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County Waterford Local Development Strategy 2023-2027



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Waterford Local Development Strategy 2023-2027

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Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

Abbreviation/Term	Definition
ACORNS	Accelerating the Creation Of Rural Nascent Start-ups
BIM	Bord Iascaigh Mhara
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CCDP	City and County Development Plan
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CLG	Company Limited by Guarantee
CLLD	Community-Led Local Development
CPG	Corporate Policy Group
CRM	Customer Relationship Management
CSO	Central Statistics Office
CYPSC	Children and Young People's Services Committee
DAFM	Department of Agriculture, Food, and the Marine
DECC	Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications,
DEIS	Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools
DHLGH	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
DRCD	Department of Rural and Community Development
DSP	Department of Social Protection
DTCAGSM	Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport, and Media
ED	Electoral Division
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
EMP	Energy Master Plan
EoI	Expression of Interest
EU	European Union
EV	Electric Vehicle
FLAG	Fisheries Local Action Group
FRC	Family Resource Centre
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent
GIY	Grow It Yourself
HP	Haase and Pratschke (Deprivation Index)
HPSU	High-Potential Start-Up
HSCL	Home School Community Liaison
HSE	Health Service Executive
ICMSA	Irish Creamery and Milk Suppliers Association
IFA	Irish Farmers' Association
IoT	Internet of Things
IPAS	International Protection Accommodation Service
JA	Jobseekers Allowance
JB	Jobseekers Benefit
JCSP	Junior Certificate Schools Programme
LAES	Local Area Employment Service
LAG	Local Action Group
LCA	Leaving Certificate Applied
LCDC	Local Community Development Committee

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Abbreviation/Term	Definition
LDS	Local Development Strategy
LEADER	Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale Links Between Actions for the Development of the Rural Economy
LECP	Local Economic and Community Plan
LEO	Local Enterprise Office
MASP	Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan
MD	Municipal District
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MUGA	Multi Use Games Area
NTA	National Transport Authority
PDST	Professional Development Services for Teachers
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
PPN	Public Participation Network
RD	Rural Development
RDP	Rural Development Programme (also known as <i>Operational Programme</i>)
REDZ	Rural Economic Development Zones
RRO	Rural Recreation Officer
RSES	Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy
RSS	Rural Social Scheme
RV	Recreational Vehicle
SCP	Schools Completion Programme
SEAI	Sustainable Energy Authority Ireland
SEC	Sustainable Energy Communities
SERSF	South East Regional Skills Forum
SETU	South East Technological University
SICAP	Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme
SLA	Service Level Agreement
SPC	Strategic Policy Committee
SPG	Strategic Policy Group
SRA	Southern Regional Assembly
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
TAMS	Targeted Agriculture Modernisation Scheme
WAP	Waterford Area Partnership
WC&CC	Waterford City and County Council
WIT	Waterford Institute of Technology
WLP	Waterford LEADER Partnership
WSTCYS	Waterford and South Tipperary Community Youth Service
WWETB	Waterford Wexford Educational Training Board

Acknowledgements

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Unless otherwise stated, all statistical data is based on the CSO Census of Population 2016. Deprivation Index information and mapping are based on Haase, T. and Pratschke, J. (2017) The 2016 Pobal HP Deprivation Index, accessed at www.trutzhaase.eu

1 Local Action Group Governance Model

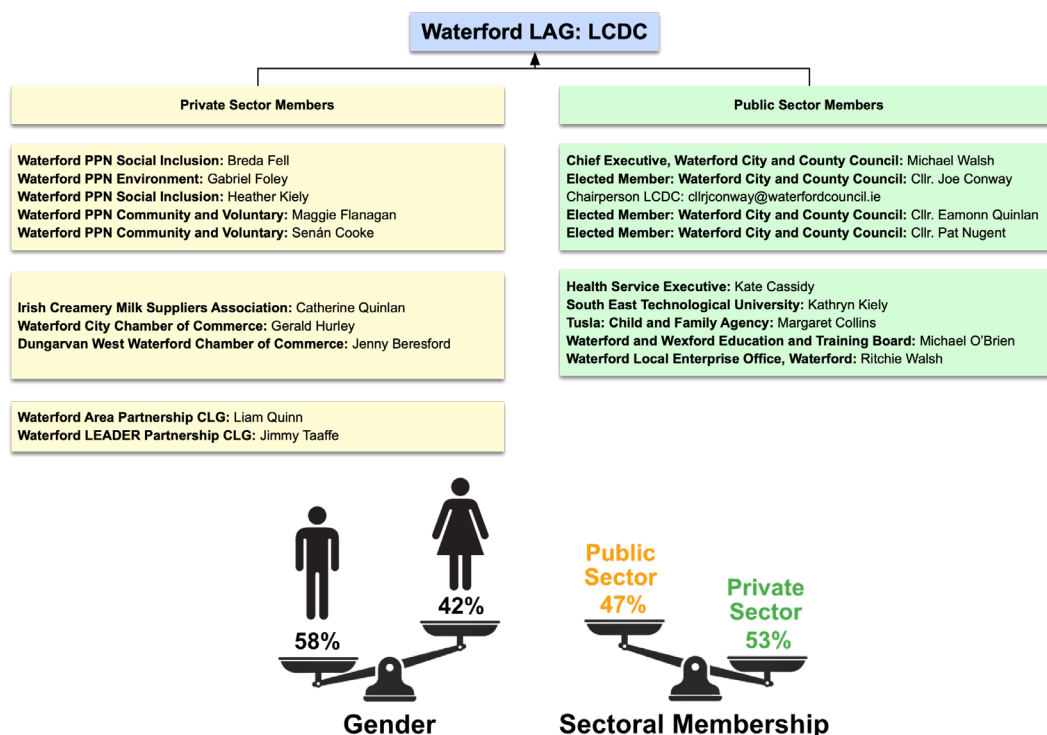
1.1 LAG Composition

Legal Name:	Waterford Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)
Contact:	Sinéad Breathnach, Chief Officer, Waterford Local Community Development Committee, Waterford City and County Council, The Civic Offices, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford. X35 Y326 Telephone: 058-22000 E-mail: sbreathnach@waterfordcouncil.ie Website: www.waterfordcouncil.ie
Tax Clearance Access	Tax Reference Number: 3263046AH Tax Access Number: 821999
CRO Number	Not applicable.

