

Waterford's Covid-19 Economic Recovery Plan

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Contact:

Lisa Grant 0761 102709 lgrant@waterfordcouncil.ie
Maureen Fitzsimons 0761 102661 mfitzsimons@waterfordcouncil.ie



TOGETHER WATERFORD IS STRONGER

Introduction

The Plan for Waterford's Economic Recovery has been prepared as an immediate and direct response to the impact that Covid-19 has had on the people and businesses of Waterford. The plan is designed for the uncertain and complex environment which Covid-19 has created. An agile approach to developing and implementing the plan will allow us to adapt to our evolving environment and create an opportunity to reflect and learn from our experiences to further enhance our ability to get people and businesses back to work in Waterford City and County.

As part of this plan, there will be a continual review of our local environment and recognition that while we have identified a number of different phases: Crisis, Pre recovery, Recovery and Transformation – not all businesses or sectors will experience these phases at the same time and there will be a continual need for supports to be available. The changed landscape created by the impact of Covid-19 also means that a return to 'normal' is not our goal; our goal is to utilise the opportunity created by Covid-19 to transform Waterford into a more resilient location ready to embrace future change.

This plan is not the economic strategy for Waterford; that is contained in the Waterford Local Economic & Community Plan 2015-2020 and it is also not a replacement for existing local plans. It is intended to enhance, accelerate and compliment existing plans including the Waterford Local Enterprise Offices Enterprise Plan, the City and Town Centre Management Plans for Waterford City, Tramore and Dungarvan, Waterford Council's Tourism Plan and Waterford Council's Corporate Plan 2019-2024.

In preparing this plan, a focus has been placed on a number of key sectors in the local economy which have been most impacted by Covid-19. These include SMEs, our main urban centres of Waterford City, Tramore and Dungarvan where the majority of Waterford's retail and hospitality sectors are centred, tourism, culture and our rural economy. The initial focus of the plan is on these sectors but a key element of this plan is to continue to work with stakeholders to monitor the impact of the crisis on different sectors and use our networks to continue to develop collaborative and innovative responses to Covid-19.

Waterford City & County Council

The Elected Members of Waterford City and County Council were engaged in the preparation of this Plan and it will be presented to them for consideration and adoption at the June Council Meeting. A progress report will be provided for the consideration of the Members at subsequent Council Meetings.

Collaboration & Networks

The preparation of this plan involved working collaboratively with a number of new and existing forums to identify solutions that will not only address the challenges of the current environment but ones which will help transform these sectors and Waterford into a more attractive and resilient location in which to live, work and invest. This collaborative approach will continue to be essential to the successful implementation of the plan.

- Waterford Chamber
- Dungarvan & West Waterford Chamber
- Waterford Business Group
- City & Town Centre Management Groups
- Retail and Hospitality Group
- Visit Waterford and Waterford Council Tourism Team
- Fáilte Ireland and Enterprise Ireland
- Industry Grouping
- Waterford Institute of Technology
- Waterford Councillors
- Cultural Organisations

The overarching mission identified for this plan is '**Getting people and businesses back to work in Waterford City and County**' in the context of post Covid-19 restrictions.

The plan to achieve this mission has been and will continue to be to:

- React quickly as a collaborative network and build new networks to plan
- Maximise supports to sustain as many businesses and jobs as possible
- Co-ordinate our action plan to maximise its effectiveness
- Identify opportunities for Waterford arising from the crisis
- Position Waterford as the top Irish city for quality of life, low cost of living and skilled workforce
- Attract investment and funding
- Build resilience for future shocks
- Be agile in our responses

Phases of economic recovery and key activities



What has been achieved so far?

As this plan goes live, we are moving out of the 'Crisis' phase and into 'Pre-Recovery'. During the crisis phase, our main focus was bringing together existing and new stakeholder groups to start developing immediate responses to assist businesses during this crisis and to co-ordinate the process of planning for the next phases.

To help signpost businesses to access the necessary supports and information, a new online [Business Support Hub](#) went live in May 2020 supported by Waterford City and County Council, Waterford LEO, Enterprise Ireland, Waterford Business Group, Waterford Chamber and Dungarvan & West Waterford Chamber.

