

# Determination of a Public Service Obligation following withdrawal of services between Inistioge and Kilkenny



# 1. Introduction

In May 2026 Bernard Kavanagh & Sons notified the NTA of its decision to cease operation of Route 882 (Inistioge - Kilkenny), the final day of operation will be Sunday 28th June 2026.

This report provides an overview of the impact along the corridor, and surrounding areas, from which the service will be withdrawn. The report also evaluates whether the withdrawal of the service creates a requirement for a new or revised Public Service Obligation (PSO) route to maintain essential public transport provision.

The National Transport Authority (NTA) is responsible for securing the provision of subsidised public passenger transport services where a Public Service Obligation (PSO) has been identified. The services in question are currently being delivered on a commercial basis by Bernard Kavanagh & Sons. In circumstances where a commercial operator ceases or curtails services, the NTA will examine whether, in the absence of any commercial services, a public service obligation (PSO) exists to provide socially necessary but commercially unviable public transport services. Such examination will include an assessment of the demand for public transport services and options to either re-configure existing PSO services including Local Link services, or to competitively tender for the provision of services. In either event, the NTA's ability to provide such services is subject to the availability of funding.

The NTA has a strong record of carrying out such assessments when market conditions change and in particular when commercial operators decide to withdraw wholly, or in part from providing services in any given location or along a corridor.

## 2. Service Withdrawal

Following engagement with Bernard Kavanagh & Sons, the National Transport Authority has been formally advised of the operator’s intention to withdraw Route 882 (Inistioge - Kilkenny) in its entirety. Bernard Kavanagh & Sons has confirmed that the cessation of services will apply across the full length of the route, with no partial retention of any section or variation to the existing alignment.

The proposed withdrawal therefore represents a complete removal of the current service provision along the corridor.

### 2.1 Existing Timetable

As shown in Table 1, Route 882 currently operates two services, Monday to Friday, from Inistioge to Kilkenny and three services in the opposite direction. Route 882 serves the following settlements: Inistioge, Thomastown, Bennettsbridge and Kilkenny.

*Table 1 – Timetable for Route 882*

Inistioge to Kilkenny					
Stop Location	Stop Name	Stop ID/GPS	Restrictions	MO-FR	
Inistioge	Church	52.48877, -7.06537	<b>PUO; KKC</b>	07:35	14:25
Thomastown	Market Street	136101	<b>P/S; KKC</b>	07:50	14:40
Bennettsbridge	Village	351161	<b>P/S; KKC</b>	08:05	14:55
Kilkenny	The Parade	52.64946, -7.24821	<b>P/S; KKC</b>	08:20	15:10
Kilkenny	Ormonde Road	10313	<b>SDO; KKC</b>	08:22	15:12

Kilkenny to Inistioge						
Stop Location	Stop Name	Stop ID/GPS	Restrictions	MO-FR		
Kilkenny	Ormonde Road	10314	<b>PUO; KKC</b>	11:00	16:10	18:00
Kilkenny	The Parade	52.64946, -7.24821	<b>P/S; KKC</b>	11:02	16:12	18:02
Bennettsbridge	Village	351162	<b>P/S; KKC</b>	11:13	16:25	18:15
Thomastown	Market Street	351031	<b>P/S; KKC</b>	11:25	16:40	18:30
Inistioge	Church	52.48877, -7.06537	<b>SDO; KKC</b>	11:33	16:50	18:40

## 2.2 Route Map

Figure 1 shows Route 882 serving the following settlements: Kilkenny, Bennettsbridge, Thomastown and Inistioge.