1.1.1 LAG Composition and Decision-Making

The composition of the LAG partnership is based on balanced representation from the public and private sectors, as per Article 33 of the EU Common Provisions Regulation (CPR) 2021/1060. In recognition of this situation, a five-step process was implemented by the LCDC to achieve the desired gender representation, which is now at 42% female participation.

Figure 1 - LAG Composition



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Table 1 - Waterford LAG Membership

Non Public Sector		Public Sector	
Gabriel Foley	PPN / Environment	Mayor Joe Conway (Chairperson)	Elected Representative
Catherine Quinlan	ICMSA	Cllr. Pat Nugent	Elected Representative
Senan Cooke	PPN / Community and Voluntary	Michael Walsh	CE Waterford City and County Council
Ger Hurley	Waterford Chamber of Commerce	Kathryn Kiely	SETU
Jenny Beresford	CEO Dungarvan and West Waterford Chamber	Richie Walsh	Head of LEO
Jimmy Taaffe	CEO – Waterford LEADER Partnership CLG	Margaret Mary Collins	TUSLA
Liam Quinn	CEO – Waterford Area Partnership	Michael O'Brien	WWETB
Heather Kiely	PPN Community and Voluntary	Kate Cassidy	HSE
Maggie Flannagan	PPN Community and Voluntary	Cllr. Eamon Quinlan	Elected Representative (Deputy Chair)
Breda Fell	PPN Social Inclusion		

There are nineteen members on the Waterford LAG, 10 non-public representatives and nine public representatives. Currently there are eight female representatives comprising 42 per cent of the LAG.

Non Public Sector Representatives

- **Gabriel Foley** represents the interests of the environment sector. A former member of the IFA, Gabriel has a keen interest in beekeeping, farming and forestry. Gabriel works as Town Foreman in the Environment Section for Waterford City and County Council.
- **Catherine Quinlan** represents rural commerce; she is a member of the Irish Creamery and Milk Suppliers Association. The ICMSA, represents farmers, particularly dairy and livestock farmers by lobbying at local, national and EU levels. It places special emphasis on preserving the family farm structure and defending the rights and incomes of farm families.
- **Senan Cooke** is a PPN member, and he represents the interests of the community and voluntary sector. Senan holds Diplomas in Social Studies, Industrial Engineering and Accountancy and Finance. Senan also holds a DCU Masters in Education and Training (Leadership Strand) and a Doctorate by research on '*The Challenge of Educational Disadvantage in a Knowledge Economy - Case Study on Waterford Crystal (1990-2006)*' which was completed in 2006. He is currently involved in the Dunhill Eco Park social enterprise and is the author of numerous books including '*Enterprising Communities*'.

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- **Gerald Hurley** is the CEO of the Waterford Chamber of Commerce. Officially established on the 8th March 1787 the Chamber's vision is to be the *'The Voice of Business' in Waterford dedicated to supporting, promoting and advocating for our members while being the catalyst for creating a vibrant and sustainable economy'*. Gerald Hurley has been CEO of Waterford Chamber since 2017, the South East's largest business representative organisation, with over 600 members. Originally from Limerick, Gerald has called the Deise home for over thirty years and is passionate about the economic and social development of his adopted city. A former Director of McNerney Homes, Gerald has worked nationally and internationally in the marketing and development of large-scale property developments.
- **Jenny Beresford** is the CEO of the West Waterford Chamber of Commerce. Jenny is an accomplished CEO with vast experience in strategic and operational management in a dynamic business environment. Graduating with a B.A. in Tourism Business Management, Jenny spent several years working in America, Australia, and Africa before finally settling back to Dungarvan. In her current roles as Chamber CEO and Dungarvan Tourist Office Manager, Jenny has done extensive work in tandem with stakeholders from both business and tourism sectors, where she sees a natural alignment. Over the past fourteen years, Jenny has tripled Dungarvan Chamber membership from 90 to over 300 businesses of all sizes and from all sectors.
- **Jimmy Taaffe** is the C.E.O. of Waterford LEADER Partnership and has worked with the agency for 32 years. Waterford LEADER Partnership CLG (WLP) was formed in 1991 and is one of 49 Local Development Companies operating throughout Ireland. WLP offers economic, social and cultural services to small businesses, community groups and individuals. The Board of WLP is made up of voluntary members from the community and voluntary sector, social partners, environmental interests, local government and state bodies.
- **Liam Quinn** is the CEO of Waterford Area Partnership. Liam took up this role in January 2022. Waterford Area Partnership is a local development company. Local development companies are governed by partnerships between the state and community and voluntary sector with a mission to deliver programmes and services that meet the needs of local communities and improve the quality of life for citizens. The programmes and services cover areas such as; rural development and community development, addressing food poverty, employment training and access, education and personal development opportunities, start-your-own business, social enterprise and climate action.
- **Heather Kiely** represents the interests of the community and voluntary sector and is especially interested in social inclusion. Heather is the manager of Waterford Sacred Heart Family Resource Centre. FRCs are located within a community-based model of family support. The centrality of community development in informing the approaches, values and methods underpinning the work of FRCs is a defining feature of their contribution. A further defining characteristic of FRCs is that they are managed by local voluntary management committees.
- **Maggie Flannagan** represents the interests and of the community and voluntary sector particularly social inclusion and youth. Maggie works with Waterford and South Tipperary Children and Youth Services who cater for the needs of young people and local communities, particularly those experiencing marginalisation, disadvantage and social exclusion.
- **Breda Fell** represents interests in the area of social inclusion. Breda is the coordinator of the South East Family Support Network, supporting families affected by problem substance use of a relative. Peer family support groups have been supporting families in Waterford since 1999.

Note: Maggie Flannagan, Breda Fell, Heather Kiely, Gabriel Foley and Senan Cooke are all PPN Nominations.