A number of local supports have already been activated by the Waterford Local Enterprise Office to assist businesses during the crisis including free mentoring support, a Business Continuity Voucher, a Trading on Line Voucher and a number of online training and information webinars. Other partner agencies have also actively engaged with their membership to provide support to their members. These are in addition to national initiatives.



A marketing plan has been prepared by the Visit Waterford Group to support Waterford's Tourism Sector. This will promote the fabulous range of attractions and activities which Waterford has to offer and will emphasise the Great Outdoors. A campaign has also been developed to encourage the people of Waterford to support local businesses and shop in Waterford. Work is also progressing on a Pilot Thermal Imaging project for shoppers in Waterford to check their temperature (A high temperature is one of the indicators of Covid-19) to help improve the safety and confidence of people shopping in the city centre.

Shop Waterford Support Local



At the heart of this plan is the desire to support Waterford to recover from the impact of Covid-19. While the actions in this plan will be implemented in the main by organisations with a focus on economic development, one key action that every person in Waterford can do to contribute to Waterford's economic recovery is to 'Shop Waterford and Support Local'. By shopping locally and by buying locally produced goods and services we will protect the jobs of our friends and neighbours and help to retain the high quality town and city centres in Waterford. Local employers can also play their part by rewarding staff with the **Dungarvan and Waterford Shop Local Vouchers and the Waterford Shopping Voucher**. Survival and long-term success can only be achieved by everyone coming on board to support this message through their actions.

eWaterford.com – An online shop for everyone

A dedicated online shop for Waterford where retailers can upload their product and consumers can buy all they need in one location while ensuring to support local business. Any Waterford business can now sign-up and add their products and services to eWaterford.com. Each business on eWaterford gets a dedicated business page complete with images, contact information, biography, administration panel, and order reports. Customers can contact businesses directly through eWaterford to enquire about products or services.

Big Little Ideas...Driving Waterford Together

This initiative provided the opportunity for the people of Waterford to suggest cost-effective actions which can be delivered within a twelve-month time frame that can help to transform Waterford.

Transformation: Infrastructure Investment

The 'Transformation' Phase will primarily be achieved through the implementation of an existing programme of infrastructural investment. This investment will result in the transformation of Waterford City centre through the development of the North Quays, the commencement of the Michael Street retail development, the advancement of a flagship national Viking attraction and the extension of the Waterford Greenway into the heart of Waterford City and ultimately connecting via the North Quays to the New Ross Greenway. A new €20m URDF Application focused on city centre revitalisation will further compliment these projects. Additional investment in Mount Congreve and Cappoquin will also further enhance the existing and extensive tourism product offering across Waterford.

Timeline for implementing actions in the plan

Our timeline is aligned with the national Roadmap for Recovery with a key concentration of actions during the Crisis and Pre-Recovery phases so that businesses are supported to continue operating or have the capacity to re-open in line with the timelines in the national Roadmap. The nature of Covid-19 and the potential for a second wave requires a fluid approach to our timeline. As noted above, not all businesses or sectors will experience the different phases of recovery at the same time so we will need to be responsive to their needs as, and when, they arise.



Timeline of Phased Reopening

Phase 1	18 th May 2020
Phase 2	8 th June 2020
Phase 3	29 th June 2020
Phase 4	20 th July 2020



How we will measure success

A number of key indicators have been identified which will help monitor progress. These will be updated and reviewed on a continual basis.

LEO Supports	Other indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Number of calls to Waterford LEO○ Number of applications for mentors○ Number of applicants for Business Continuity Vouchers – number of successful applicants and value○ Number of applicants for Trading On Line Vouchers & value○ Number of webinars held and no. of participants○ Restart Grant – no. of applicants and total value of scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Footfall levels in city centre○ Number in receipt of Pandemic Unemployment Payment○ Number on the Live Register○ Number on Temporary Wage Subsidy Scheme○ Number of businesses re-opened○ Uptake of Shop Local Vouchers

Delivery of the plan

The plan detailed on the following pages contains objectives for each of the sectors focused on to date, what drivers are needed to achieve these objectives, the actions and who will lead on each action. In implementing this plan, each identified lead agency will bring together appropriate stakeholders and resources to progress the actions.