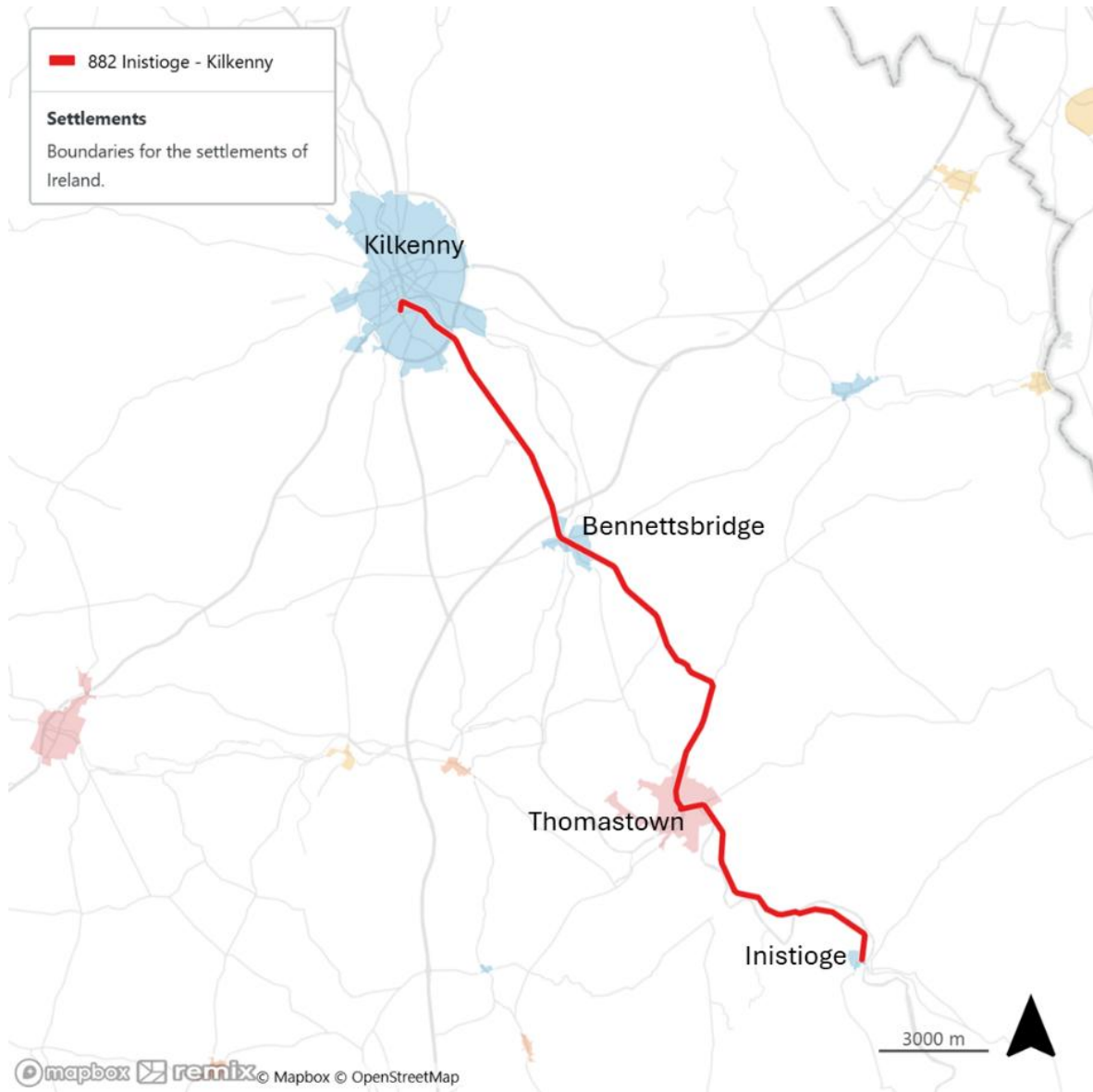


Figure 1 - Route 882 alignment

### 2.3 Demand Analysis

Table 2 presents observed travel demand between Kilkenny, Bennettsbridge, Thomastown and Inistioge using 2022 Census POWSCCAR data. POWSCCAR stands for Place of Work, School, College or Childcare Census of Anonymised Records. This dataset records anonymised origin–destination movements between people’s usual residence and their place of work, school, college or childcare.

The matrix therefore shows existing travel demand for work and education-related purposes across all modes of transport. It does not represent public transport demand alone, but it provides a useful indication of the scale and direction of current travel flows that could potentially be served by improved public transport provision.

Table 2 - OD Matrix (2022 census data: all modes, school and work purposes)

	Kilkenny	Bennettsbridge	Thomastown	Inistioge	Total
Kilkenny		34	57	6	97
Bennettsbridge	113		18		131
Thomastown	325	10		12	347
Inistioge	32	2	18		52
Total	470	46	93	18	627

### 2.4 Connecting Ireland Standard

Connecting Ireland is the National Transport Authority’s rural mobility plan, developed to improve public transport connectivity for towns, villages and rural communities outside the main urban areas. The programme aims to address gaps in the existing public transport network by introducing new services, enhancing existing routes, and improving links to employment, education, healthcare, retail and onward public transport connections.

As shown in Figure 2, Connecting Ireland aims to achieve a minimum service of three buses a day between New Ross and Kilkenny. The withdrawal of Route 882 would result in a complete removal of public transport services along this corridor.

