



Waterford Area
Partnership CLG

Strategic Plan 2024–2028

Empowering people, supporting communities

FOREWORD

Eoin Ronayne – Chairperson

On behalf of Waterford Area Partnership, I am delighted as Chairperson to present our Strategic Plan 2024–2028. As a local development company with a social inclusion focus, we have actively supported individuals and communities across Waterford since 1996. We are a not – for – profit volunteer-led organisation driven by the values of equality, diversity and inclusion. We are citizen focused, committed to affecting change at local level through the delivery of essential and meaningful responses to social need.

One of 49 Local Development Companies across the country we work in partnership with the state and a range of community and voluntary organisations to deliver programmes that improve the quality of life of those we serve. Programmes include rural and community development, food poverty, employment training and access, educational and personal development opportunities social enterprise, business start-up and climate action.

In recent years the Board of Waterford Area Partnership with the CEO, Senior Management and all the staff at WAP have guided the organisation through challenging times building closer relationships with key partners and stakeholders while planning at the same time to strengthen and resource our organisation for the years ahead. Our success will be measured by the benefits we can deliver through our programmes to the individuals and communities who engage with us.

This Strategic Plan 2024–2028 is our road map to meet the challenges we will face in delivering that success over the next five years. It is an ambitious plan and so it should be. We are clearly setting out our Vision of a diverse and inclusive society that values all, our Mission to work in collaboration with others to empower communities and individuals based on our Values of innovation, courage, collaboration, integrity and a person-centred approach.

The adoption of our Strategic Plan 2024 – 2028 marks a high point in the evolution of Waterford Area Partnership and is our promise to the citizens of Waterford that we will continue to provide and expand our services to individuals and communities working together to address social change and social need.

Liam Quinn – CEO.

As we plan for the future we do so building on the strengths and success of our services and supports and seek to branch out into new areas of opportunity that will be of benefit to our beneficiaries and our company. Working in collaboration with our statutory and non-statutory partners our aim is to improve the quality of lives of the people and communities we support. A review of our activities going back over 25 years highlights the benefits of that collaboration in the wide variety and scope of the positive interventions delivered by our dedicated team of community support workers.

However, the recently published Deprivation Index reminds us there is much work to be done. Despite a positive economic environment those on the margins continue to experience levels of deprivation and disadvantage that the majority of our communities are not exposed to. Often referred to as “hard to reach” target groups, people who experience enduring levels of disadvantage must be the focus of our efforts. While the various programmes and services we deliver have had and will continue to have a positive impact on peoples lives, we must also strive to influence and shape societal change on a larger scale.

Our new Strategic Plan asks that we become more **innovative** in how we support our communities. This is essential if we acknowledge that current service provision is not effectively reaching those at greatest risk. Our plan asks that we are better **connected** internally and externally. We need to work better together to reach all of those in need. Improved **collaboration** with our partners in the community development sector is needed to give people the supports they need to escape the cycle of exclusion. We need to strengthen our own **capabilities** as by doing so we improve the chances of building the capacity of others. We must position ourselves so that we can **shape policy** and influence societal change on a macro level.

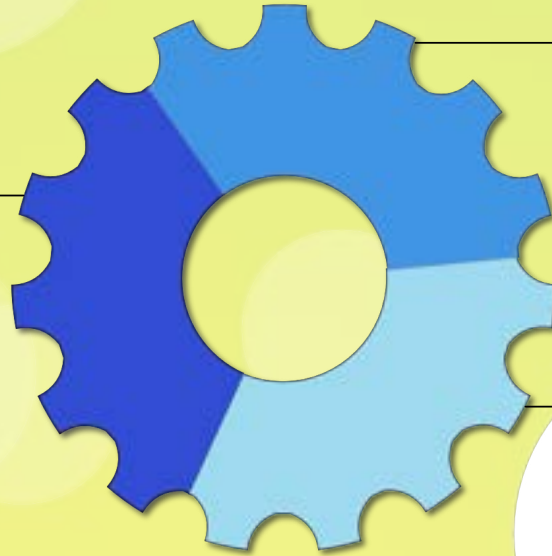
I am confident that we have the team to deliver on these objectives.