An operational co-ordination group with representatives of the key agencies delivering this plan will monitor the implementation of the actions on an on-going basis and respond to issues as, or when, they arise. A comprehensive review of the plan will take place in early September to ensure that the actions still remain relevant and further actions may included.

We will also continue to develop our engagement infrastructure by developing new sectoral networks to engage with different sectors as we continue to navigate through the impact of Covid-19. These networks will facilitate peer learning and adopting an

innovative approach in tackling the challenges of Covid-19. Waterford City and County Council will work in partnership with WIT's Technology Gateways: SEAM, PMBRC and TSSG to develop these networks which will focus on sharing the skills, technology and supports available locally on an ongoing basis.

As there is an acknowledgement that different sectors and businesses will experience the impact of Covid-19 at different times and there is potential for a second wave, we have presented actions in terms of an indicative timeline as outlined above. This will allow for flexibility to match supports to the personal experience of individual businesses and the different sectors.

Flexibility will also be required to ensure that collectively across Waterford we follow all national guidance as outlined in the Roadmap for Recovery and continue to implement national guidance and best practice in relation to health and safety and social distancing as this guidance continues to evolve.

Small & Medium Enterprises

Objective: Prioritise the recovery and onward future development of our SMEs	
Drivers:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support businesses and self employed people to resume trading and employment • Enable businesses to prepare for a post Covid-19 environment • Ensure strong local collaboration among enterprise support agencies • Provide appropriate financial supports to SMEs to facilitate stabilisation and recovery 	
Pre Recovery	
Action	Lead
Provide advice to businesses in availing of grants and supports to sustain them through the covid-19 crisis	Waterford LEO, Waterford Chamber, Dungarvan & West Waterford Chamber
Provide supports and advice on Health and Safety issues such as social distancing, back to work protocols etc	Waterford LEO, Waterford Chamber
Provide bespoke one-to-one mentoring on key issues such as HR, financial management and eCommerce	Waterford LEO, Waterford Chamber
Build strong communication links between the local authority, Enterprise Ireland, the LEO and the Chambers	Waterford LEO/ Waterford Chamber /Dungarvan & West Waterford Chamber
Deliver schemes such as the Business Continuity Voucher to prepare for recovery period	Waterford LEO
Deliver Covid-19 Restart Grant and supports to the SME sector	Waterford Council
Recovery	
Action	Lead
Ensure that SMEs are as competitive as possible in a post-Covid business environment through the delivery of LEAN programmes	Waterford LEO / WIT
Support the establishment of new business networks and the strengthening of existing ones	Waterford Council/ WIT / Waterford Chamber / Dungarvan and West Waterford Chamber
Support Enterprise Ireland Procurement Managers event to match indigenous suppliers with MNCs	Enterprise Ireland/ IDA / Waterford Chamber
Provide supports to the SME sector which promote innovation, agility and flexibility (e.g. Training, Agile R&D Funding)	Waterford LEO / Waterford Chamber

Transformation	
Action	Lead
Increased investment by Waterford businesses in training, management development and innovation	Waterford LEO / Enterprise Ireland
Improved efficiency and competitiveness in the SME sector	Waterford LEO
Improved local business networking/ <i>Utilise business networks to identify sector specific Covid issues and develop a collaborative plan to tackle issues at local level</i>	Waterford LEO
Co-ordinate with local public sector agencies to improve the public procurement environment for small	Waterford Council

Objective: Develop Waterford as a digital leader across all sectors to support existing and stimulate new enterprises

- Drivers:**
- Provide supports to SMEs to develop their e-Commerce potential
 - Development of a Digital Plan for Waterford incorporating a focus on SMART City/Towns

Pre Recovery

Action	Lead
Promote and deliver eCommerce supports such as the Trading Online Vouchers and Online Retail supports	Waterford LEO/ Waterford Chamber