Proposal	Connecting	Serving*	Description
882	Kilkenny	New Ross	Bennettsbridge, Thomastown, Inistioge and other places en route
			We propose to increase the frequency of existing route 882 from Kilkenny to New Ross. Minimum service frequency of 3 return trips a day.

Figure 2 - Connecting Ireland proposed service level on Kilkenny – New Ross Corridor

### 2.5 Inistioge – Kilkenny Corridor Analysis

The Inistioge - Kilkenny corridor, when considered in its entirety, is currently served exclusively by Route 882. However, it is noted that portions of this corridor are also served by other public transport services. In particular, Irish Rail provides service between Thomastown and Kilkenny only, while Bus Éireann Route 73 operates between Kilkenny and Thomastown and also serves Bennettsbridge. These

services are therefore limited to specific sections of the corridor and do not provide continuous end-to-end coverage between Inistioge and Kilkenny.

- **Irish Rail Waterford - Dublin:** 8 return services a day (Mon-Sat) and 5 return services on Sunday between Kilkenny and Thomastown
- **Bus Eireann - Route 73 (Waterford - Athlone – Longford):** 1 return service a day (Mon – Sun) between Kilkenny and Thomastown, also stopping at Bennettsbridge

Figure 3 shows the impact of the withdrawal of Route 882. Despite the presence of other public transport services operating along parts of the Inistioge - Kilkenny corridor, coverage is not consistent across its full extent. These services are limited to specific sections between Kilkenny and Thomastown, with no provision beyond Thomastown towards Inistioge.

As a result, the withdrawal of Route 882 would create a significant gap in service provision along the corridor. In particular, the section between Thomastown and Inistioge would be left entirely unserved by public transport, resulting in a complete loss of connectivity for Inistioge. Furthermore, Bennettsbridge would experience a substantial reduction in service levels, with only a single daily return service remaining (Route 73), which falls below the minimum service level defined under the Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan.

Overall, while alternative services provide partial overlap, they do not ensure continuous or adequate coverage along the corridor and are therefore not sufficient to mitigate the impact of the withdrawal of Route 882.

