Minutes of Special Meeting held on 13th February, 2017 at 3.00p.m.

Chair: Cllr. Matt Doran

Cllrs: M.H. Cavanagh, P. Millea, M. Shortall, J. Brennan, M. McCarthy, P. Fitzpatrick, A. McGuinness, P. Cleere, M. Doyle, P. O' Neill, B. Gardner, D. Kennedy, J. Malone, M. Noonan, D. Fitzgerald, S. Tyrrell, M. O' Neill, P. Dunphy, F. Doherty, E. Aylward, T. Breathnach and G. Frisby.

Officials: C. Byrne, M. Prendiville, S. Walton, T. Butler, M. Mulholland, D. Malone, M. Delahunty, K. Haney, B. Tyrrell and A.M. Walsh

Apologies: Cllr. P. McKee

Cllr. Doran welcomed the members to the Special Meeting. He advised that he had received a request from RTE to record and film part of the meeting and approval of the members is required.

It was proposed by Cllr. P. Fitzpatrick, seconded by Cllr. M.H. Cavanagh and agreed: - "That approval be given to RTE to record and film proceedings of this meeting".

Cllr. Doran requested the Executive to make a PowerPoint presentation before contributions are made by the elected members.

Ms. C. Byrne, M. Prendiville and D. Malone gave an overview of the report issued by the Waterford Boundary Committee and in particular on the following:-

- Background to the establishment of Committee and area of interest, submissions made.
- Committee's findings on delivery of services, future scope for efficiencies/savings, physical constraints to development, revision of PLUTS, development of Belview as a Strategic Development area, Rates Harmonisation, Compensation due to Kilkenny County Council, additional costs for Waterford and Kilkenny.
- Comparison with Review Report issued on Athlone/Roscommon mostly same issues but a very different recommendation.
- Analysis of Report – Inconsistencies in the work of both Committees, lack of recognition of submissions made, submissions appear to be ignored. Kilkenny sought implementation of PLUTS and Retail Strategy and Waterford did not lead, ample land available to Waterford to develop North and South of the Suir, in Waterford area need for Waterford to focus on regeneration, new bridges required for connectivity, existence of boundary not an issue for National Agencies such as IDA, TII etc.
- Analysis of the financial impact.
    - Loss of income/compensation due, capital cost of provision of alternative area office
- Issues arising- Kilkenny has vested interest in Waterford City being developed, Region needs a university, improved health service, relocated railway station in Waterford, new bridges, and delivery of jobs,
- Strategic co-operation shown in recent years – 3 Sisters Capital of Culture, South East Action Plan for Jobs, Revising PLUTS and joint meetings at Municipal District level.
- Overview on options considered by Committee
    - No change

- Same boundary/improved co-operation
- Change of boundary to river
- Boundary extended to Area of Interest
- Boundary extension to Kilculliheen, Aglish/Dunkitt

- Recommendation of Committee
  - Boundary change to include areas in Kilculliheen, Aglish and Dunkitt
  - Slieverue and Belview Port to remain in Kilkenny

- Implications for Recommended Change
  - Reconfiguration of Municipal Districts
  - New location for services in South Kilkenny
  - Implications for ETB/Council Staff
  - Compensation to be paid
  - Setting national precedence
  - Minister must place any boundary change before houses of the Oireachtas

Cllr. M. Doran thanked the Executive for a most detailed overview of the report published on the Waterford Boundary Review. Cllr. M. Doran as Cathaoirleach stated that the recommendations in the report are unfounded, wishes of people have been ignored, report failed to respect the identity of Kilkenny and called on the Minister not to implement the recommendation but to have both local authorities co-operate and work together.

Contributions were received from all elected members present at the meetings. All members were appalled with the recommendation to change the Boundary. All spoke about the need to retain the identity in Kilkenny and seek to work with Waterford. Little regard appears to be made to the 20,000 submissions made against any proposed change to the boundary. Contributions were made in relation to the following by a number of members.

- Identity of Kilkenny needs to be respected, pride of place, parishes being split.
- People living in affected area not given any choice. No recognition given to the 20,000 submissions.
- 99.8% of submissions against any change.
- Precedent will be created for other boundary changes, reconsider recommendations for Kilkenny to that of the Carlow/Athlone review.
- Key is to co-operate and collaborate with Waterford, Kilkenny consistently sought co-operation.
- Interest/consultation in developing the area as a Region, several examples cited as successes following co-operation across region etc.
- Should be concentrating on issues which affect the South East – University, Cath Lab, Job creation.
- Already high level of engagement between the 2 Local Authorities.
- Proposal will build barriers with the local authorities instead of encouraging co-operation.
- Natural boundary should be the River Suir, no change in boundary since 1955.
- No reference made to protecting communities, total disregard to “Putting People first”.

- Compensation – Can Waterford afford it, no reference to compensation for Capital investment, reference made to little or no savings in the cost of providing services.
- Plenty of zoned land in Waterford to be developed – Can accommodate an additional 27,000 people.
- Kilkenny has supported the strategic initiatives in Waterford
- Implications for Education Training Board and Abbey College.
- Waste of money and time on preparing responses to the Boundary Review Committee. Funds could be better diverted to more important issues such as Housing.
- Affect on all Municipal Districts in the County, need to provide an alternative area office.
- Legal challenge to any decision – must be prepared to challenge
- National Planning Framework
- Required Statutory basis for PLUTS and other regional strategies

Cllr. Doran and all members thanked the Chief Executive and her team and the elected members in the Piltown Municipal District for all the time and work put into preparing submissions and answering queries raised by the Committee.

Members called on Minister Coveney to set aside the report prepared by the Review Committee. They further called on all TD's and Senators to oppose the recommendations.
It was agreed that a letter be sent to the Minister and that he would be invited to attend a meeting with the Councillors.

The Chief Executive and Management Team responded to all queries raised by the members.
It was agreed that the working group would be reconvened to respond to the report. Membership of group to be agreed at monthly meeting.

Cllr. Doran advised that workshop would be held for a discussion on the National Planning Framework.