Waterford Area Partnership

Strategic Plan 2024-2028

Mission

We work in collaboration with others to empower communities and individuals by implementing person-centred programmes and activities that support social inclusion and equality



Vision

A diverse and inclusive society that values everyone through promoting access, participation, equality and human rights

Values

- Innovation
- Courage
- Collaboration
- Integrity
- Person-centred

Strategic goals

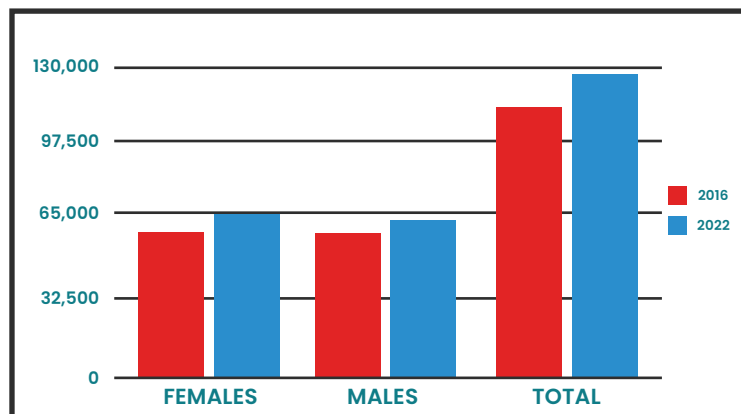
- 1 Innovation**
Enhance innovation in how we support our communities
- 2 Connection**
Improve our internal and external connections in supporting individuals and communities to connect with each other and with relevant services and supports
- 3 Collaboration**
Enhance cross-organisational collaborative working and partnering with others to support people
- 4 Capability**
Facilitate participation and engagement so that people have a voice and enhance our capacity to serve them best
- 5 Policy Shaping**
Influence policy to ensure the most appropriate and relevant responses at local, regional and national levels

CONTEXT FOR THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Waterford Area Partnership (WAP), established in 1996 supports individuals and communities across Waterford with social inclusion, equality and human rights central to our activities and the support we provide. In working in partnership with local communities, organisations and state agencies we are a catalyst for innovation and change to affect positive change. We are registered as a Company Limited by Guarantee and a charity, governed by a voluntary Board of Directors.

OUR AREA OF OPERATION

Summary results from the 2022 Census show that the population of Waterford has grown by 9.6%, higher than the national average growth rate of 8.1%. The County now has a population of 127,363, of which 64,268 are females and 63,095 are males.



Covering Waterford City & County



STRATEGIC LINKS AND CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMMES

WAP responds to and works within an environment of continuous change. There are a number of challenges that can impact our operations.

THESE INCLUDE:

- Persistent disadvantage and unemployment in certain parts of the county, including inter-generational poverty and social exclusion
- Inward migration as a result of conflict, poverty and climate change
- Increasing inequality and poverty, despite Ireland's economic success
- Entry of private sector for-profit providers in employment services and potentially other areas
- We are funded under various contracts from a number of statutory agencies and government departments. These have strict operational guidelines, requirements and specific targets which can limit our response to individual and community needs
- On-going and increasing compliance burden.

HOW WE OPERATE

We operate within a local and regional context and as a member of the **Local and Community Development Committee (LCDC)** we are a key player in implementing local strategies including the **Waterford Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP)**. We will continue to be a strategic partner in delivering the high-level goals of the new Local Economic and Community Plan 2023–2029. The community goals in this plan are Liveability and Quality of Life; Health and Wellbeing; Inclusion and Accessibility, and Resilience and Sustainability. The economic goals are Low Carbon and Sustainable Economy; Economic Diversity and Sustainable Growth; Sustainable Place-making and Destination Management, and Innovation and Digital Transitions.

We actively participate, advocate and implement actions relating to national and local strategies which impact positively on those we support. Using collaborative approaches, our resources complement existing actions and enable the creativity to implement new developments within our communities, such as the **National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy** (working with the Waterford Roma Interagency Group and Waterford Traveller Interagency Group), the **Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020–2023**, **Waterford Age Friendly Strategy 2023–2028** and **Waterford Migrant Integration Strategy 2020–2024**.