Recovery

Action	Lead
Provide supports to the SME sector which promote innovation, agility and flexibility (e.g. Agile R&D Funding)	Waterford LEO
Engage with key stakeholders to develop a Digital Plan for Waterford with specific focus on SMART City/Towns	Waterford Council / Waterford Chamber / Dungarvan & West Waterford Chamber

Transformation

Action	Lead
Increased focus on eCommerce with businesses developing strong online presence or omni channel presence	Waterford LEO / Waterford Chamber

Urban Centres: Waterford City, Tramore and Dungarvan

Objective: Safe and secure urban centres	
Drivers:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement best practice in managing the public realm re social distancing • Support businesses in implementing best practice in social distancing 	
Pre Recovery	
Action	Lead
Pilot Thermal Imaging Project for shoppers	Waterford Council
Install signage and guidance for pedestrians including visually attractive markings	Waterford Council
Facilitate queuing for high volume attractions where practical in partnership with commercial operators	Waterford Council
Develop standard operating procedures in partnership with local retailers for safe management of retail and public realm	Waterford Business Group / Waterford Chamber/ Dungarvan and West Waterford Chamber
Facilitate additional seating in the public realm and develop a 'Street Furniture' grant scheme to include online application form and waiver of \$254 licence	Waterford Council
Provide training and supports to retail and hospitality businesses to implement Covid-19 H&S measures	Waterford LEO / Waterford Chamber
Recovery	
Action	Lead
Review social distancing measures in the public realm in line with national guidance	Waterford Council
Develop a dedicated retail programme of education and activation	Waterford LEO / Waterford Chamber
Provide support for developing online platforms for retail and hospitality operators	Waterford LEO / Waterford Chamber
Transformation	
Action	Lead
Develop a Customer Charter for businesses in the main urban centres	Waterford Business Group/ Waterford & Dungarvan Chambers

Objective: Drive business retention and growth	
Drivers:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shop Waterford Support Local campaign • Promote Shop Local Vouchers to local employers • Create opportunities for increased footfall and increased dwell time • Animation of urban areas in line with best practice on social distancing 	
Pre Recovery	
Action	Lead
Develop Shop Waterford Support Local digital campaign	WCCC / Waterford Chamber / Dungarvan and West Waterford Chamber / Waterford Business Group
Engage with festivals and events on appropriate animation activities in line with the Roadmap for Recovery	Waterford Council
Review parking in partnership with private operators to optimise footfall and dwell time in urban centres	Waterford Council
Recovery	
Action	Lead
Launch Shop Waterford Support Local campaign	WCCC/Waterford Chamber / Dungarvan and West Waterford Chamber
Develop a programme of events to attract footfall in line with best practice on social distancing and Roadmap for Recovery	Waterford Council
Engage local businesses to use Shop Local Vouchers to reward their staff and support the local economy	Waterford Chamber/ Dungarvan and West Waterford Chamber/Waterford Business Group
Transformation	
Action	Lead
Launch Waterford 2040 branding and marketing collateral to target new investment and attract mobile talent	Waterford Council
Develop and promote a year round programme of events to animate urban centres	Waterford Council

Tourism

Objective: Secure share of domestic tourism market for 2020	
Drivers:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement and tourism promotion and support programme 	
Pre Recovery	
Action	Lead
Waterford City and County Council Tourism Team and Visit Waterford to develop a partnership to identify the issues facing the local tourism sector	Visit Waterford
Develop a multi media domestic tourism campaign for 2020 aligned with Fáilte Ireland's 'Keep Discovering' campaign and leverage local stakeholders marketing campaigns	Visit Waterford
Provide advice and support to local tourism providers including training and webinars	Visit Waterford
Engage with local stakeholders to develop packages to attract domestic visitors	Visit Waterford
Establish a working group with Fáilte Ireland for additional actions to assist the tourism sector	Fáilte Ireland
Recovery	
Action	Lead
Co-ordinate activities across the tourism sector to develop packages targeted at domestic tourists and secure engagement on the tourism marketing plan	Visit Waterford
Roll out Tourism Marketing Plan and monitor implementation	Visit Waterford
Continue to liaise with Fáilte Ireland on support and guidance targeted at the tourism sector	Visit Waterford
Open the Silver and Time Museum in Waterford's Viking Triangle	Museum of Treasures
Transformation	
Action	Lead
Deliver upgrade of Mount Congreve and flagship Viking visitor attraction	Waterford Council
Greenway extension link into the city centre from Bilberry and link to the New Ross Greenway	Waterford Council
Implement Fáilte Ireland's Destination Towns Programme	Waterford Council
Partner with Fáilte Ireland on the development and roll out of a campaign re-targeting international visitors	Fáilte Ireland

