

**Comhairle Cathrach agus Contae Phort Láirge**

**Waterford City and County Council**

**Corporate Plan**

**2014 – 2019**

## Foreword by the Mayor of Waterford City and County



We live in a time of huge political, economic and social flux. Many of the cultural and social norms have been overturned. Our connections to our communities are more tenuous. For many of us, these links were best displayed in strong local connections with church, sporting organisations, schools and businesses. At a time of huge technological advancement and “connection”, as expressed for example in the development of social media, sometimes we are ever more remote from family, friends and community. At times of major change, there is never a greater need for a local leadership that can create stability and certainty. People need to know where they stand and as a new organisation we now have a wonderful opportunity to reengage with our communities and provide this certainty and stability.

Local government has been one of the greatest subjects of change in recent years. Many of the changes provide many executive and political challenges. In this situation our priority has to be to create a stable and consolidated operating environment to regain the trust of investors, business people and citizens. This will address the most notable challenges in Waterford’s situation that have been, and will continue to be:

- The merger of Waterford City Council, Waterford County Council and the town councils of Dungarvan, Tramore and Lismore
- New local political boundaries and changed local political dynamics
- Reduced resources from the National Exchequer
- A less vibrant local economic environment due to the recession, leading to lack of readily available local funding sources
- The formation of Irish Water
- The impending arrival of domestic water charges
- The institution of Local Property Tax.

Waterford City and County Council’s activities are determined by available resources but are also largely determined by the Council’s operating environment – both external and internal. There can be a huge number of external catalysts and constraints, ranging from such as EU and national legislation and guidelines to local community needs. We are also obviously very much under the influence of the National economic picture. In many of these areas, we have no choices. In many others - and within the constraints of local resources – it is a matter of balance. Balance between one priority and another, balance between one area and another, maybe even a balance between this year and next.

At all times, however, the greater good of Waterford has to be the driving force and the ultimate determinant where there exist elements of choice.

The Council's internal operating environment is largely composed of its elected representatives, its staff and its adopted systems and technologies. From my dealings with both staff and elected representatives in the first few months of the new Council, I can say, unreservedly, that they are all, without exception, committed to the greater welfare of Waterford. It will take time before we can all arrive at a shared agreement of what defines that "greater welfare" and how we should go about achieving it. But a shared understanding is what our target has to be – and not alone shared by elected representatives and staff, it also has to be reflective of the needs and priorities of all the communities and citizens of Waterford.

This first Corporate Plan of the new Council attempts to do exactly this i.e. to make statements as to what will be the strategic priorities and objectives for this new Council and, by inference, for the whole of the people of Waterford. The Plan is also a very important step on the road to local certainty for the foreseeable future in that, even in a quickly changing environment, it establishes the priorities which shall direct the activities of this Council for its lifetime or until such time that these strategic priorities are reviewed. This Corporate Plan should be our guiding light .... the thing which provides us with certainty .... The thing which tells us what is what. All other local policies and plans should merely determine the means by which we strive for the targets laid down in this plan.

In conclusion, I genuinely believe that this Corporate Plan can contribute to establishing a shared vision for the new Waterford City and County Council and to making Waterford a better place for everybody. If this were our ambition and we were to achieve it, then we would, I feel, have achieved a lot.

*Cllr. James Tobin*  
*Mayor of Waterford City and County*

# OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to make Waterford the best possible place for all its people and for those that wish to live, visit, work or invest here.

