience in Gateshead, UK of the potential of the European Capital of Culture to advance cohesiveness and opportunities across traditional boundaries regardless of bid outcome is a source of inspiration. The concern, that a change in the boundary will damage this progress and even cause regression in the region, is very real.

> **Working together in a ground-breaking partnership**

8.1.6   Tourism

One of the ten key priorities identified for the South East in the South East Economic Development Strategy 2013 -2020 was "*supporting tourism as a key driver of economic growth through a coordinated and integrated regional strategy and the development of a strategic tourism vision.*"[55] Fáilte Ireland's counter brand to the Wild Atlantic Way provides Waterford, Kilkenny and the South East region with a significant opportunity to join forces to grow tourism right across the region. The brand is particularly suited to the tourism proposition of Waterford City and Kilkenny.   Given the level of state funding invested in the Viking Triangle in Waterford and the Medieval Mile in Kilkenny there is a need for both to work together to get a return for the region for the public money invested.   This will require working across boundaries, which are invisible to tourists, in particular to the high spending international tourists, and will require joint funding of marketing initiatives with a particular focus on the two tourist access points to the region, Waterford Airport and Rosslare Europort.

> **Regional Tourism Strategy to drive economic growth**

8.1.7   Waterford as the Gateway

The role of Waterford as the Gateway to the South East is to be a focus for business, residential, service and amenity functions. Waterford has the infrastructure in place to deliver the two neighbourhoods of Carrickphierish and Gracedieu. The thirty two classroom school opened in September 2015 with significant capacity for student growth.   Planning is in place for youth and childcare facilities to meet the needs of 4,000 households.

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[55] Joint Committee on Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation South East Economic Development Strategy 2013 -2020 p15.

Waterford needs to enhance its retail offer to build vitality, vibrancy and retail choice in the city centre. To achieve this delivery of the Michael Street opportunity site is essential. It is 15 years in the planning and will still require a new planning permission and significant public funding on urban renewal enhancement to secure private sector investment. There are nine opportunity sites in central locations capable of facilitating economic development including the North Quays Strategic Development Zone.

This will achieve sustainable social, economic and physical critical mass in a compact city form which is an overarching objective of the Waterford City Development Plan.

**Accelerate the growth of the Gateway
Enhance the Retail Offer
Develop the North Quays**

8.1.8　Kilkenny as the Hub

Kilkenny will support Waterford as the Gateway but significant investment is required to ensure that Kilkenny can fulfil this role.

To maintain and develop its role as a Hub in support of the Gateway and the Region the following infrastructure will be required:

1. St. Francis Abbey Site
2. Belview Development
3. Completion of Ring Road for Kilkenny City
4. N76 Callan Road Re-alignment
5. County and City Library
6. Completion of St. Mary's Museum
7. Development of critical infrastructure in the city to facilitate new residential development and also the development of the new schools recently announced for Kilkenny City
8. Completion of the Central Access Scheme
9. New Fire Station in Graiguenamanagh
10. Development of a number of other strategic tourist attractions in the City and County
11. Works to alleviate flooding problems (Local Contribution)

The loss of a substantial income stream in the event of a boundary revision would prevent the delivery of Kilkenny's ambitious and necessary capital programme.

Kilkenny's performance as a hub will be severely and unnecessarily impacted

8.1.9   Delivery across Boundaries

Across boundaries there will inevitably be potential for duplication and crossover of administration which require attention on a case by case basis. As this issue has been part of the local government system in Ireland for many years, provision has been made in existing legislative arrangements to deal with the administration of functions across boundaries.   Practical arrangements around housing, planning, street cleaning, rents, repairs, enforcement, development management, library service etc. can be addressed using legislation and models of best practice.

The solution can be through Shared Services, Service Level Agreements or Section 85 agreements. Examples are the flood scheme, the fire service, derelict sites and the N25 Waterford bypass (see Appendix 17).

This would resolve any issues to sites such as the former Ard Rí hotel site and Abbey Community Collage etc. The local authorities have gained much experience in innovative solutions in recent years and the principle of a lead authority is now normal for many services.

