

PRESS RELEASE

Laois County Council estimates potential loss of over €50 million to County Laois.

Laois County Council, today (February 5th 2016) made its submission to the Carlow Boundary Committee. The submission estimates a short to medium term loss of over €50 million to the County in revenue and capital income and also identifies significant adverse threats to the cultural, social and economic development potential of the Graiguecullen/Crossneen area. The submission also highlights an increase in the cost of public services in County Laois as a consequence of an administrative boundary change.

In June 2015, the Minister for the Environment, Community & Local Government established the Carlow Boundary Committee under Section 28 of the Local Government Act, 1991. The Minister appointed a three man committee to undertake the review and the committee have until the 31st of March 2016 to report to the Minister. The Committee is required to carry out a review of the boundary between the Counties of Laois & Carlow. The Carlow Boundary Review is one of four reviews currently underway with the others being Kilkenny/Waterford, Westmeath/Roscommon and Louth/Meath.

A local public consultation process has just come to a close where members of the public were asked for their views on the review process. The Cathaoirleach of Laois County Council, Ms. Catherine Fitzgerald today stated *'I fail to see how an administrative boundary change would lead to more effective Local Government. Laois County Council has been managing its affairs in an excellent manner for many years and keeping within budgetary parameters. This potential boundary alternation is unwarranted and will only increase pressure on the provision of public service in Laois and will inevitably lead to an increase in the cost base. In addition, I am confident I speak on behalf of all the Elected Members of our County when I say that a proposed interference with established County boundaries will result in a very negative social, cultural and sporting impact for Laois'*

Councillor Tom Mulhall, Chairman of the Municipal District of Graiguecullen/Portarlington stated *'We have a very strong and effective working relationship with Carlow County Council and up to 2014 with Carlow Town Council and have collaborated very productively on a number of cross boundary issues. In my view, there is no compelling reason or rational justification for a boundary change and I cannot countenance our Municipal District sustaining such a potential loss of income and autonomy. The review process must end now'*

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