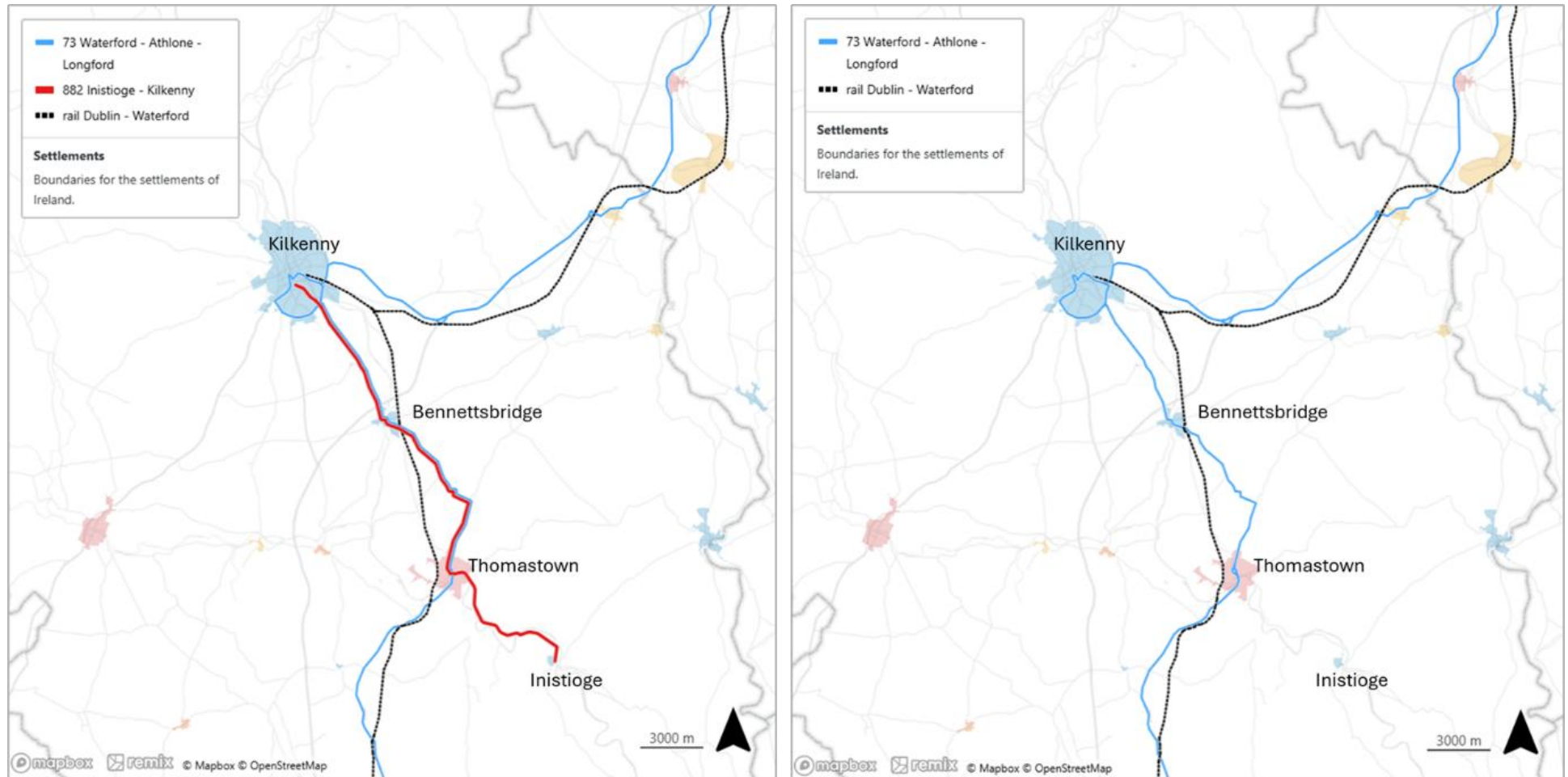


Figure 3 - Public transport options with and without Route 882

## 2.6 Addressing the Service Gap

The withdrawal of Route 882 (Inistioge - Kilkenny) would result in a significant gap in service provision along the corridor, particularly along the section between Thomastown and Inistioge. This section would be left entirely unserved by public transport, resulting in a complete loss of connectivity for Inistioge and surrounding rural catchments.

While alternative services operate between Kilkenny and Thomastown, including Irish Rail and Bus Éireann Route 73, these services are limited in geographic coverage and frequency, and do not extend beyond Thomastown. Furthermore, settlements such as Bennettsbridge would experience a reduction in service levels below the minimum thresholds set out under the Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan.

In order to maintain an appropriate level of public transport provision, action would be required by the Authority to investigate options to address the identified service gap and to ensure that connectivity for affected settlements, particularly Inistioge and Bennettsbridge, is maintained in line with Connecting Ireland objectives and standards .

### 3. Conclusions

The withdrawal of Route 882 would result in a material reduction in public transport provision along the Kilkenny–Inistioge corridor. Route 882 currently provides an important all-stop service between Kilkenny, Bennettsbridge, Thomastown and Inistioge, supporting access for intermediate settlements along the R700 alignment.

Although some alternative services operate on parts of the corridor, they do not provide sufficient coverage or frequency to maintain existing levels of connectivity. In particular, Bennettsbridge would fall below the minimum service level identified under the Connecting Ireland programme, while Inistioge would be left without access to a scheduled public transport service.

This would create a significant service gap and would be inconsistent with the objectives of Connecting Ireland, which seek to improve rural public transport connectivity and address gaps in service provision.


Accordingly, the withdrawal of Route 882 gives rise to a requirement to examine and progress appropriate replacement or mitigation measures. These measures should address the identified gap, maintain connectivity for Bennettsbridge and Inistioge, and ensure that the Kilkenny–Inistioge corridor continues to receive an appropriate level of public transport provision in line with national rural transport policy objectives.

## 4. Determination

The Authority has determined that the cessation of Route 882 would reduce public transport provision along the Kilkenny–Inistioge corridor and create identified gaps in service coverage, including the loss of scheduled public transport access for Inistioge.

To maintain appropriate connectivity along the corridor, the Authority considers that a Public Service Obligation intervention is required. It is therefore recommended that the Authority progress the necessary steps to implement an appropriate service response. Any such response should address the identified gaps and support affected settlements. Implementation would be subject to funding availability, completion of the necessary approvals, and operational readiness.

Signed by:



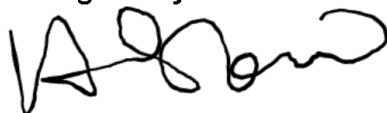
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**Philip Kavanagh**

**Public Transport Integration Manager**

Approved:

Signed by:



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**Anne Shaw**

**Chief Executive Officer**

Dated: 25 June 2026 | 12:48:02 PM BST