



15 March 2017

Submission to National Planning Framework Ireland 2040 Our Plan by Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board

I am writing on behalf of Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board to express strong opposition to the recommendations set out in the Report of the Waterford Boundary Review Committee to abandon the existing county boundary in favour of a re-designation of a new boundary which will involve the ceding of areas currently within the Kilkenny county boundary.

The Ferrybank area is part of the identity of County Kilkenny and has always been a significant area of educational provision for the former County Kilkenny VEC and now the Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board. In line with other public service providers in County Kilkenny, as a local education provider Kilkenny and Carlow ETB has always prioritised the Ferrybank area as a strategic hub for the development of the southern area of the County. Ferrybank itself acts as a significant focus for the wider South Kilkenny area and as a base through which services are provided by the ETB to the wider hinterland.

Abbey Community College located in Ferrybank is a large second level school which operates under the remit of Kilkenny and Carlow ETB. The identity and heritage of the school is aligned with County Kilkenny as it represents an amalgamation of the former Slieverue Vocational School and the Sacred Heart of Mary Convent Secondary School in Ferrybank. Both of these schools had a distinctive characteristic spirit and heritage linked to their origins in South Kilkenny and now Abbey Community College continues this tradition. Today Abbey Community College is equipped to grow to an enrolment of 1,000 students having recently completed a €6 million extension.

Kilkenny and Carlow ETB worked with both Kilkenny County Council and Waterford City Council in the planning and development of this project and encountered no difficulty in so doing. It is our belief that identity and heritage cannot and should not be sacrificed for service administration and efficiency.

The National Planning Framework Ireland 2040 identifies the importance of a place making strategy as critical to the future development of the county. This place making strategy must have the capacity to look beyond but fundamentally respect the county boundary and seek to articulate a vision which is a respector of place and place based characteristics and reimagines how future growth can be balanced, integrated and sustainable. This is not achieved by a strategy and approach which fundamentally dismisses attachment to and identity with one's own place.

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The alignment of the school is within the broad south Kilkenny areas such as Kilmacow, Mooncoin, Piltown, Slieverue, Milepost, Glenmore and other areas as well as the Ferrybank area itself. The sporting and cultural alignment of the school is also with Kilkenny and this association is an important aspect of the identity of the school.

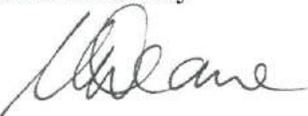
From an educational perspective Ferrybank is in a strategic area as it acts as a fulcrum for other educational activities in the southern part to the County. Over the years Kilkenny and Carlow ETB has provided a range of services and programmes based in the Ferrybank area, thereby serving the needs of those seeking second level and further education in South Kilkenny. This activity has been undertaken in co-operation with a broad range of local groups. Through partnership and collaboration we have assisted in serving the needs of the county with a wide range of organisations in both Kilkenny and Waterford.

Where challenges arise in the context of future planning and development it is imperative that imaginative solutions are sought to overcome any presenting obstacles. Such an approach demands a respect for place and people and accordingly resolution must be achieved through mandated co-operation and partnership rather than boundary change. The necessary strategic co-operation should be legislatively underpinned so that the economic, social, cultural and educational aspirations of the region can be achieved. To suggest that a change to the county boundary is a necessary requisite to such future growth and development is to disrespect the work done by service providers over many years. The National Planning Framework has the capacity to recommend new legislation which would mandate co-operation between the two local authorities to ensure integrated, sustainable development for the Ferrybank area which transcends the boundary issue and respects the sense of place of the people while simultaneously securing the future of the region.

Abbey Community College is located on the county boundary and Kilkenny and Carlow ETB is opposed to any proposal where this flagship school would no longer fall within its functional area.

Kilkenny and Carlow ETB considers Ferrybank to be of strategic importance in serving the needs of the county and believes strongly in the sense of identity which county alignment fosters and considers that the future development of the area is best served by co-operation and partnership with Waterford rather than a boundary change.

Yours sincerely



Cynthia Deane
Chief Executive