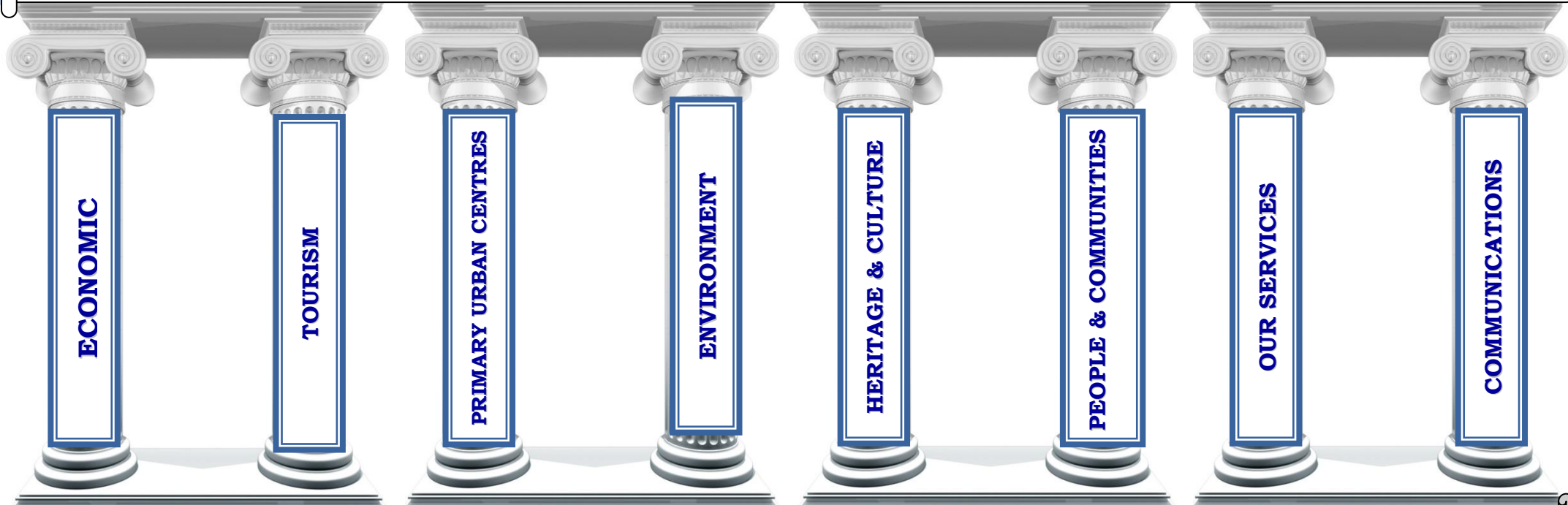
# OUR VALUES

- Unity** We aspire to speak with one voice for Waterford and all its people and be unified in our actions, service delivery and leadership of the City and County.
- Democracy** We will encourage active engagement and participation in the democratic process and facilitate informed decision making by our elected representatives. We will support local democratic structures at Municipal District and Metropolitan level and facilitate participative decision making as near to the community as possible.
- Inclusion** We will seek to deliver opportunities and accessibility for all in our activities and will promote respect for diversity and inclusion in our communities.
- Integrity** We will seek to deliver all our services with honesty, openness and respect.
- About people** We recognise that our services are delivered for people and through people and we will accordingly place respect for people as individuals and communities at the heart of the organisation.
- Quality** Notwithstanding pressure on resources we will aspire to quality and long term sustainability in all our services.

# THE FOUNDATION AND PILLARS

(OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES TO MAKE WATERFORD STRONGER)







## WATERFORD



## INFRASTRUCTURE

# OUR INFRASTRUCTURE

**We will seek to:**

-  **Achieve maximum efficiency from available resources.**
-  **Concentrate on roads maintenance above improvement with emphasis on:**
  - **Road Drainage.**
  - **Mechanisation.**
  - **Community Involvement.**
-  **Ensure clarity for all our workforce as to their roles and responsibilities.**
-  **Optimise the transition to Irish Water and manage organisational risks with emphasis on**
  - **Business Continuity.**
  - **Cost Management.**
-  **Aspire to quality in all our public realm, amenity and recreation provisions appropriate to the surrounding environment.**
-  **Sustain the asset value of our building and housing stock to the best level possible.**

## **Our Metrics**

**Road Condition as surveyed annually**

**Unit costs for maintenance and improvement.**

**Compliance with the Service Level Agreement with Irish Water.**

**External recognition from other bodies relating to presentation of our amenities and public realm.**

**Condition surveys of housing stock.**

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

We will seek to:

- ✚ Develop and implement an effective Economic Plan.
- ✚ Place job creation at the forefront of all our services and strategies.
- ✚ Focus on self-generation of jobs through
  - Enterprise Support and Enabling Entrepreneurship
  - Community Involvement
- ✚ Seek to be best in class for start-ups and inward investment through
  - Maintaining a low cost base.
  - Providing a one-stop interface for business, through the Local Enterprise Office and Economic Development Office.
  - Developing a clear strategy for property solutions for FDI
- ✚ Determine our key areas of strength and seek to align other players activities including the Technological University and expansion of activities at the University Hospital.
- ✚ Seek to realise value from our unique marine environment.
- ✚ Place a focus on youth employment programmes.