> **Maximise the use of existing legislation for effective service delivery across boundaries**

8.1.10 University

The delivery of a technical university is the single biggest issue facing Waterford and the South East. The designation of the Technological University of the South East is already a commitment in the current Programme for Government.

Moving ahead with this would have an enormously transformative impact for both Waterford and the South Eastern Region as a whole from both a psychological and economic perspective. As stated in the Economic Strategy for Waterford City & County – Final Report, "*the presence of a strong University is a key asset for any city/region competing for international investment*."

A way forward has been mapped in National Policy charting how the Technological University can be achieved.

Local authorities have no direct role in relation to third level education, but they do have a strong role to play in economic development. This necessitates that they play a leadership role and create an environment conducive to third level institutes within the region working together. Together we need to show leadership to find workable solutions to very sensitive issues.

A change in boundary has never been cited as an impediment to achieving a university for the South East.

In truth, a change in boundary could further damage the relationship between both Institutes of Technology, as it may be perceived as Waterford, the more dominant partner, taking over rather than working in partnership. Such a change would create a local emphasis acting as a barrier to collaboration and fostering a competitive approach where one party is seen to gain and another to lose.

> **Facilitate the delivery of a Technical University for the South East**

8.1.11 Infrastructure

The delivery of significant infrastructure has transformed the South East and in particular Waterford and Kilkenny in the last ten years. Many of the issues cited in the past by agencies as impeding the attraction of FDIs have been addressed.   Improvements have included: the M9 motorway, rail service improvement, water and waste water infrastructure, ring road to the south, the N25 bypass to the north and significant investment in WIT (in particular its research capacity).

Broadband

Dark fibre will be essential for data-intensive activities over time, and if Waterford and the region wants to host the industries of the future the region will need to have future-proof high bandwidth infrastructure available.

While there is some broadband available at Belview, the area would benefit from connection to the MAN network in Waterford. Issues are:

- Linking of Waterford to the Aurora dark fibre network and through the South East Region.
- An extension of the MAN in Waterford City to encompass developing areas in the city such as Belview Port is required.

Broadband delivery is a national challenge which requires cross county collaboration. A boundary review can make no positive contribution to the delivery of improved connectivity.

Roads

Major progress has been achieved with the construction of the N25 Waterford Bypass and Outer Ring Road, and the M9 motorway giving much greater road transport connectivity. The following issues are identified:

- N11 (Arklow/Rathnew; Enniscorthy By-pass)
- N25 (New Ross By-pass)
- N24 (various improvement schemes along N24 route)
- To enhance connectivity between the main regional centres (Clonmel, Kilkenny, Carlow, Wexford and Waterford), improvements in some secondary roads will be required – for example the N76 and the R700/705.

Regional Airport

An extension to the runway at Waterford Airport is required to enhance international access for tourism and business to the South East region. A financial contribution from the local authorities in this regard may be required.

Public Transport

- Review of Waterford and regional bus services (private and public).
- Examine the potential for improved rail services, including possibly a Waterford-Kilkenny-Carlow shuttle rail link.

A Third River Crossing- Waterford City

Athird river crossing would provide connection to the industrial areas of Waterford City from the Port via the ring road. Kilkenny has consistently included this objective in it's development plan. The

delivery of the project does not necessitate a boundary change. The second bridge involved three local authorities and its delivery was not impeded.

All of these challenges and opportunities require elements of cooperation, collaboration and coordination.

A boundary alteration is not required for these to be delivered. On the contrary, a boundary change would cause signifcant impediments to realising them.

Climate Change
The challenge of climate change is one of the major issues facing local authorites into the future. The impacts of climate change are being felt already as evidenced through the recent flood events. Flood events have no respect for boundaries. This is a challenge to be met through co-operation and coordination between local authorities across administrative boundaries.

Chapter 8 Key Points

- Waterford as the Gateway and the South East Region needs to focus on and put its energy into addressing the Region's underperformance.