CURRENT KEY PROGRAMMES

Programmes and projects currently provided by WAP are:

- Asylum Migration and Integration Fund
- Integration and Employment of Migrants
- Job Initiative
- Atelier Roma Project for Men and Women
- Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme incorporating
- Ukrainian Community Response, Fáilte Isteach and Community Car
- Initiative
- Tús Community Work Placement Scheme incorporating Care and Repair
- Waterford Food Bank
- Waterford and South Tipperary Local Area Employment Service – Waterford City

WAP implements the **Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP)** on behalf of the Local and Community Development Committee in the Waterford area. SICAP is a national programme which aims to address poverty and social exclusion through equality, community development, collaborative and climate justice approaches.

The programme supports community groups to build their capacity, identify needs and develop local solutions. We support individuals to access opportunities for personal development, education, employment training and self-employment/social entrepreneurship. Staff working within the programme build collaborations and partnerships with others from the statutory, community and voluntary sectors to support strategic coordination, provide additionality to existing service provision, initiate innovative responses and avoid duplication. In working with local and national partners, we lead and/or initiate responses to progress strategies relevant to the SICAP programme.

Under SICAP additional funding was allocated in 2022 to support the Ukrainian Community Response. Multi-lingual Community/Development workers are working with existing SICAP staff to respond to the social, economic and cultural needs of the Ukrainian community and to support their integration and that of other refugee and international protection applicants living in Waterford. In implementing the **Fáilte Isteach Programme**, we provide English language supports, a critical step for all newly arrived people. Through a Service Level Agreement with Waterford City and County Council, we are implementing a Community Car Initiative for those residing in 'Offer A Home Scheme' in rural areas with limited or no access to public transport.

In the delivery of Waterford and South Tipperary **Local Area Employment Services (LAES)** in Waterford city, we are sub-contracted with Waterford LEADER Partnership, who are the lead agency. The Local Area Employment Service is a national service to support unemployed people back into the labour market.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY (SICAP)





WAP supports people with employment opportunities through the **Tús Community Work Placement Scheme** which is a community work placement scheme providing short-term working opportunities for unemployed people. The work opportunities are to benefit the community and are provided by community and voluntary organisations. In delivering the **Care and Repair** project older people are supported to live independently at home through small jobs e.g. garden maintenance and DIY.

The **Job Initiative scheme** is a programme providing full-time employment for people who are 35 years of age or over and unemployed. The scheme is not open to new applicants.

WAP has several programmes focusing on migrants and the Roma Community supporting progression to employment, training, education, English language, advocacy and personal development. Through the **Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), Integration and Employment of Migrants (IEM)** migrants are supported to progress into meaningful employment through training, job coaching through the development of strong working relationships with employers.

The Atelier Roma Project for Men and Women supports progression into education, training and employment through skills-based programmes. In providing advocacy support to families they can access key services to enhance their quality of life.

Waterford Food Bank was established in 2017 through the Tús Scheme in response to food poverty with the support of our partners, the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul and Food Cloud. Weekly food parcels are delivered to those who are identified by our partners.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN LAST THREE YEARS

Over the past few years, our Board, management team and staff have implemented vital steps to strengthen the governance of our organisation. Through challenging circumstances, our staff have pulled together to maintain relationships with key stakeholders and continue to deliver programmes, supporting individuals and communities in achieving many positive outcomes.

WAP is a key partner in local development and community responses. Working collaboratively with other partners, we initiated and implemented critical responses and actions during the Covid-19 pandemic and with Ukrainian war refugees. Our staff engaged with local communities to provide essential support for those who were deemed vulnerable during the pandemic. To date we have welcomed over 2,500 Ukrainian refugees to Waterford and recruited seven staff from the Ukrainian community to provide critical support. WAP staff received an award from President Michael D. Higgins in recognition of the Covid-19 Community Champion programme in 2020.

WAP won the EU tender for the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme in 2015 and 2018. Since 2018, we have supported over 3,500 people and approximately 140 local community groups. Key areas of research and evaluation were undertaken on Social Enterprise and the Roma Community during Covid-19 with case studies on other topics, e.g. the Traveller Community.

In partnership with Waterford LEADER Partnership and South Tipperary Development Company, we were successful in our bid to deliver the Local Area Employment Service contract to support individuals seeking employment. Since operations commenced in September 2022, WAP has supported 722 individuals (September 2022 to June 2023) under this contract.