## Our Metrics

**Number of IDA site visits.**  
**Employment/Income Indicators – Comparison with peers.**  
**FDI jobs created.**  
**New start up companies**  
**Levels of youth employment**  
**Business costs in our control – comparison with peers.**  
**Availability of Property Solutions for inward investment.**



# TOURISM

We will prioritise:

- ✚ Making Waterford a longer stay destination.
- ✚ Defining an integrating entity such as the “Ring of Waterford”.
- ✚ Developing further products such as:
  - The Waterford Greenway      Comeraghs Wild      Mount Congreve      Viking
  - Triangle      Lismore      Tramore      Ardmore      Dunmore East
  - Copper Coast      Blackwater Valley      Munster Peaks
- ✚ Developing an integrated branding and communications programme.
- ✚ Identifying key audiences.
- ✚ Developing stakeholder participation.
- ✚ Enhancing the culture and festival offer.
- ✚ Further developing the accommodation product in City and County.

## Our Metrics

- Increase in numbers of visitors.
- Increase in average duration of stay.
- Increase in number of bednights available.
- Increase in cumulative spend by visitors.

# PRIMARY URBAN CENTRES

In Waterford City we will:

- Deliver retail led regeneration of Michael Street/John Street Area
- Deliver arts led regeneration of O'Connell Street Area
- Enhance the connectivity of the Viking Triangle to the City Centre
- Develop the effectiveness of the City Centre Management Group

In Dungarvan we will:

- Maximise public realm improvements from Smarter Travel
- Regenerate the O'Connell Street area
- Recognise the Quays as focal for night-time vibrancy
- Develop a Town Centre Management Group involving all stakeholders

In Tramore we will:

- Develop clarity on the positioning and function of the town.
- Regenerate the former Tramore Fáilte lands and environs.
- Prioritise Regeneration of the Town Centre and connectivity with Dungarvan and Waterford.

We will link the 3 main urban centres by Greenway and seek to become part of a strategic national trail (Great Journey of Ireland)

## Our Metrics

**Retail availability – mix and overall quantum**  
**Vibrancy and activity expressed through footfall**  
**Perception (External and Internal) measured through customer surveys.**

# HERITAGE AND CULTURE

We will:

- Seek to enhance the wonderful Natural Heritage in Waterford
- Develop and realise value from our Heritage and Cultural Assets
  - for community benefit
  - for high quality visitor experiences
- Innovate in our use of heritage and culture assets.
- Promote the Arts, with particular emphasis on:
  - Developing Youth Arts in Waterford City
  - Sustaining Venues
  - Rewarding creativity not existence
  - Supporting the development of professional theatre
- Expand and support our range of festivals and activities and raise standards.
- Promote and sustain the Gaeltacht as unique part of our Heritage.

## Metrics

**The quality of our architectural heritage**

**The extent of arts activity**









**The extent of festival activity**

**The number of arts organisations**

**The number of daily Irish speakers resident in the Gaeltacht**

# ENVIRONMENT

We will prioritise:














-  Ensuring quality of access to our Natural Heritage.
-  Ensuring best in class presentation of our urban centres and the county as a whole.
-  Development of coastal and mountain amenities and amenities generally.
-  Development of a healthy City and County.
-  Ensuring best in class standards for surface and bathing waters.
-  Ensuring impartial delivery of our regulatory functions.
-  Providing and regulating high quality waste management services where appropriate to do so.
-  Developing an age friendly City and County.

## Our Metrics

**Extent of amenities.**  
**Kilometres of walking routes.**  
**IBAL/Tidy Towns results**  
**Water/Air Quality results**  
**WHO Healthy City status**

# PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES

We will:

-  Develop and implement an effective Community Plan with increased engagement at all levels.
-  Work to develop sustainable and safe communities throughout City and County.
-  Support and work with those that help themselves.
-  Support for those that are or feel excluded.
-  Ensure the alignment of Leader and Community Development with the Local Authority.
-  Develop an effective Local Community Development Committee and a Public Participation Network.
-  Focus on Communities involvement in economic development and educational attainment.
-  Focus on Village and Town Regeneration.
-  Place a changed focus on Communities of Common Interest working together.
-  Place an emphasis on quality of life in Local Authority housing estates.
-  Sustain the quality of housing stock, and minimise the number of empty houses.
-  Maximise the provision of social housing of appropriate type.
-  Maintain fit for purpose emergency services.