- A boundary alteration is clearly not required for Waterford to grow. There is more than adequate serviced land to meet population growth; Carrickphierish and Gracedieu planned neighbourhoods will accommodate 4000 households, the City Centre Retail offer will be significantly enhanced by the delivery of Michael St Shopping Centre, and the North Quays coupled with eight other opportunities sites within the City provide significant job creation opportunities. All achievable within the currently boundary.

- A boundary alteration could seriously undermine Kilkenny's capacity to contribute to regional development and growth.

- We must support the private/public sectors in their work on the **Implementation Committee (chaired by Frank O'Regan) for the South East Action Plan for Jobs** to deliver the six agreed key objectives for the Region. A boundary change flies in the face of the commitment to work together on Regional issue and to represent the Region with **"One Voice"**.

- The delivery of the Technological University for the South East, which is Government Policy, is viewed as critical for the South East's development. A boundary alternation will not move this ambitious goal one inch closer to being realised.

- Together we need to win the bid to host the European Capital of Culture 2020, (significant public money expended on the process to date) and not do anything to undermine the ambition of the three sister local authorities to work in a brave new partnership that could transform the South East.

- A boundary review will not help, it will in fact hinder, the regions capacity to address the well documented challenges and reasons for our underperformance. It will inevitably lead to tensions in relationships.

- We pride ourselves in the South East as being innovative and open to new ways of working, the operational issues that are inevitable in every boundary situation can be overcome if both parties are willing to find solutions.

9   International Best Practice

9.1   Newcastle/Gateshead

The city of Newcastle is the administrative capital of the North East region of England. Standing on the north bank of the River Tyne, Newcastle itself has a population of approximately 278,000 and on the opposite bank is the separate municipality of Gateshead with a population of around 200,000. Another three local authorities –North Tyneside, South Tyneside and Sunderland – make up what is commonly seen as the 'Newcastle City Region' and with a combined population of around 1.65 million, which accounts for around two-thirds of the region's total population.

Both Gateshead and Newcastle Councils recognised that spatial planning does not stop at Local Authority boundaries[56] and came together work collaboratively in writing a joint Core Strategy[57].

The Gateshead Newcastle Partnership was set up in 2007 following agreement between the two councils to set up an umbrella body for joint activities. This was then expanded to form the NewcastleGateshead City Development Company, 1NG.   This was funded by the two Councils and One North East (a Regional Development Agency). 1NG developed an economic and spatial strategy for the urban core of Gateshead and Newcastle – the 1Plan[58]. It also led on delivering projects in the plan - including Science Central, the Ouseburn Valley and Gateshead Quayside - at a time when across the country major projects were stalled by the recession.

"We know that Gateshead and Newcastle are, in some ways, very different places, with their own histories, identities and traditions. That is part of what makes Newcastle/Gateshead special and distinctive and gives us a sense of place. We have recognised the need to broaden out the scope of our joint working to a broader agenda of economic competitiveness and place making".[59]

Since 2011, the NewcastleGateshead Initiative has taken over the role of the NewcastleGateshead City Development Company, 1NG. Established in 2000, NewcastleGateshead Initiative is a **public-private partnership** supported by Gateshead Council, Newcastle City Council, and over 170 private sector partner organisations across North East England. NewcastleGateshead Initiative's board is made up of 19 private sector representatives, Gateshead Council and Newcastle City Council.

The NewcastleGateshead Initiative played a key role in the development of NewcastleGateshead as a short break and cultural destination, stimulating private investment in hotels and other infrastructure. This established the platform for Newcastle Gateshead's 2008 European Capital of Culture bid, and for the culture festivals and events programme. Even though the bid was unsuccessful it formed the basis of a joint working partnership.