The Food Bank is well established and recognised as making a positive difference to individuals and families in need. Since it was established, the Waterford Food Bank has delivered over 1 million meals which was acknowledged through a thank you event for supporters in May 2023. The Tús Work Placement Scheme places approximately 110 individuals each year in local community groups, providing much-needed assistance for the maintenance of premises, activities and services.

After the Covid-19 pandemic, we re-established our Care and Repair programme, which provides essential help to older and vulnerable people in their homes. Small jobs such as grass cutting and DIY ensure that people can remain in their home and live independently.

Between 2018 and 2022, over 70 people were supported in Level 5 and Level 6 education under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund programme. Through this programme, our participants also engaged in the filming and consultation of the IFTA-nominated movie Aisha directed by Frank Berry. The Integration and Employment of Migrants programme commenced in March 2023 and to date we have helped 82 people with employment and integration support. Atelier Roma Men and Women's Projects which became part of the organisation in January of this year continues to grow. In 2023 the project supported 5 women to access training in Barista and Driver Theory with 9 women and 15 men supported into employment. The women's group has grown from 19 participants in January to 37 by end of July.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE



WATERFORD FOOD BANK

WAP is grateful for the continued support of our core funders namely the Department of Rural and Community Development, Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, Department of Social Protection and Waterford City & County Council.

We work collaboratively with many community and voluntary organisations, statutory agencies, private businesses and Waterford City & County Council in delivering key responses and programmes. We look forward to continuing our engagement with them, building on our existing relationships in strengthening strategic coordination and positive outcomes.

Process for developing the strategy

WAP was supported in the development of this strategy by Ann Clarke & Associates and our strategy working sub-group comprised of representatives from the Board, management and staff.

The stages involved included a review of internal documentation and statistics; consultation with the strategy sub-group, CEO, Chairperson and Board; online survey of Board and staff; focus groups with external stakeholders; one-to-one consultations with clients, and workshops with staff, the Senior Management Team and the strategy working sub-group.

This process identified Strengths, Weaknesses/Challenges, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT), What Matters Most and key themes for the strategy.



SUMMARY SWOT

The following are the main headlines from consultations internally and externally about the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for our organisation.

STRENGTHS

- Knowledgeable and experienced staff
- Experienced at identifying, understanding and addressing needs of local communities
- Strong linkages and relationships with community organisations
- Resilience
- Responsive
- Community development practice

WEAKNESSES & DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

- Clarify organisational goals/objectives
- Enhance internal work and communications processes
- Enhance public communications or marketing
- Staff development and training
- Effective collaboration with external organisations

OPPORTUNITIES

- Providing person-centred, integrated and wrap-around services
- Improving internal cohesion and communications
- Greater collaboration with funders and other external stakeholders
- Creating pathways for service users and encouraging collaboration between community organisations
- Becoming the catalyst for change and 'go to' organisation across the county
- Scope to provide county-wide supports and services
- Potential to generate income from non-State sources

THREATS, RISKS CHALLENGES

- Competitive funding environment
- Reliance on a limited number of funding programmes
- Strategic coordination with local and national partners
- Duplication of services
- Programme constraints limit response to local needs
- Staff recruitment and retention
- Politics of the far right
- Economic downturn – cuts to funding for the community and voluntary sector

WHAT MATTERS MOST

The following summarises the main headlines about what matters most to our different stakeholder groups.

WHAT MATTERS MOST TO OUR CLIENTS

- Treating people with kindness and respect
- Understanding people's needs
- Empowering people
- Helping people to access services, supports, funding

WHAT MATTERS MOST TO OUR BOARD AND STAFF

- Treating people with empathy, fairness and respect
- Listening to the short and long term needs of individuals and communities
- Focussing on clients by providing person-centred and wrap-around services that deliver benefits and progression
- Staff that are trained and resourced to deliver programmes
- Becoming an innovative and dynamic organisation that is characterised by strong leadership
- Greater emphasis on internal cohesion and external collaboration
- Strong governance

WHAT MATTERS MOST TO ORGANISATIONS WE WORK WITH

- Collaboration
- Integrated approaches and pathways to support individuals and communities
- Communication and relationships and clarity over what WAP does and does not do
- Getting the balance right between supporting 'traditional' client base and new groups

BELIEFS

Our work and how we respond is underpinned by a number of core beliefs:

