

Recommendation for a one-off grant of €60,000 to Waterford Area Partnership

The Council will be aware that following protracted difficulties for Waterford Area Partnership in finalising the company's Annual Financial Statements for 2019 and 2020, an interim executive leadership and an interim board was put in place in March 2021.

During the period from March to now the Interim Board, working with the CEO and staff and with the company's funders at national and local levels, have made significant progress. Below is a summary of the current situation in relation to Waterford Area Partnership.

- **All** financial issues arising from the 2018 AFS are now resolved and the Directors are satisfied with the on-going financial viability of the company.
- The 2019 AFS (clean audited accounts) will be formally signed off next week.
- The 2020 Accounts will be signed off by the end of November 2021.
- Recruitment for the new CEO will now commence.

The Board of WAP have now requested that Waterford City and County Council make available a once off grant of €60,000 to provide the additional financial support needed to enable WAP to meet the costs of:

- Completing all outstanding legacy work in relation to the preparation and auditing of the 2019 and 2020 company accounts coupled with re-introducing good financial practices and systems across the organization.
- Review and implement new human resource management practices across the organization.
- Develop a new Constitution parallel with appointing a new Board of Directors to take over from the Interim Board in due course and commence the process to appoint a CEO and Financial Controller (both are currently in their role on an interim basis).

Given the funding structures for Partnership companies generally, they are not able to generate surpluses to meet unexpected or unforeseen costs. Recognising the fact that the works undertaken and the costs incurred were critical in achieving the progress outlined and effectively securing the future of Waterford Area Partnership, it is recommended that the grant requested be approved by the Council. The payment of the grant can be provided for within the Council's overall budgetary outturn for this year.

The payment of this grant would be completely separate from the SICAP contract between the Council and Waterford Area Partnership. The implementation of SICAP is overseen by the LCDC and the interim CEO reports to the LCDC on a monthly basis. We are satisfied that the payment of this grant would have no implications in relation to the SICAP contract.

Our two priorities in engaging with the Board and CEO of WAP has been to ensure the continuation of the much needed SICAP services in disadvantaged communities and to try to safeguard the jobs of the staff employed by WAP. We are satisfied that the payment of the grant will help achieve these priorities.

Ivan Grimes

Director of Services

9 September 2021