9.2   Liverpool

The Liverpool City Region is made up of six authority regions. The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) is the combined authority that now governs an area that covers the metropolitan county of Merseyside and the adjacent Borough of Halton in North West England. It was established by statutory instrument under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act

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[56] *NewcastleGateshead One Core Strategy (Draft)*, 2011 p7
[57] Gateshead Council & Newcastle City Council, *Planning for the Future, Core Strategy and Urban Core Plan for Gateshead and Newcastle upon Tyne 2010-2030*, Adopted March 2015
[58] *1Plan - An economic and spatial strategy for NewcastleGateshead,* 2010
[59] *Bridging Document Developing Sustainable Cities NewcastleGateshead 2030,* 2010 p5

2009 on 1 April 2014. Membership of the combined authority is made up of the leaders of the six principal membership authorities and the Chair of the local enterprise partnership.

The LCRA is a strategic authority with powers over transport, economic development and regeneration.   Transport policy of the combined authority is delivered by the Merseytravel functional body.   The authority is "*striving to strengthen our economy and establish ourselves as a truly world-class City Region where people want to live, work and do business*"[60]

9.3   Sheffield City Region

The Sheffield City Region is an area of England centred on Sheffield, which had a population of 1,819,500 covering an area of 3,517.84 km2 in 2004. The nine local authorities that make up the Sheffield City Region (SCR) have a long history of collaboration at a scale that reflects the natural economic geography of the region. In September 2006, the Local Authorities comprising the Sheffield City Region launched the Sheffield City Region Development Programme. This set out how the local authorities believe that by working together as a city region they could increase the economic output of the area by 12.6% by 2016.

The Sheffield City Region Combined Authority was established in April 2014 and this is a strategic authority with powers over transport, economic development and regeneration. The Authority comprises eleven Members as follows: one elected member from each of the four Constituent Councils (Borough and City Councils) and the five Non-constituent Councils (District Councils) and also, each Constituent Council appoints one of its elected members to be a rotational second member. The Authority appoints a Chair and a Vice-Chair from among its Members.

Some of the projects currently underway, which have been facilitated by this city region co-operation include:

- The creation of a new Rail Engineering Campus in Doncaster, bringing together a new £50m Centre of Excellence for Rail Engineering and other major facilities to make Doncaster the UK's capital for rail engineering skills.

- Investment in Sheffield City Region's Business Support Programme to support local businesses to invest and grow, including its existing unlocking business growth programme

- Investment in Sheffield City Region's Sustainable Transport Exemplar Programme to promote cycling, walking and public transport across the City Region

- A fund to speed up development in the Sheffield City Region Enterprise Zone, creating new high quality employment premises[61]

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[60] http://www.liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/ accessed 13.1.2016
[61]

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/399436/Sheffield_City_Region_Factsheet.pdf

9.4 The Northern Powerhouse

The Northern Powerhouse is a proposal to boost economic growth in the North of England, particularly in the "Core Cities" of Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield and Newcastle. The proposal is based on urban agglomeration and aims to rebalance the UK economy away from London and the South East.

One of the main areas of focus for the Northern Powerhouse has been transport improvements, and in 2015 their Transport Strategy was produced by the Transport for the North Partnership Board[62]. This board is comprised of representatives of government, northern city regions, local enterprise partnerships (LEPs), Highways England, Network Rail and HS2 Ltd.

This Strategy recognised that, "*Excellent connectivity across the North will take the city regions' individual performance to the next level, bringing them together to help create the critical mass to compete globally*"[63]. The Powerhouse will allow the authorities to "*take a lead in prioritising and planning transformative transport interventions, right across and beyond the North to: transform connectivity; improve journey times; improve capacity and resilience; and simplify the user experience*"[64].

9.5 Lessons Learned

All of the examples cited herein firmly establish that strategic collaboration produces positive results. The matter of strategic collaboration has emerged in many areas of this submission as the way forward for Waterford, Kilkenny and the South East Region. Collaboration is based on mutual respect and co-operation across organisations and jurisdictional lines. The two working examples of strategic collaboration currently in the region are the Three Sisters Capital of Culture 2020 bid process and the development of Ireland's Ancient East. Norris-Tirrell & Clay define strategic collaboration as "*an intentional, collective approach to address public problems or issues through building shared knowledge, designing innovative solutions and forging consequential change*"[65]. It has been accepted and outlined throughout this submission that increased collaboration is the key to cost effective service provision, balanced regional, economic and social development and the resolution of the challenges facing the region.