- **Everyone is equal.** Everyone has the right to be treated with empathy, understanding, dignity, respect and without discrimination. We use plain English and avoid abbreviated terminology.
- Everyone has a **wealth of knowledge and experience** and excels when given the right environment.
- **One solution does not fit** the needs of every person, and services should be tailored and appropriate to each person's requirements, with follow through on promises made.
- **The power of connectivity** to make people feel better. The work of staff and personal connection makes a difference.
- **Building communities** is as important as building up individuals, including helping communities to collaborate to achieve common goals. Job activation is not the equivalent of community development.
- People have the **right to access** education, employment and health services.
- **Resilience, adaptability, flexibility** and consultation are key to our way of working. Part of our role is to challenge the status quo.
- As an organisation, we are **innovative, forward-thinking and dynamic**. Strong leadership is fundamental to our organisational DNA.
- **Openness and transparency** underpin our interactions with people, communities and stakeholder organisations.



01-VISION

Our vision is for a diverse and inclusive society that values everyone through promoting access, participation, equality and human rights.



02-MISSION

We work in collaboration with others to empower communities and individuals by implementing person-centred programmes and activities that support social inclusion and equality



03-VALUES

INNOVATIVE: we continually strive to find better ways to deliver our supports and services. Guided by national and international best practices, we actively develop new services and, where necessary, work in collaboration with other organisations. We pledge to be an active, energetic and evolving organisation that constantly monitors our environment and refreshes our supports and services in response to the changing needs of individuals and communities in Waterford.

COURAGEOUS: we resolve to be bold and decisive in addressing the challenges facing our communities in Waterford and to advocate on their behalf. We are determined to take a leadership role in delivering the best socio-economic outcomes for the county.

COLLABORATIVE: we embrace the traditional meitheal approach of communities coming together in unity in response to common challenges. Creating networks, forming alliances and working collaboratively with external organisations are part of our organisational DNA. We recognise that we are all links in the same chain and that the chain/team is weakened if one link breaks. We are supportive of our colleagues and help out when needed. We care about what we do, apply our skills, and work to the highest standard. We look inward to recognise our own prejudices or biases and to remain neutral when dealing with those we serve and when working with others.

03-VALUES

WORKING WITH INTEGRITY: we are present with people, keep our word and follow through. We are honest about what we can and cannot do. We are transparent and accountable. We are open and honest in our dealings with individuals, groups, communities, funders and staff. We are transparent with our funding and the data we keep on service users.

PERSON-CENTRED: we are welcoming at the first point of contact and every contact thereafter. We strive to be helpful, kind and compassionate, polite and courteous. We are open-minded, without prejudice and devoid of judgment and actively listen with no preconceptions. We give due regard to the rights, wishes, autonomy and feelings of others. We treat the person as a whole – their struggles, abilities, aptitudes, commitments and barriers – and advocate for them. We believe in the potential of those we serve, no matter their background or culture, and are committed to their success.

VISION

A diverse and inclusive society that values everyone through promoting access, participation, equality and human rights

VALUES

Innovation
Courage
Collaboration
Integrity
Person-centred

MISSION

We work in collaboration with others to empower communities and individuals by implementing person-centred programmes and activities that support social inclusion and equality



WHO WE SERVE

WAP provides a range of education, personal development, employment training/guidance, work placement and start your own business supports for unemployed individuals living in Waterford.

We support local community groups across Waterford City and County that are actively developing their services and facilities to build inclusive and sustainable communities. Additionally, we support local community groups that have established or are seeking to establish a social enterprise in their community that will provide employment opportunities and services to increase the quality of life for members of their community or specific target groups. Families engage through community events, Waterford Foodbank and school-based programmes. Our work aligns with many of the United Nation's Global Sustainable Development Goals. Our focus is applying Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)'s philosophy to directly impact on our clients.

WAYS OF WORKING

WAP is committed to the practice and promotion of community development across our programmes, policy development and collaborative approaches. Community development has been defined as 'a task and a process. The task is social change to achieve equality, social justice and human rights, and the process is the application of principles of participation, empowerment and collective decision making in a structured and co-ordinated way.

In working with people and communities, we can advocate and affect change through equality and human rights and ensure the voices of those most impacted are heard.

We work with communities and individuals to help them to identify their assets and gifts and to facilitate them to use what they already have to improve their own lives. We work to support the whole person, providing them with information, advice, assistance, signposting and referral as appropriate to their needs. Where necessary, we advocate on their behalf.