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Public Sector Representatives

- **Joe Conway** is the current Mayor of Waterford and as such he is the LCDC/LAG chair. Joe was first elected to Waterford County Council in 2004 and is currently serving his fourth term as an elected member. Joe represents the electoral area of Tramore and Waterford City West.
- **Councillor Pat Nugent** was first elected to Waterford County Council in 2004 and is currently serving his fourth term in office. Pat represents the electoral area of Dungarvan and Lismore.
- **Councillor Eamon Quinlan** was first elected to Waterford City and County Council in 2014 and is currently serving his second term as an elected member. Eamonn represents the electoral area Tramore and Waterford City West.
- **Michael Walsh** is the Chief Executive of Waterford City and County Council. He has held this position since 2007. Before progressing to administration Michael's background was one of engineering, graduating from UCC in 1983 with a Civil Engineering degree. A number of significant milestones were achieved under Michael's Stewardship including M9 Motorway, Waterford Bypass, Waterford Greenway, Waterford Flood Alleviation Scheme, The Viking Triangle and most recently the commencement of the ambitious North Quay Development and Sustainable Transport Bridge.
- **Kathryn Kiely** is Vice President for External Affairs at South East Technological University (SETU). This is a leadership position with responsibility for driving regional engagement and stakeholder partnerships at the university. She represents the university in a wide variety of research and education/skills fora interacting with stakeholders from industry, government departments, public sector, international investors, and the European Commission. SETU is a multi-campus university based across the South East in Waterford, Carlow, Wexford, Kilkenny, and Wicklow. SETU employs 1,400 staff and has 18,000 learners across business, education, engineering, humanities, health science and science.
- **Richie Walsh** is the head of the Local Enterprise Office which aims to ensure a co-ordinated and cohesive development of micro enterprise for Ireland which contributes to economic growth and job creation. LEO serves as a '*first stop shop*' to provide strategic, administrative, technical and financial support and services to start, grow and develop micro and small business in each local area.
- **Margaret Mary Collins** is Waterford Children and Young People's Services Committee Coordinator (CYPSC). The CYPSC Coordinator brings together a diverse group of agencies in local county areas to engage in joint planning and coordination of services for children and young people. By ensuring effective interagency coordination, collaboration and oversight of policy implementation and provision the committee works towards its overall purpose of ensuring better outcomes for children and young people in the county.
- **Michael O'Brien** is the Chief Executive of Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board. WWETB provide a broad range of education and training services including post primary schools and colleges, Further Education and Training (FET), outdoor education and training, music education and has legal responsibilities for youth work in the South East.
- **Kate Cassidy** represents the Health Service Executive and is the General Manager of the Vaccination Programme. Kate is also head of Health and Wellbeing, South East Community Healthcare. Starting her professional life as a nurse, Kate later moved into health and wellbeing. She holds a H Dip in Social Personal and Health Education and is a fully trained Human Givens Therapist. Kate has extensive experience in the Healthcare setting particularly in health inequalities, facilitation skills, health behaviour change, training, and development.

Waterford LCDC oversees and approves the operation of the LEADER Programme, the SICAP Programme, the Healthy Counties Programme and the Small Grants scheme on a county wide basis.

Selection Process for New LAG Decision-Making Members

In conformity with Article 32 of EU Regulation 1303/2013, Waterford LCDC maintains its position as a body '*composed of representatives of public and private local socio-economic interests, in*

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which at the decision-making level neither public authorities nor any single interest group represents more than 49% of the voting rights.'

Membership of the Waterford LCDC has been ratified by the members of WC&CC. Every meeting of the Waterford LCDC where decisions are approved is required to: -

1. Maintain a quorum with a ratio of 51% Community and Social Partner representation and 49% statutory representation.
2. Operate in line with the best practice requirements underpinning the establishment of the Waterford LCDC and relevant EU and national rules and guidelines.

Rotation of Members

In conformity with the *Guidelines for the Establishment and Operation of Local Community Development Committees*¹, the Chief Officer will ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place for the rotation (every three years) of representatives of the community and voluntary, social inclusion, and environmental pillars, together with other local community and social partner interests.

There is no requirement on the LCDC to rotate or renew the public sector or WC&CC members.

LAG Gender Balance

Waterford LCDC was established in 2014 on an open invitation basis to the respective nominating bodies. From the outset, the LCDC endeavoured to achieve the internal private/public representation balance. However, the open invitation process did not yield the target of 40% LCDC membership being female. In recognition of this situation, a five-step process was implemented by the LCDC to achieve the desired gender representation over time: -

1. All nominating bodies were formally informed in writing by the Chairman of the LCDC that the Committee is committed to attaining the national target of 40% female participation.
2. In association with the nominating bodies (following Government recommendation under the 2013 Report '*Towards Gender Parity*'), the LCDC provides training for potential female board members, delivered through the Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board.
3. All nominating bodies are routinely requested to identify a male and female nominee to the LCDC for any vacant position.
4. The Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the LCDC, with the technical support of the Chief Officer, are tasked with choosing the candidate most appropriate to the requirements of the LCDC at the time of nomination. The nominee is then put forward for approval by the LCDC.

LAG Decision-Making Structures

Waterford LCDC is the Local Action Group. Waterford LCDC was established in 2014 under the provision of Part 6 of the Local Government Reform Act. The LCDC comprises public and private sector members, including WC&CC members and officials, State Agencies, and private sector local and community development representatives.

1.1.2 LAG Governance Standards

Waterford LCDC is a committee of WC&CC. However, unlike the Corporate Policy Group (CPG) and Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs), Waterford LCDC performs its functions independently of WC&CC. This independence is provided for explicitly in sections 49A(2) and 128B(8) of the Local

¹ *Community Division of the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government: 10th July 2014*

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Government Act 2001 Revised (updated to 21st December 2022), which sets out the functions of the Waterford LCDC.

Table 2 – LAG Governance Standards

Element	Description
Policies and Procedures	The LAG operates under and is fully compliant with the policies and procedures of the WC&CC. Where any variance exists with the LEADER rules and regulations, the latter will take precedence.
LEADER Rules and Regulations	The LAG will adhere to the rules and regulations of the LEADER Programme, as required by DAFM and DRCD. Each Waterford LCDC member must familiarise themselves with the rules and regulations of the LEADER Programme and be aware of Departmental Circulars.
Conflict of Interest	Each Waterford LCDC member must declare any potential conflicts of interest to the Committee. Subsequently, they must absent themselves from any meeting at which conflicted subjects are dealt with. Where the WC&CC is co-financing a project, all WC&CC Executive and Elected Members must formally absent themselves from the meeting elements at which relevant discussion is undertaken and subsequent decisions are reached. The CEO of WLP is a member of the Waterford LCDC. Therefore, he/she will observe the conflict-of-interest rules where the contract between WLP and the Waterford LCDC and any WLP internal projects are discussed. Details of all conflicts of interest will be fully recorded in the minutes of each Waterford LCDC meeting.