The examples of best practice referenced support this assertion and every effort must be made to develop and sustain cross boundary strategic collaboration. In Orla O'Donnell's paper "*Strategic Collaboration in Local Government*" for the IPA[66] the three barriers to successful collaboration are illustrated, "Time, Turf and Trust". Time may be a barrier where relationship building and mutual benefits are slow to develop. "*Turf issues surface when an imbalance, perceived or real, of benefits to the collaboration partners occurs. Where partners do not see each other as equally involved in benefitting of the collaboration.*" Lack of trust is identified as a barrier to collaborative efforts when prior or current troubled working relationships persist.

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[62] Department of Transport, The Northern Powerhouse: One Agenda, One Economy, One North, A report on the Northern Transport Strategy, March 2015

[63] Ibid, Executive Summary

[64] ibid

[65] Norris-Tirrell, D. and J.A. Clay *Strategic collaboration in public and nonprofit administration*, American Society for Public Administration, New York: C RC Press, Taylor & Francis Group, 2010

[66] IPA Local Government Research Series Report No.2 January 2012 *Strategic collaboration in local government*

In this and previous chapters we have shown that strategic collaboration between authorities and agencies across boundaries is the best method of working towards optimal regional development. Collaborative relationships are in place and delivering positive outcomes within the Three Sisters and Ireland's Ancient East projects. The proposed boundary review is contrary to the spirit of the examples of best practice shown here and can threaten the relationships currently being developed by creating barriers of "turf" and "trust". It is also accepted that such collaborations are entered into for the purpose of mutual benefit. In this case it has been established that the proposed boundary review cannot have mutually beneficial outcomes. Any alteration to boundaries will damage the successful development of existing collaborations and create barriers to future ones and is therefore not in the best interest of the region.

Chapter 9: Key Points

- International best practice proves that strategic collaboration between separate local authorities results in positive outcomes.
- One relevant example was the European Capital of Culture bid experience for NewcastleGateshead.
- The boundary review will create a barrier to strategic collaboration by creating disproportionate benefits to the parties involved and will damage trust.
- Mutual respect is required to sustain successful collaboration, recognition of and regard to individual identities and cultures is required to establish mutual respect.

10 The Way Forward

10.1 Current Issues

Across boundaries there will inevitably be potential for duplication and crossover of administration which require attention on a case by case basis. As this issue has been part of the local government system in Ireland for many years provision has been made in existing legislative arrangements to deal with the administration of functions across boundaries. Indeed such arrangements are common within the local authority system.

The main issues to be addressed in relation to cross boundary administration are addressed in the following sections.

10.1.1 Housing

Waterford City Council has housing stock in the Ferrybank area within County Kilkenny, which was provided in the main when Waterford City Council had a limited land bank in its own administrative area. It is recognised that it is not ideal for one local authority to operate as landlord and for a second to provide other day to day services. A boundary change, which would have far reaching negative impacts, is a disproportionate response to this issue.

The matter can more cost effectively be resolved in either of the two following ways:

1. Transfer of the housing stock to Kilkenny County Council. The impact of a change of landlord has far less impact than a change in parish, county and province. There would be no capital compensation required as they were provided with state funding.
2. The use of Section 85 agreement transferring the legal powers for specific legislative functions from one local authority to the other by agreement.

Section 85 agreements under the Local Government Act 2001 between the two authorities have been effectively used in the past in the construction of the N25 bypass and in relation to derelict sites legislation (Ard Ri Hotel site).

10.1.2 Planning – Development Management

Issues in development management also arise occasionally within the affected area, where cross boundary site planning applications are made to two local authorities by one applicant. This issue relates to a very limited number of sites including the Ard Rí Hotel, Abbey Community College and the Atheneum House Hotel. This matter is most effectively addressed through co-operation and communication. A potentially harmful and costly boundary review cannot be justified as a proportionate response to this issue.

