09 March 2021

Forward Planning Section

Kilkenny County Council

County Hall

John Street

Kilkenny

Re: Kilkenny City and County Draft Development Plan 2021 – 2027

Dear Sir/Madam,

Kilkenny City Vocational School welcome the opportunity to submit observations on the Draft Development Plan and, specifically, the development of the Western Environs of Kilkenny City.

KCVS wish to continue our positive working relationship with Kilkenny County Council for the benefit of the entire community of Kilkenny City and Council.

**Request No. 1: Provision of suitable sport pitches**

Three new schools will be built in the Western Environs of Kilkenny City. Unfortunately the provision of sports pitches is outside the remit of the Department of Education and will not be provided as part of the schools project. The provision of *full-sized multi-use playing pitches*, as part of recreation and amenity infrastructure, is very important for wellbeing, quality of life and identity in the new community in the Western Environs. *A full sized multi-use grass or synthetic based playing pitch would be 90 metres \* 145 metres in size, and allow schools and sporting clubs play official competitive matches.* It is essential for both the schools and the local community that appropriate playing fields plus associated infrastructure is zoned in the locality.

KCVS propose a collaborative approach to the provision of sporting infrastructure in accordance with policy 8.5 of the draft CDP

“The Council will co-operate with local development organisations, community groups, sporting organisations and other stakeholders in the development of active recreational facilities throughout the county and enter into joint venture arrangements where appropriate for the provision of such facilities”.

KCVS will provide a significant number of sporting and recreational facilities in the new schools campus. This will include PE halls, gyms and small hard surface courts and pitches. KCVS wish to integrate the schools into the local community and are anxious that use of these facilities would be made available to local community, sporting and disability groups.

The availability of full-sized playing pitches will complement KCVS facilities and KCVS would be pleased to assist in their operation through sharing its resources and infrastructure: e.g., caretaking, maintenance, changing rooms, showers, toilets and car-parking.

A sustainable level of sporting infrastructure can be provided in the Western Environs through the auspices of KCETB schools, Kilkenny County Council and other stakeholders. Partnerships and co-operation between schools, the local community, public authorities, disability groups and local sporting bodies are essential to the development of a successful new city neighbourhood.

**Request No. 2: The playing pitches to be located adjacent to our new school**

The development of education infrastructure includes a new school being provided by KCETB in the Western Environs of Kilkenny City. These schools will cater for a student population of 650 pupils. The provision of appropriate sporting and recreational facilities is critical for the well-being of such a large cohort of young people.

*KCVS requests that such facilities be provided adjacent to the schools.* This will enhance the health and safety of the student body of children and young adults which will range in age from 5 to 19 years. It will also provide for the sharing of infrastructure and resources as detailed above.

**Request No. 3 The provision of safe walking and cycling infrastructure**

KCVS welcomes policy 12.5.1 of the CDP “To **invest in cycling and other smarter travel projects in support of the compact ‘10-minute city’ concept” and the** commitment “to the provision and prioritisation of a network of safe cycle and walkways linking residential areas to schools”

We also welcome the Council’s policy in the Kilkenny County Council Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024 “to improve cycling infrastructure through the development of segregated cycle paths where possible” and request that this policy should be included in the CDP.

The programme for Government recognises the need for separation of cycle ways “*We will promote cycling and pedestrian safety and enable this through improved design, increased separation and better signage and marking.”* The most effective way of doing this is to create a [**network of segregated cycle tracks**](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0001457517301021), i.e. a web of interconnected cycle routes that are physically separated from motor traffic by kerbs, bollards or other appropriate structures.

Increased levels of walking and cycling in the Western Environs will only be achieved through a network of segregated cycling and walking tracks in conjunction with safe connectivity to the city centre. It is unsafe for children to cycle or walk across a ring-road roundabout and parents will not allow children to travel to school in this manner.

In summary KCVS welcomes the proposed development of the Western Environs of Kilkenny City. We request that the following infrastructure be provided as part of this development:

1. **Provision for full sized multi-use grass or synthetic playing pitches of 90 \* 145 metres**
2. **Playing pitches to be located adjacent to the three schools**
3. **Safe walking, cycling infrastructure and connectivity to the city centre**

Yours sincerely,

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Cathy McSorely

Principal

Kilkenny City Vocational School