Rural Economy

Objective: Focus on key projects to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 and enhance the rural economy	
Drivers:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and implement projects to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on rural towns • Develop measures which will facilitate on-line trading and enable remote working • Develop projects which will diversify the rural economy 	
Pre Recovery	
Action	Lead
Under the CLÁR programme, develop Community Recreation Areas in village centres	Waterford Council
Pilot a set of supports which provide remote working solutions and improved capacity for remote working.	Waterford Council
Recovery	
Action	Lead
Undertake projects to deliver greater capacity for on-street trading and hospitality provision. T&V	Waterford Council
Develop and deliver a dedicated eCommerce programme aimed at providing an on-line presence and on-going support to the small food and craft producer community	Waterford LEO
Develop a pilot on-line trading portal for one town in County Waterford under the T&V Scheme	Waterford Council
Transformation	
Action	Lead
Obtain funding from the Rural Regeneration Development Fund for Cappoquin	Waterford Council
Obtain funding for projects in the Blackwater Economic Zone	Waterford Leader
Collectivise branding/marketing of rural Waterford's identity through Local Flavours Interreg Rural Tourism project increasing footfall and dwell time in rural areas	Waterford Council

Culture & Libraries

Objective: Support the recovery and ongoing development of the arts sector

Support the Waterford Cultural Quarter community (business, creatives, residents) during recovery phase

Support community recovery through phased programme of return to full library service

Drivers:

- Offer advice as to new ways of working and restructuring operations to align with social distancing measures.
- Provide advice on accessing appropriate financial supports. Deliver on committed arts programme in partnership with Arts Council.
- Liaise with national and local arts organisations to provide for mentoring opportunities across arts forms.
- Build a new online arts audience. Use social media to facilitate arts offerings, events, information and advice.
- Liaise with businesses on O'Connell Street and surrounding area to promote recovery activity through social media and other tools
- Support urban animation including festivals in line with WCCC safety guidelines
- Build on existing customer base and new online customer base to rebuild library service in innovative ways to reinvent its potential as a welcoming, free public space in the City

Pre Recovery

Action	Lead
Implement innovative ways of working to deliver on agreed arts programme on a phased basis for 2020.	Arts Office
Offer online arts events (such as with Poetry Day Ireland), online gallery tours and performance events with Waterford venues.	Arts Office
Support festival and event activity in line with the Roadmap for Recovery. Increase visual marketing of the Waterford Cultural Quarter.	Waterford Cultural Quarter
Reopen library initially for a Contact and Collect Service and build on this using roadmap for reopening libraries.	Library Services

Recovery

Action	Lead
Artists and arts organisation to deliver their programme /activity in line with the Roadmap to Recovery and following HSE guidance	Arts Office

Have socially distanced events in place with the re-opening of galleries, theatre and venue spaces.	Arts Office
The Waterford Gallery of Art will hold outreach activities across the county in partnership with the Old Market House Arts Centre in Dungarvan.	Arts Office
Provide coordinated practical supports to ensure safe and new ways of using the streetscape for urban activity.	Waterford Cultural Quarter
Use Digital Hub as a focal point for online learning programmes, seminars and courses for reskilling and upskilling people	Library Services
Transformation	
Action	Lead
The Waterford Gallery Of Art & the Old Market House Art Centre will be significant cultural spaces for Waterford.	Arts Office
Waterford Cultural Quarter will be developed as a place of transformation and experimentation in the arts, creativity and innovation through urban interventions.	Waterford Cultural Quarter
Libraries continue as vibrant and relevant community spaces in the transformation of the urban environment. Library programming supports and enhances access to national and local events and programmes	Library Services