Boundaries will always exist.   Such issues are likely to arise at new locations in a situation where the boundary is altered. Dublin City straddles four administrative areas and its development is in no way constrained. The fostering of good working relationships between planning authorities is the most cost effective and efficient mechanism for the management of cross boundary planning issues on a case by case basis.

The way forward is to look at innovative ways of addressing shared issues and needs through strategic collaboration.

The use of existing legislation should be maximised to address administrative issues across county boundaries.

10.1.3 Social and Economic Development

Traditionally, each county in Ireland pursued their perceived county-specific interests at the expense of an integrated model of regional economic development. This fractious approach to strategic development has been a major issue at local, county, regional and national levels. There is an increasing recognition that a county-specific approach to strategic development is not fit for purpose. A new ambitious alternative is currently being developed involving a collaborative approach between Kilkenny, Waterford and other County Councils. Any significant boundary revision which would transfer economic activity or local authority revenues from one county to another has the potential to seriously damage relationships and effective cross-boundary co-operation. For major cities this may not be an issue, but for regional areas such as the South East, which are struggling to compete, any significant boundary revisions have the potential to impede co-operation. This would at the very least delay, and possibly reverse, the innovative emerging moves towards regional development which are currently underway.

The adoption of the National Spatial Strategy and other policy documents have endeavoured to alter the county based approach in the promotion of integrated and balanced regional development.

Ongoing collaboration between Waterford and Kilkenny local authorities has resulted in the Ferrybank Development Project (FDP) with a particular emphasis on social inclusion. The recently established Local Community and Development Committee (LCDC) incorporating the Public Participation Network (PPN) have reconfirmed the cultural heritage of South Kilkenny giving focus to groups and increasing local engagement.

The physical community infrastructure and established practice for such consultation in South Kilkenny is in Ferrybank. Inclusion and successful consultation with communities recognises and respects cultural identity and increases engagement in collaborative initiatives.

The *Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP)* for Kilkenny adopted in December 2015 maximised these community links and represents the findings of widespread engagement within the area overall.

National strategies and policy documents, including the National Spatial Strategy, Government's Medium Term Economic Strategy 2014-2020 and the Enterprise 2025 strategy, which identifies *Optimising regional potential – placemaking* as a key objective, all seek to promote strategic collaboration across county boundaries. These initiatives and others seek to increase a co-ordinated approach towards the achievement of regional economic development objectives.

International best practice, national policies and the Waterford and Kilkenny Development Plans consistently emphasise the need for strategic collaboration across boundaries. Sustainable collaborations are based on a shared understanding between leaders and residents of the challenges facing communities and regions. The successful engagement processes involved in the FDP, PPN, LCDC, LECP and other initiatives have ensured a local understanding of the challenges facing the region. A growing regional dimension within national policy ensures that administrative and political leaders are fully aware of the challenges facing the region.

In the current climate, strategic collaboration has an increased potential to succeed. Regional engagement towards the shared objectives of the European Capital of Culture 2020 and the

branding of Ireland's Ancient East has greatly improved co-operation and has the potential to benefit all participants into the future.

Our collective objective should concentrate on making collaboration the norm. Collaborating across jurisdictional lines needs to become a natural ingredient in any local authority's strategic endeavours.

Any boundary review will interrupt currently successful co-operation and create barriers to future initiatives by threatening the identity of communities, limiting the investment potential of some areas and creating inequality in the creation of benefits to the region. Such an outcome will limit the overall region's development potential and create an even more fractious approach at county level, contrary to national policy and at significant cost to the region.

All of the administrative issues outlined within the affected area and within the region overall can be addressed through existing legislative mechanisms and increased levels of co-operation. There is no evidence that a boundary review alone can adequately address these issues.

10.2 Co operation Delivers

Co operation is essential for the South East to act as a cohesive region and history shows it can deliver.