1.1.3 Local Action Group Role

The LAG does not directly employ any staff. It is operated by WC&CC through its Chief Officer and staff. The role of the LAG will be to: -

- Set the overall strategic direction and Local Development Strategy priorities.
- Approve parameters for calls for proposals following the priorities and objectives set out in the Local Development Strategy.
- Review and Approve/Reject Project Applications recommended by the Independent Evaluation Committee.
- Monitor and review the Implementation Partners' performance per the service level agreement with the LAG.
- Monitor and review the performance of WC&CC as lead Financial Partner.
- Monitor and review progress under the Local Development Strategy on an ongoing basis and agree on corrective action where required.

1.2 Financial Partner

WC&CC will be the lead Financial Partner of the Local Action Group. Accordingly, it will carry out the administrative tasks associated with this role, including: -

- The provision of advance administration and animation funding to Waterford LEADER Partnership.
- Making payments to promoters on behalf of the Local Action Group.

- WC&CC will be responsible for the Article 48 checks.

1.2.1 Contractual Arrangements

The contract for the implementation of the strategy will be held by the LAG, which will sign the contract with DRCD. The LAG will have a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with WC&CC and Waterford LEADER Partnership CLG concerning their respective roles.

1.2.2 Payment Functions

DRCD makes payment to the LAG for claims, which are then paid to the project promoter - WC&CC will be the lead Financial Partner.

As a local authority, WC&CC operates under the Accounting Code of Practice (January 2018) as revised by the DHLGH in December 2018. All accounting practices of the local authority are subject to oversight by the Local Government Auditor.

The role of the local authority concerning financial procedures is outlined in legislation, including the Local Government Act 2001 as amended by the Local Government Reform Act 2014 and the Local Government (Financial and Audit Procedures) (Amendment) Regulations 2015.

The procedure for preparing the Council's annual budget is also outlined in the above legislation. In 2020 WC&CC had a budget of €144.0m. WC&CC has significant experience managing budgets for large-scale capital projects. From a procurement perspective, WC&CC comply with EU and national public procurement procedures.

1.2.3 Control Functions: Administrative Checks

If the DRCD delegates Article 48 administrative checks to the LAG, these will be carried out by WC&CC or may be subcontracted to a competent service provider. The preparation of documentation and files for administrative checks will be the responsibility of the Implementer.

1.2.4 Running Costs and Animation

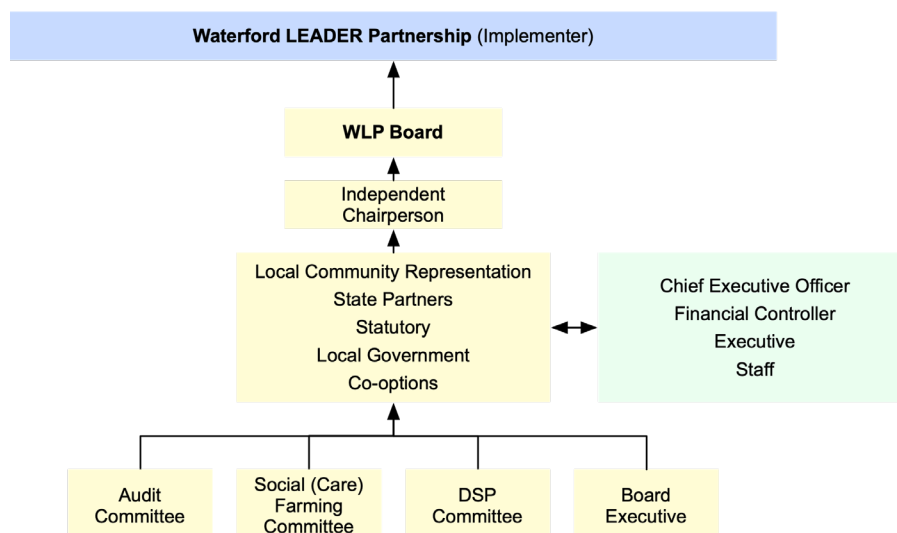
Article 35(1) of the Common Provisions Regulation provides that support for community-led local development shall cover, among other things: -

- Running costs linked to the management of the implementation of the community-led local development strategy consist of operating costs, personnel costs, training costs, costs related to public relations, and financial costs, as well as the costs linked to monitoring and evaluating that strategy.
- Animation of the community-led local development strategy to facilitate exchange between stakeholders to provide information, promote the strategy and support potential beneficiaries to develop operations and prepare applications (NB: Support from the European Structural Investment Funds for CLLD shall also cover costs of preparatory support, implementation of operations, and preparation and implementation of the LAGs cooperation activities).
- Article 35(2) provides that *'support for running costs and animation shall not exceed 25% of the total public expenditure incurred within the community-led local development strategy.'*
- A minimum of 98% of the available running costs and animation budget will be allocated to the Implementer. The remaining 2% will be allocated towards other actions supporting the implementation of the Local Development Strategy as the LAG determines appropriate. This will include WC&CC's work as the lead Financial Partner.

1.3 LEADER Implementing Partner

Waterford LEADER Partnership (WLP) is a Company Limited by Guarantee with charitable status. The company registration number is 189661, with its registered office at Lismore Business Park, Lismore, Co. Waterford, P51 XVP6. The company's CHY Number is 18451, and its Registered Charity Number is 20070748.

Figure 2 - Implementer Composition



The company was established in 1991 to address the rural decline in West Waterford by mobilising the local area to access appropriate EU and State funds to develop the area's physical and human capital.

WLP will operate as the Implementer and animating partner for Waterford LCDC to deliver the prospective LEADER Programme 2023-2027. The structure of WLP has evolved over the past two decades and conforms fully with the requirements of all the funding bodies and agencies with whom it works.

1.3.1 Service Level Agreement

The Implementing Partner will sign a formal Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the LAG and WC&CC, which will outline the controls and procedures, including: -

- All the Implementer's actions will be in line with this LDS.
- The Implementer will maintain a real-time Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system.
- The LAG will have the final say on all project applications.
- The Implementer will continue to employ a qualified accountant as Financial Controller.
- The Implementer's Financial Controller will support the LAG and WC&CC concerning Article 48 checks and administration returns.
- The Implementer's Financial Controller will provide quarterly reports to the LAG regarding LEADER Programme administration costs.
- The LAG (through WC&CC staff) will have a full view of all entries on the CRM system regarding administration returns, project applications and claims.

The CRM system is set up such that the Financial Partner must review all administration and animation expenditures submitted by the Implementer each month before the administration return is submitted for review.