## Our Metrics

**Deprivation Indices.**

**Number and activity of Community Economic Groups.**

**Housing condition assessment and repair statistics.**

**Numbers of housing units vacant.**

**Housing lists relative to peers.**

**Monitoring of community safety through the Joint Policing Committee.**

**Participation rates in the Public Participation Network.**

# OUR SERVICES

We will:

- ✦ **Aspire to deliver Efficient, Effective and Equitable services.**
- ✦ **Prepare and deliver ambitious annual service plans with appropriate monitoring and reporting.**
- ✦ **Ensure that our payroll costs are reduced relative to our income base.**
- ✦ **We will seek to sustain services at our bases in Dungarvan – Waterford so as to ensure consistency and availability of services to each of the Districts.**
- ✦ **See to be customer orientated and friendly with an emphasis on single point of contact Customer Service Desks at our main bases.**
- ✦ **Regulate impartially with systems to guarantee fairness.**
- ✦ **Be transparent in all our activities.**
- ✦ **Deliver our services through quality people with appropriate skills.**
- ✦ **Change to meet societal demands.**
- ✦ **Be plan led and democratic.**
- ✦ **Deliver a sustainable financial model and cost management structures for the organisation.**
- ✦ **Invest prudently in our assets.**
- ✦ **Supporting changing service demands through the application of Information Systems.**
- ✦ **Seek to provide and enhance a Library Service that is dispersed and accessible.**

## Metrics

- Our payroll costs relative to overall budget and peers.**
- Our costs relative to our peers.**
- Our service relative to our peers.**
- Qualitative customer and stakeholder experience assessment.**
- Resources committed to training.**
- % Reduction in cost base.**
- % Collection of income.**

# COMMUNICATIONS

We will:

- ✚ Develop a Communications Strategy identifying key stakeholders and tools.
- ✚ Provide resources for proactive corporate promotion and awareness.
- ✚ Ensure brand development with stakeholder involvement.
- ✚ Develop positive media relations.
- ✚ Progress online communications in line with societal demands.
- ✚ Develop a new relationship with customers with respect to engagement and feedback.
- ✚ Work proactively with Tourism stakeholders on promotional activities.
- ✚ Embed a consistent communications approach throughout the organisation.
- ✚ Develop a Customer Charter for approval by Council.

## Metrics

### Media Penetration

- International
- National
- Regional
- Local.

Customer perception surveys.

Customer response times.

## Commentary from Michael Walsh, Chief Executive.



This Corporate Plan is being adopted in fairly unique circumstances where a new organisation has been created and has an opportunity to establish its priorities and to express them clearly so that all stakeholders can see our intent and the focus for our resources in the coming years.

In adopting this Corporate Plan the Council has deliberately sought to keep it at a high level with metrics that speak to the overall well being of Waterford in the areas where this Council has direct control and influence. The annual service delivery plans will allow a further focus on organisational service indicators and will be framed around this Plan and have integral regard to its core objectives.

It is our intention to establish a clear baseline on the high level metrics and to report on these on a bi-annual basis. Reporting on Service Plan indicators will happen in tandem with the monthly Chief Executives Report to Council.

Given the timeframes around the amalgamation process it has not been possible to have as extensive consultation as we would have liked and accordingly it is our intention that a full review will happen in the coming year. This will allow full engagement with the Public Participation Network and will have regard to the Economic and Community Plans currently under development through the auspices of the Local Community Development Committee. It will also allow full participation of the relevant SPC's.

Notwithstanding the fact that this new organisation has a whole host of policies and plans to develop and review, I am satisfied that this Corporate Plan yields a clear view of our priorities over the coming years. It is a platform for the preparation of Annual Service Plans and for our Council to monitor our high level objectives and can deliver a focus for the organisation to work together for the betterment of Waterford as a whole.

*Michael Walsh,  
Chief Executive,  
Waterford City and County Council*