We are exploring and developing actions within the **Community Wealth Building** framework. Our aim is to create a Waterford model of Community Wealth Building that will build the local skills of individuals and communities and so strengthen the future of our communities. This model will provide opportunities to shape our resources, where communities and individuals are empowered to 'do for themselves' and generate local assets to combat long-term barriers.



WAYS OF WORKING

Our programmes and resources align with the key principles of the Community Wealth Building framework which are:

- Building wealth and opportunity into the local economy
- Harnessing the impact of 'anchor institutions' (e.g. local authority, third level institutes, large employers, housing bodies, hospitals)
- Using collaborative approaches, fair employment and just labour markets (e.g. living wage, recruitment from disadvantaged areas)
- Maximising spending power of public and private procurement/commissioning to create social, economic and environmental value
- Incentivising the flow of finance to benefit the local community – harnessing existing wealth within the community
- Maximising use of land/property for community benefit
- Diversifying ownership models of the economy (e.g. small-medium sized enterprises, social enterprises, co-operatives, municipal ownership).

WATERFORD ESTUARY MEN'S SHED



THE GLOBAL GOALS for Sustainable Development



Our work aligns with many of the United Nation's Global Sustainable Development Goals. Our focus is applying Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)'s philosophy to directly impact on our clients.

GOAL 1 – No Poverty, by reducing the number of people living in poverty, ensuring equal rights to economic resources and services for those who experience poverty and vulnerable situations

GOAL 3 – Good Health and Wellbeing, is achieved through our programmes and actions by promoting healthy lives and well-being at all ages

GOAL 4 – Quality Education, by ensuring equal access to education and the development of literacy, numeracy and relevant skills

GOAL 5 – Gender Equality, by ending discrimination, ensuring full and effective participation and equal opportunities and empowering women and girls

GOAL 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth, through inclusive and sustainable economic growth, access to decent work for all and opportunities for entrepreneurship

GOAL 10 – Reduced Inequality, by ensuring equal opportunities and reduced inequalities through programme delivery dovetailing into social, economic and political inclusion of all

GOAL 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities, by ensuring access to adequate services and supporting communities to be inclusive, safe, sustainable and resilient

GOAL 16 – Peace, Justice & Strong Communities, through inclusive communities and institutions at all levels where justice and people's rights are respected within participatory decision-making

GOAL 17 – Partnership for Sustainable Development, by working collaboratively with local and national partners through shared knowledge and expertise and resourcing of strategic partnerships

In developing a climate action plan, actions will potentially include:

- Securing a single premises to reduce commuting between offices
- Exploring how our premises can be made more energy and water efficient
- Using hybrid working and service provision
- Awareness and knowledge of climate justice impact for the organisation and within local communities
- Supporting community groups and social enterprises interested in climate action, e.g. by providing information and support about accessing grants for retrofitting

In the development of our company's Annual Report, we will align our programme development and progression with the United Nation's (UN) Sustainable Development Goals to highlight our contribution at a local and national level.

Based on the above, our strategic framework for the period 2024-2028 centers on five strategic goals: **Innovation, Connection, Collaboration, Capability and Policy Shaping.**

ENSO PHOTOGRAPHY COURSE (SICAP 2022)



01-INNOVATION

Enhance innovation in how we support our communities

Actions To Support People

1. Adapting the Community Wealth Building framework to support communities and enhance their resilience by working with key players in Waterford to implement it
2. Building and expanding on partnerships for integrative working across the county
3. Engaging with the Irish Local Development Network (ILDN) to learn from other partnerships about innovative approaches that have been impactful
4. Building consortia to instigate new economic developments that will benefit the county's communities, both urban and rural
5. Exploring joint opportunities with other local organisations
6. Supporting the development of social enterprises and innovative business models in the county
7. Working with the local authority on the implementation of the Local Economic and Community Plan

Actions To Progress Innovation

1. Encouraging creative thinking in our programme implementation
2. Developing income streams that supports our mission, e.g. contracted services, social enterprises
3. Building our links with the business community for a range of opportunities, including Corporate Social Responsibility
4. Acquiring a business development resource to secure a range of funding (public, statutory, European, philanthropy, private sector) that can support the development of services for public benefit
5. Building our relationship with South East Technological University (SETU)'s Innovation Hubs
6. Maximising the use of Information Technology (IT) systems and platforms, to support innovative developments
7. Developing a climate action plan