Waterford Local Development Strategy 2023-2027

At the end of each quarter, the Implementer submits copies of all the administration returns, bank statements, bank reconciliations, chequebook and cash book printouts, and a reconciliation of the relevant bank account to the returns submitted to the LAG for its review.

To allow for cash flow, the Implementer invoices the Financial Partner in advance each quarter for funds to pay administration expenses. These invoices are submitted to the LAG for approval before payment.

Applications received by the Implementer and recommended by the Evaluation Committee are submitted to the LAG, having first been reviewed and approved by the Financial Partner. The Implementer's Project Officers must resolve queries before submission to the LAG.

When claims from external promoters are received by the Implementer and recorded on the CRM system, they must be reviewed and approved by the Financial Partner before being submitted for further review.

Any claims for internal projects are sent directly to Pobal for review.

1.3.2 Public Procurement

The LAG has the support of the Financial Partner and the Implementer to ensure that the Public Procurement function is appropriately carried out by: -

- Third-party applicants to the LEADER Programme.
- The LAG in its own administration of the Programme.
- Any projects and/or administration work to be completed by the Implementer.

The Implementer's staff have previously received training to ensure the company fully complies with public sector standards. The LAG also has access, through the Chief Officer, to procurement experts within WC&CC.

Promoters are advised at the application stage that public procurement procedures must be followed, reiterating this in their Letter of Offer. The Implementer's Project Officers can assist and advise promoters regarding the procurement process.

All circulars issued by the Department regarding procurement rules are routinely circulated to all affected staff and the LAG.

1.3.3 Implementer Decision-Making Processes

Table 3 – Implementer Governance Standards

Scope	Description
Company Policies and Procedures	The Implementer provides staff and Board Members with detailed guidance to ensure a structured, balanced, transparent, and focused operation.
Employee Policies	WLP implements policies and procedures that provide equality of opportunity, protect employees' health, safety, and dignity, and promote respect for others in the workplace. Peninsula is retained to ensure that the Employee Policies are updated regularly to reflect any changes in employment law and to assist in any employment-related issues that might arise.

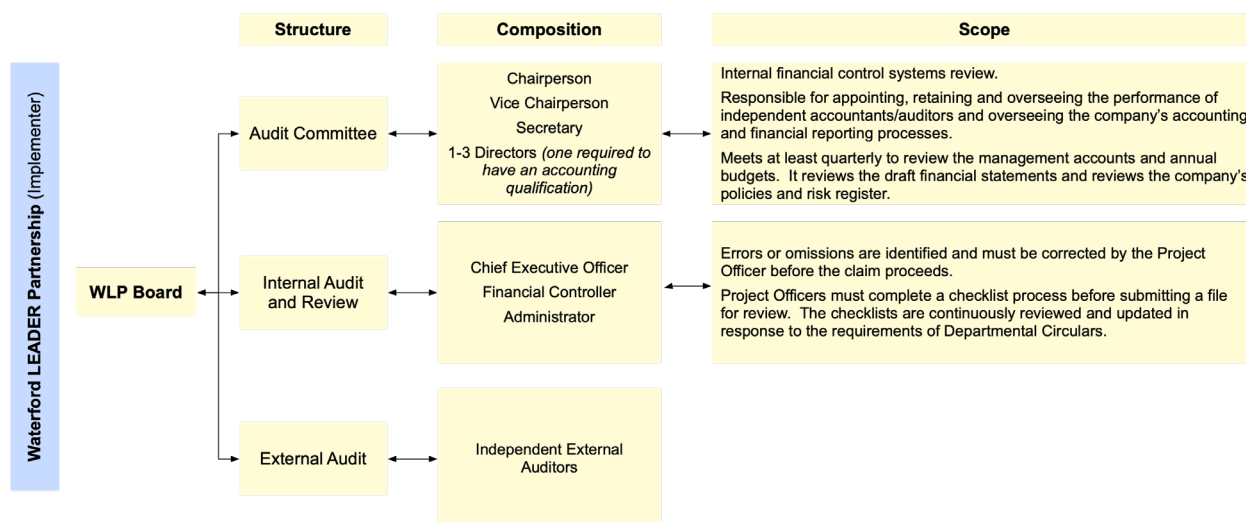
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Scope	Description
Programme Procedures Manual	This manual has been compiled to assist the staff and Board in operating the LEADER Programme efficiently and transparently for the benefit of all applicants. It details the segregation of duties between the CEO, Financial Controller, Administrator, Project Officers, Board and Committees.
Company Safety, Health and Welfare Statement	The statement has been prepared and updated following the Safety, Health, and Welfare at Work Act 2005. It outlines the various responsibilities of management, employees and subcontractors and the arrangements for implementing safety measures. It also offers guidance on hazards, risk assessments, and control measures.
Fraud and Corruption	This documents the Implementer's policy towards detected or suspected acts of fraud or corruption. The policies relate to Directors, Board and Committee members, employees or other persons as designated by the Board/CEO. The Implementer is committed to dealing with fraud and corruption, both internally and externally.
Director's Handbook	The Handbook assists the Directors and Committee members by providing direction from admission on to the Board to retirement. Each new director is also given an induction pack, which acts as a detailed guide to the company, its structure, policies, and procedures.
Sub-Committee Members Handbook	The Handbook provides a general overview of the Sub-Committees' composition, roles, and duties. It also directs how all meetings will be operated to ensure the business is carried out efficiently and productively.
Charities Governance Code	The Implementing Partner is now in full compliance with the Charities Governance Code, and this will be reflected in the next annual CRA return.

1.3.4 Implementer Committee Structures

Figure 3 – Implementer Committee Structures



1.3.5 Implementer Staffing

The Implementer will provide staff resources to implement the LDS on behalf of the LAG. The staff will report and be responsible to the Implementer.

The staff will deliver all contractual duties agreed upon between the LAG and the Implementer and attend all relevant LEADER/LAG meetings as required. In addition, they will provide support and backup to the Chief Officer and her staff on LEADER activities as needed and always act in the best interests of the Programme.

The Implementer has 2.9 full-time equivalent (FTE) experienced staff members employed on RDP/LEADER activity. Given the budget cut to the programme either the current allocation would have to be allocated and paid out in a four-year period with the current staff or spread over a 6 year period with a reduced staff of approximately 2.2 FTE, which would mean that the hours of all four staff working in the RDP would need to be cut.