Recognition by Three Counties of Benefits of Co-Operation

[The bid is] "built on the recognition that we are better together (Ní neart go Cur le Chéille)."

This bid is driven by a unique and unprecedented partnership of three cities and counties (Waterford, Wexford and Kilkenny) which historically worked independently but are increasingly coming together as a non-metropolitan, peripheral region of small cities and rural / semi-rural communities which face a set of challenges and that require a collaborative approach.

Our approach is a new, ambitious model of public policy and partnership which puts cross-boundary sharing to the heart of planning.

Together we are co-operating to develop a future of sharing over competition, partnership over fragmentation and collaboration across boundaries.

Source: Joint Bid for European Capital of Culture Document, Prepared by Waterford, Kilkenny and Wexford County Councils

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Examples of co-operation which have been undertaken or are currently underway are presented in the table below.

Table 10.1: Examples of Co-Operation

- **Community Development**
- **Planning and Development**
- **Delivery of Infrastructure**
- **Development of Port of Waterford (Belview)**
- **Belview Forum (Kilkenny, Waterford, Port of Waterford)**
- **Strategic Framework Plan 1974**
- **Waterford City and Environs Strategic Framework Plan 1999**
- **PLUTS 2004 (2002-2020) and PLUTS II**
- **South East Regional Waste Management Plan**
- **National Water Framework Directive Office**
- **Regional Road Design Team in Tramore**
- **South East Regional Authority (now SERA)**
- **Emergency Services and Emergency Planning**
- **Tourism**
- **Tall Ships Festival**
- **Greenway to New Ross**
- **Three Sisters European Capital of Culture Bid (Based at Ferrybank Area Office)**
- **Social Housing Delivery Taskforce**

As a result of co-operation between Kilkenny and Waterford significant projects have been delivered or are in progress in the area of infrastructure and economic co-operation, see Table 10.3. These have resulted in enhanced efficiency and value for money and contribute to the improving economic performance of the region.

Table 10.2: Projects Delivered through Co-Operation

➢ **Infrastructure**
- **Land bank at Belview for industrial development**
- **Waste Water Treatment Plant, site made available**
- **N29 Port Road**
- **Belview Water Supply Scheme**
- **Waterford City Bypass** (Waterford City Council lead authority)
- **M9 Motorway: Kilkenny was the lead authority**
- **Greenway from Waterford to New Ross (in progress Kilkenny Lead Authority)**
- **New Ross Bypass** (Wexford County Council lead authority in progress)

➢ **Economic Co-Operation**
- **Waterford Regional Airport**
- **Implementation Committee for the South East Action Plan for Jobs.**
- **University for the South East**
- **Tall Ships 2005 + 2011**
- **European Capital of Culture Bid**

The significance of having a collaborative cohesive regional approach to social and economic development is clear. A boundary review does not support this process in any way.

When examining issues and associated solutions for the affected areas and the region it is interesting to note that Waterford in its *Local Economic and Community Plan 2015 – 2020* identified twelve opportunities and one threat in its economic SWOT Analysis. That threat, as outlined in the next table, was identified as **a lack of a cohesive regional approach**.

Table 10.3: Waterford Economic SWOT Analysis	
Opportunities	**Threats**
- Amalgamation – One Waterford - National Planning Framework, Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy and Regional Action Plan for Jobs - Transition to high tech manufacturing - Retail: Michael Street development - Development potential of North Quays - Property solutions: completion of ATB and Dungarvan property solution - IDA Regional Director based in Waterford - Established aquaculture and sea food sector - Agricultural policy reform - Reputation for festivals and events and vibrant cultural community - World class sporting facilities: RSC and NHDCD at WIT Sports Campus - Gaeltacht	❖ **Lack of cohesive regional approach**

Source: Waterford Local Economic and Community Plan 2015 – 2020

All of the opportunities identified can be supported by closer cohesion between counties. All of these opportunities can be threatened by the lack of a cohesive regional approach. Any boundary revision will therefore threaten Waterford's capacity to maximise stated opportunities.