02-CONNECTION

Improve our internal and external connections in supporting individuals and communities to connect with each other and with relevant services and supports

Actions To Support People

1. Support community groups to network, to work together to address local needs and build their capacity to do so on an ongoing basis
2. Build on local networks for enterprises/social enterprises and connecting to national networks
3. Continue to support the self-determination of individuals and communities
4. Develop the Community Wealth Building framework in collaboration with our partners to support communities
5. Support integration and connection between communities to address shared challenges
6. Proactively be on the ground to support people in making connections
7. Assist people to access personal development, education and employment/self-employment
8. Work with communities to help them to achieve their goals

Actions To Progress Innovation

1. Develop and embed a common practice framework and ethos across WAP that embraces change
2. Cross organisational planning and working using a common understanding of the WAP practice framework, integrated approaches to supporting clients, joint planning, enhanced referral pathways and feedback loops with key local players
3. Secure a single premises
4. Improve our communications
5. Develop our web site and social media and developing a public relations/communication strategy
6. Building relationships with other Local Development Companies
7. Strengthen our links with local businesses, agencies and networks
8. Produce and disseminate an annual report

03-COLLABORATION

Enhance cross-organisational collaborative working and partnering with others to support people

Actions To Support People

1. Provide a neutral space, bringing people together to strategically coordinate and collaborate, innovatively and creatively
2. Support and build on opportunities for networking within local communities
3. Support the development of wrap-around services, both internally and externally
4. Actively working to bring groups together to address common needs
5. Ensure connections with distinct communities in Waterford

Actions to improve cross-organisational collaboration

1. Develop internal referral mechanisms
2. Secure one location in the city and expanding our presence in rural communities
3. Host team building days and cross-programme planning

Actions to progress partnership working with others

1. Utilise and pool our resources with other relevant stakeholders
2. Collaborate with like-minded organisations on funding applications to deliver and promote programmes
3. Participate actively in county-wide and national strategies
4. Continue to engage with and participate in area-based planning and action groups
5. Connect with the South-East Technological University in developing evidence-based approaches that will inform our actions

04-CAPABILITY

Facilitate participation and engagement so that people have a voice and enhance our capability to serve them best

Actions To Support People

1. Provide holistic, wrap-around services that address needs, empower people and give agency, and build their capacity and resilience
2. Actively following up on external referrals and, with the consent of clients, providing feedback to referral agencies
3. Provide access to lifelong learning opportunities (accredited and non-accredited) and bridging the gap for people with low educational attainment
4. Support individuals to develop their job-seeking skills and to enhance their employability (CVs, interview preparation, job searching, relevant training, work placement opportunities)
5. Support individuals to start their own businesses, including social enterprises and self-employment (training, mentoring, networking, one-to-one support, grant applications)
6. Support individuals to enhance their quality of life and reduce isolation
7. Address poverty by direct action or by providing a gateway to internal and external services
8. Work with our partners to provide support to parents and to focus on prevention and early intervention initiatives for children and young people
9. Facilitate local community groups to enhance participation, increase sustainability, access opportunities and support organisational development
10. Explore and expand the suite of supports and services we offer

Actions to develop internal capacity

1. Attract and retain committed staff and planning for succession for staff and Board
2. Explore flexible working options
3. Develop a staff induction, training and development programme
4. Offer our staff Continuous Professional Development opportunities, including joint training with external partners, and continuing to source diversity and empathy training for staff and a management training programme
5. Introduce reflective practice and work plan review days, reviewing progress against the strategic plan and measuring and communicating our impact
6. Ensure our Board has the relevant skills, including finance, human resources, industry, community, public relations/marketing, legal/governance and programme knowledge and implementing the Board induction and training programme
7. Ensure excellence in governance – full and ongoing compliance with the Charities Governance Code, risk management planning, annual review of the strategic plan and work plan progress with full transparency in our dealings with individuals, communities and stakeholders.
8. Invest in systems, clear and robust processes and procedures, and developing a management culture of auditing, risk assessment and mitigation.
9. Maintain excellence in the financial management of public, state and philanthropic funds including financial planning and work planning.
10. Ensure that new opportunities for service provision are consistent with WAP's mission statement and, if so, that the organisation has sufficient managerial, financial and operational resources to implement them.
11. Explore self-funding and other funding opportunities.
12. Develop a more functional organisational structure with clear reporting lines and boundaries re: responsibilities and decision-making