Implementer Staffing– WLP GLG

- Jimmy Taaffe: CEO and Project Work
- Angeline Drennan: Assistant CEO and Financial Controller
- Claire Connors: Project Officer
- Denise Walsh: Administrator

LAG Staffing - WC&CC

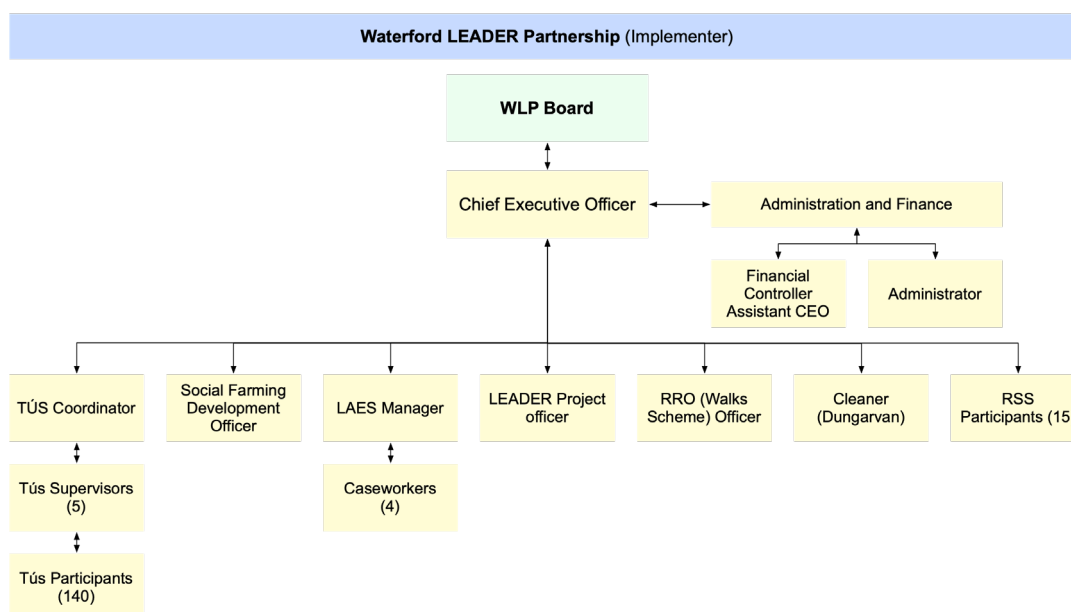
LAG - Waterford LCDC.

Waterford City and Co Council will provide appropriately qualified staff to oversee the LAG and the implementation contract with WLP CLG. The support staff to the LAG will operate under the appropriate Local Authority Scales.

1. Sinead Breathnach, Senior Executive Officer and LCDC Chief Officer (approver).
2. Jonathon Codd, Staff Officer, LEADER administration.
3. Susan Whelan, Staff Officer, Section 48 Checks.

1.3.6 Organisational Chart

Figure 4 – Implementer Organogram



1.3.7 Salary Scales

The Board of WLP CLG will adopt the appropriate salary scales. The scales which are current are outlined in the appendices.

The CVs of the current RDP focused Staff are attached to the appendices. Staff roles are appointed based on relevant experience, degree qualifications and professional qualifications. Length of service or time serving is not a qualifying factor.

1.3.8 Competencies

Biodiversity and Climate Change

Waterford LCDC through its implementing partner, Waterford LEADER Partnership CLG hired in two young graduates with specialist skills, one in Biodiversity and the other in Sustainability (Circular Economy). Both had master's degrees.

The experience and learning for the Programme and the two staff members was enriching, and very informative in terms of the implementation strategy for 2023 – 2027.

What was learned?

- Professional expertise is important.
- The expertise is costly. On the Pobal Scale, the two staff started on €33K. One was head hunted 6 months into the position and was offered €50K plus additional benefits (€17K increase in 6 months) by a State Body. The new offer was accepted.
- It was obvious that the new Programme would not be resourced to engage such expertise on a continuous basis.
- Project Management experience is vital and young graduates unless they have completed project management training, don't have this vital skill.
- An appreciation of financial realities. Biodiversity requires land and biodiversity does not provide a traditional economic return on land use.
- On the Circular Economy, we realised that LEADER was already actioning projects without calling it.

Next Steps

- WLP CLG in the current programme have trained two voluntary groups who are becoming Biodiversity CLG's. In Dungarvan, Waterford for Nature CLG will be set up and a similar Company in Lismore. In the East, LEADER will continue to engage with the Dunhill Eco Park.
- Biodiversity requires land. Steps have been taken to engage with land owners who do not need a traditional economic return on their land.
- These experienced groupings will endeavour to implement three to four projects of scale.
- They will be able to apply to LEADER for both Technical Support to hire in gaps in expertise on a contract basis and requisite Capital Investment.
- WLP CLG will also introduce the Groups to Landowners who are seeking a Civic Dividend.
- WLP CLG will also link the groups to SETU and the National Biodiversity Centre and the WC&CC Climate Action Team.
- Continue to implement Circular Economy Actions but name them properly.

1.3.9 Staff Procurement

Knowledge of staff in Procurement, State Aid, and other national and EU requirements.

Procurement

The Staff of WLP CLG have all received training on procurement. This training is updated as the rules change and with the commencement of each programme timeframe. The Staff involved in implementing LEADER have a collective experience of 76 years on the Programme. Their knowledge of both procurement rules, the LEADER Rules and how they interact is deep seated and rooted in Company Policy.

All procurement procedures will conform with Circular No: 02-2023 Revised National Procurement Thresholds and Procurement Requirements to Assist Assessment of Reasonableness of Cost by the Department (LEADER Policy and Operations Unit DCRD, 28th June 2023), and Section 15.4 of LEADER 2014-2022 Operating Rules.

State Aid

The Staff are very experienced regarding State Aid rules. In particular, the Staff are very experienced regarding De Minimus, related Directorships in relation to SME's and large businesses.

Regulatory matters related to Planning Permission, Part 8's and Section 5's is also part of daily operational duties.

The company is also current on all tax and financial regulatory matters.

Finally, in relation to other programmes, be they national or CAP funded, the project team are current on what is available from DAFM, DRCD, EI/LEO, DECC, SEAI, etc.

1.4 Project Selection Procedures

The Evaluation Committee will be independent of the decision-making LAG. This independence will facilitate a clear and distinct segregation of duties. The Evaluation Committee will recommend, and the independent LAG will review and decide on the investment. This operational arrangement provides a segregation of duties and will ensure transparency.