10.3 Conclusion – The Way Forward

This submission demonstrates emphatically that any boundary change is not in the best interests of the residents in the affected area, Waterford or Kilkenny Local authorities or the region. There is no evidence that it can help Waterford better fulfil its role as a Gateway supported by Kilkenny City and Wexford town as Hubs. It will hinder the economic development of Kilkenny and its role as a Hub at an overall cost to the South East region.

This submission has focused on Waterford, Kilkenny and Ferrybank providing the widest possible amount and range of information related to the potential impacts of the proposed boundary review. This information has been gathered and given local context to assist the Committee in its consideration of the matter with particular reference to the citizens, businesses, communities and organisations upon whom any change in administrative arrangements for the provision of local authority services may impact.

Kilkenny County Council has adopted a prudent approach to budget management and is in a strong financial position. It is clear from the projected loss in income outlined of €110m[67], excluding any asset value, that this level of compensation would present serious difficulties for Waterford City and County Council. The financial impact on Kilkenny County Council would be such that the delivery of essential infrastructural capital projects would no longer be possible. This would impact negatively on Kilkenny's performance as a Hub in its role supporting the Gateway and regional development.

The consistent message emerging from the analysis presented is that cross boundary working relationships must develop further, allowing the counties of the region to work together for mutual competitive advantage and to drive economic growth in the wider region. Accordingly, Kilkenny County Council will not support any proposal to alter the County Boundary between Kilkenny and Waterford on the basis that it will damage Kilkenny's growth and service delivery, disengage and disenfranchise individuals and communities and create barriers to closer strategic collaboration across the region.

The potential negative impacts of the proposal, limiting the affected areas and organisations' capacity to respond to challenges and opportunities cannot be underestimated. The region already has significant challenges to face without the creation of a new one.

10.3.1 Putting People First

The review process so far has resulted in excess of 18,000 submissions opposing any alteration to the boundary between County Kilkenny and Waterford City and County Council. This view has been endorsed by the democratically elected members of the Council and the Oireachtas members in County Kilkenny.

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[67] These calculations are preliminary estimates only and would be subject to further detailed analysis. (See Section 7.8)

10.3.2 Ten Point Plan

Chapter 8 outlined the sectoral and infrastructural challenges and opportunities for Waterford Kilkenny and the Region. The way forward has been developed into the following ten point plan which we believe can address the critical issues and build capacity to transform the performance of the Gateway and the South East Region in a unified approach.

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Ten point plan

1. A united representative voice for the region built.
2. Implementation of the PLUTS 2002 – 2020 and develop PLUTS 2020 – 2040.
3. Delivery of the Implementation Committee Objectives for the South East Action Plan for Jobs.
4. Brand and marketing of the South East Region.
5. Work together in ground-breaking partnerships such as the European Capital of Culture bid 2020.
6. Develop a Regional Tourism Strategy.
7. Performance of Waterford as the Gateway. Accelerate the population growth of the Gateway through development of the North Quays Strategic Development Zone and enhancement of the city centre retail offer.
8. Kilkenny must fulfil its role as a Hub.
9. Maximise tried and trusted methods to deal with current service delivery anomalies and basic house-keeping. (Shared services, Service Level agreements, Section 85 agreements)
10. Facilitate and support the delivery of the Technical University for the South East.

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United we stand divided we fall

The following statement was issued by the elected members of Kilkenny County Council and the Oireachtas members of County Kilkenny.

"We, the Elected Representatives for County Kilkenny, support the development of County Kilkenny, Waterford City and the South East Region. The successful development of the South East Region is facilitated by effective working relationships, co-ordination and partnership. Changes to County Boundaries are divisive and are not required to ensure that the South East Region develops to its full potential. Accordingly we, the TDs and Elected Members for County Kilkenny, will not support any proposal to alter the County Boundary between Kilkenny and Waterford".

The elected members of Kilkenny County Council fully endorsed this submission at their meeting on the 22nd January 2016.