05-POLICY SHAPING

Influence policy to ensure the most appropriate and relevant responses at local, regional and national levels

Actions To Support People

1. Engage with targeted communities to identify needs and appropriate social inclusion responses to inform relevant policymakers and stakeholders
2. Support targeted communities to engage with decision-making structures in Waterford to facilitate collaboration to help address common barriers and co-design responses
3. Advocate for change based on our knowledge and identified needs
4. Promote Community Wealth Building as a framework for supporting communities
5. Identify European programmes that could benefit communities in Waterford and collaborating with others to implement them

Actions to work with others

1. Maintain and develop relationships with policymakers locally, regionally, nationally and at EU levels
2. Facilitate strategic coordination to enhance interagency cooperation and collaboration in Waterford
3. Take part in relevant forums
4. Make an annual presentation to Waterford City & County Council on all our programmes
5. Work with Irish Local Development Network and other stakeholders to influence national policy and programmes
6. Participate in European Union-funded initiatives to learn and study innovative approaches at a European level that could be applied in Waterford
7. Challenge agencies and policies that create barriers to cohesive and integrative working and to the autonomy and self-determination of individuals and communities

RISKS AND MITIGATION

The main areas of risk that could impact the implementation of this strategic plan are as follows:

THEME	RISKS	MITIGATION
RESOURCING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● attracting and retaining staff and board members; ● delivering programmes that meet the needs of our clients and ensuring we have the staffing and managerial capacity to achieve our ambitions; ● external factors impacting economic growth and hence government finances. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We will ensure that WAP is a great place to work, continue to tender for national programmes and explore new funding streams.
OPERATING ENVIRONMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● not being able to source a single premises; ● ongoing crisis in Ukraine and impact of war and climate change on growing numbers of immigrants coming to Ireland and having adequate resources to meet their needs; ● cost of living crisis and impact on operating costs and day-to-day living of our clients and staff; ● growing threat of cyber-attack; ● increased risk of future pandemics; ● rise of extreme politics and the threat this poses to social cohesion and equality; ● lack of consultation between statutory sector and local providers giving rise to duplication of services and ● competition for resources; ● negative impacts from privatisation of the community and voluntary sector. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● We commit to monitor risks and keep our risk mitigation strategies up to date.
GOVERNANCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ineffective governance erodes public confidence and trust. ● Maintaining compliance in an ever-changing environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Board, management and staff will continue to improve our culture of compliance, internal controls, performance management and risk mitigation.

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS FOR IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGY

- Leverage our wealth of knowledge, experience, and evidence-based insights whilst drawing inspiration from external sources to design impactful initiatives and exert a positive influence.
- Continue and strengthen our community-based social inclusion approach and improve our communications
- Collaborate with like-minded organisations and developing our network of partners
- Providing targeted supports
- Ensure we have sufficient and sustainable staffing and funding, best-in-class organisational leadership and governance, an organisational structure that supports growth and an organisational culture that is innovative, flexible, diverse, positive and responsive.
- Keeping social inclusion, human rights and equality on the agenda of policy makers

CONCLUSION

Waterford Area Partnership is committed to building on our existing work, relationships and resources to provide essential and meaningful responses to local social inclusion needs. We cannot do this in isolation and will continue to work with individuals, families, local community organisations, state agencies and other partners to affect change at local and national levels. As part of our national alliances with other local development companies and our national network (ILDN) we will continue to influence policy and implement various programmes to help us in achieving the key objectives outlined in our Strategic Plan.

As has been evidenced in the past three years, the social inclusion and community sector is continually evolving to meet emerging needs. We see Waterford Area Partnership as a key strategic leader in adapting to meet change and a catalyst in driving innovation and strategic coordination within our communities and with our partners.

Waterford Area Partnerships Strategic Plan 2024 to 2028 is our commitment to Waterford communities and citizens that we will continue to work and expand our services to address social need and social change. Our Strategic Goals of Innovation, Connection, Collaboration, Capability and Policy Shaping will strengthen our responses across Waterford and we look forward to working with you to achieve our goals