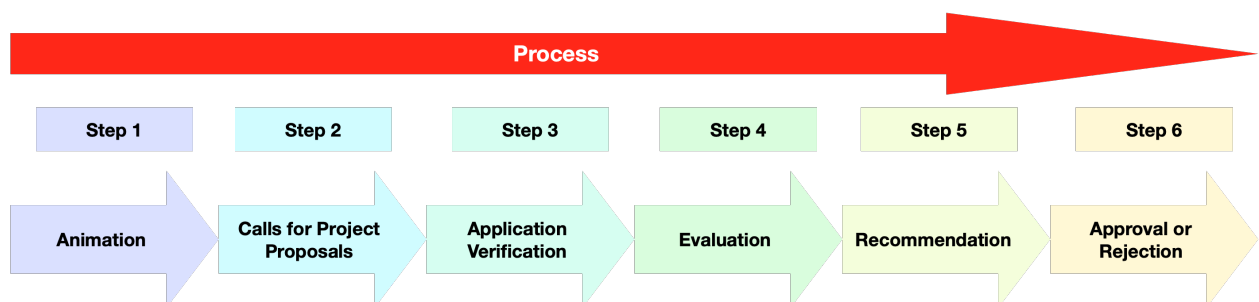
1.4.1 Evaluation Committee

The members of the Evaluation Committee have many years of experience in public administration, private enterprise, banking, tourism, and voluntary community activities involving older people and the less affluent in society.

The members include ex-senior WC&CC officials, ex-senior officials from Justice, Fáilte Ireland, Senior Agri Industry figures, IFI members, and retired Senior Bank Officials.

1.4.2 Project Selection Process

Figure 5 – Project Selection Process



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Waterford Leader Partnership CLG is the Implementing and Animating Partner for delivering LEADER 2023-2027. It will comprise a six-stage process for appraising and selecting project proposals.

Step One: Animation

The LDS objectives will be outlined at public and Individual meetings county-wide. In addition, the project selection, evaluation/scoring process, and subsequent approval/rejection will be fully explained and outlined in advance in written and electronic format.

Staff will meet all prospective applicants before and up to the closing of the Call Process (see below) to go through the standard requirements that must be met, provide templates, and advice or access to advice through the local LEO Office, WC&CC Office, Fáilte Ireland Office, etc.

Step Two: Calls for Projects - Targeted Calls Process

LEADER 2023-2027 will mostly run competitive **Targeted Calls** for project proposals under the LEADER Themes/Sub-Themes outlined in the LDS at intervals throughout the Programme.

Targeted calls with a pre-defined budget will ensure that only the best and most worthy projects will be approved for grant aid and will allow for comparative analysis. Dates for the upcoming Information Workshop and Application Workshop are detailed in the advertisement, and attendance is mandatory.

Targeted Calls are advertised across all our social media sites and local newspapers.

Towards the end of the Programme, Calls for Projects may revert to **Rolling Calls** to allow for total budget allocation.

Step Three: Application Verification

Information Workshops are held to explain how the **Targeted Call** process works and the rules and regulations of the Programme. Promoters must attend to participate in the Call. After attending a workshop, promoters are invited to complete an Expressions of Interest (EoI) form and, if eligible, are invited to the Application Stage. Those not eligible are advised of the reason why not.

Training / Application Promoters that submit an eligible EoI are invited to attend a mandatory Application Workshop where Project Officers explain how to complete the application form and stress the importance of presenting a complete application by the required deadline. After that, Project Officers work individually with applicants to guide them through the process.

Only fully complete applications are accepted by the due date. The Implementer will initially assess applications internally to ensure that all required documentation is submitted with the application, and the application is eligible.

- Incomplete applications are returned to the promoter with the reason for the return documented. Promoters can apply again under future Calls.
- Fully completed applications that are eligible will be presented to the Evaluation Committee for independent review, which will make recommendations to the LAG, which has the final funding decision.

Step Four: Evaluation Committee

The Evaluation Committee comprises members independent of the LAG and the Board of the Implementer. The individuals appointed by the LCDC will have experience in Public Administration, Private Enterprise, Banking, Public Administration, and Voluntary Community Activity.

The Evaluation Committee will consider similar batches of applications (for example, Enterprise in one sitting and Tourism in the next). The process will ensure that comparative analysis is carried out during the appraisal process. They will evaluate the project against a standard scorecard, rank

Waterford Local Development Strategy 2023-2027

the applications according to relative merit and make their recommendation accordingly. The recommendation is made on a standard template.

Step Five: Recommendation

The Evaluation Committee recommendations are submitted on a standard template, and the LAG will either agree or disagree with the guidance of the Evaluation Committee.

Step Six: Approval or Rejection

The LAG has three options: accept, reject, or return the project to the Evaluation Committee for further review. The LAG will contact the applicant through the Programme Implementer to inform them of their application's outcome. All applications evaluated will go before the LAG regardless of whether they have been recommended for acceptance or rejection.

If accepted, a standard Letter of Offer will issue within two weeks. If rejected, a letter outlining the reason(s) will also issue within two weeks, along with a copy of the appeals process from the Programme's rules.

1.4.3 Project Selection Criteria and Scoring Framework

Project Selection Criteria: The project will be evaluated to determine its compatibility with the Local Objectives, Themes, and Sub-Themes detailed in the LDS. The Evaluation Committee will review each application thoroughly to ensure its viability and that it meets the rules and regulations of the Programme. Analysis of projects is carried out, and all are ranked/scored for comparative purposes.

Scoring Framework: The projects will be evaluated against a standard scorecard outlined in the Programme's rules. The Evaluation Committee will rank the applications according to comparative merit and make their recommendation accordingly.

Table 4 – Evaluation Committee Scoring Record

Date:	Time:	Project Title:	Project Reference Number:		
Assessment Criteria	Objective	Issues raised by Evaluation Committee	Weighting	Score	
Compatibility with Local Development Strategy	Do the project proposals meet the criteria set out in the LAG business plan for the relevant measure?		Yes / No		
Innovation	Is the product innovative in its nature and does it displace existing enterprises?		19		
Promoters experience	Does the promoter have the training/skills, track record or experience to deliver?		25		
Financial Viability	Are the project costs justifiable (reasonableness of costs) and / is funding available to co-fund the project?		25		
Sustainability	Is the project viable and will the service continue to be delivered?		13		
Requirement	Does the proposal target a specific need or address a specific gap in the market?		18		
Total			100		

N.B. Project must receive a minimum score of 65% prior to being recommended for approval.

- Has the potential level of deadweight been assessed for this project? YES / NO
- i.e. would the project proceed without LEADER funding? YES / NO

Recommendations of the Evaluation Committee: _____

Signature: _____

Signature of Evaluation Committee Chair

Date: _____

1.5 Relevant Experience

The Implementer and the Financial Partner have professional staff trained in public procurement procedures. The Implementer will manage on behalf of the LAG all calls for proposals. The calls will be made in line with specific National and EU guidelines on calls for proposals.

The Implementer has over twenty years of experience (LEADER Pilot, LEADER 2, LEADER+, the RDP 2007-2013, the RDP 2014-2022, Interreg II, Skillnets, and EU NoRBIT) in successfully devising, operating, and delivering an area-based approach to economic development in rural areas. Additionally, the Implementer has over twenty years of experience delivering and supporting the Local Community Development Programme, Local Employment Service, TÚS, and the Rural Social Scheme in rural Co. Waterford. The company currently operates the Local Area Employment Service, TÚS and RSS for the DSP.

1.6 Monitoring and Review

Programme Monitoring and Review will be carried out at two levels: -

1. Project Level Monitoring
2. Monitoring of LAG

The LAG will monitor and review the programme in line with the guidelines set out in the programme documentation. The monitoring of the operation of the LDS will involve three simultaneous actions: -

1. All the fields on the LEADER ICT system will be completed by the relevant Project Officer responsible for the implementation of the project in real time. The LAG will have access to the system to review independently.
2. On an annual basis, several detailed case studies on selected funded projects will be completed by the relevant Project Officer. The completed studies will be reviewed by one of the following: the CEO or Administrator of the Implementer for accuracy before submission to the LAG for final approval.
3. A Monitoring and Evaluation Framework will be developed for each Sub-Theme and local objective. The information required by the relevant frameworks will be populated by the relevant Project Officer and reviewed by the implementer's Financial Controller or CEO to ensure accuracy before being given to the LAG and the Implementer's Evaluation Committee for review.

Table 5 - Draft Framework Template

Local Objective 1		Indicators	Action 1.1	Target	Variance
Title of Local Objective	Investment in indigenous rural enterprises to maximise efficiencies and competitiveness, increase the offering for visitors whilst supporting a greener sustainable economy.	Type	Activity Tourism	Actual Annual Target	Variance

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Waterford Local Development Strategy 2023-2027

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Local Objective 1		Indicators	Action 1.1	Target	Variance
LEADER Theme/Sub-Theme	Economic Development and Job Creation-Sub-Theme 1.a The Green Economy and 1.c Rural Tourism and Recreation.	No. Of New Projects Funded.			
Rationale for the Objective		No. of Existing Projects Funded.			
Link to the LECP	Objective 1 Low Carbon and sustainable Economy Goal 1: Develop a flagship Green Economy, including the circular economy, maximising opportunities while transitioning to a low carbon and resilient economy. Objective 2: Economic Diversity and Sustainable Growth. Goal 2.2 : Scale established indigenous enterprises to maximise their global growth and job creation potential.	No. of FTE's Created			
Financial Allocation	LEADER €2,976,409 Matched: €2,976,409 Total: €5,952,818	No. of FTE's Sustained			
No. of Strategic Actions	5	Capital, Animation			

The employment figures will be monitored using the current annual in operation letter process where the PPS Numbers listed in the application will be compared annually to ascertain: -

1. If the original employees are still employed.
2. That if the head count has changed, that the change is calculated by subtracting the declared current PPS Numbers from the original data given so that there is a definite annual figure for each of the five years after the grant has been paid. This process will involve the Project Officer collecting the annual data, and the Administrator reviewing for accuracy and then collating the data to be provided to the LAG, and Evaluation Committee on a half yearly basis.

1.6.1 Evaluation

The LAG's objectives for the evaluation of the LDS are: -

1. Early Cycle 1-2 years; To check early strategy implementation to ascertain if the strategy needs to be changed to reflect changed circumstances.
2. End of Cycle 4-5 years; To learn lessons for the next programme formulation.

Evaluation is the systematic and objective examination concerning the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and the impact of the RDP/LEADER actions in the light of the seven objectives chosen. As it is a retrospective tool for reviewing the programme, it is proposed that: -

- A review will be carried out by independent consultants to check the continued relevance of the strategy and avoid mission drift. The call for review will be tendered on E-Tenders by mid-2025.
- A comprehensive evaluation is carried out in 2028 by a totally independent review body appointed through an open procurement process on e-tenders (if required) to prepare for next programme formulation.

1.6.2 Evaluation Data

The data used will primarily be the information available on the ICT System, case studies, direct contact with promoters, communities, and relevant parties such as the Department, and its agents.

1.6.3 Governance/Co-ordination

The implementer will draw up a specification that will be reviewed and approved by the LAG.

The specification will be placed on e-Tenders and the LAG will appoint appropriately qualified consultants to review both the early cycle progress and the end of programme review. The consultants will report directly to the LAG, and the evaluations will be made public through the LAG, the Implementer's and the Department's and its agent's websites.

1.6.4 Resources Required

A collective budget of €20,000 for both evaluations maybe required, however, as it will be an open tender, this figure maybe slightly lower.

1.7 Risk Management Procedures

The LAG is committed to implementing an organisational philosophy that ensures risk management is integral to the achievement of corporate objectives, programme delivery planning and associated management systems. Compliance with legislative requirements is central to our risk management policy. Risk management is recognised as being vital to the organisation's ability to pursue its goals, commence and operate programmes on behalf of Contracting Authorities, and to perform duties in an efficient and professional manner.

The LAGs Risk Management Framework is a scalable, holistic approach to improved decision-making that consolidates and organises risk information from across the company. By embracing this framework, the LAG and Implementer fosters a strong risk management culture enabling it to drive the company's performance, innovation, and growth, while protecting the company's reputation and stakeholder interests.

The Risk Management Framework consists of six steps for effective risk management as below: -

1. **Identify Risks:** Engage in dialogue with directors and employees to uncover all potential risks, involving all in a comprehensive assessment of current and future risk.
2. **Analyse Risks:** Evaluate identified risks based on likelihood, impact, and operational implications. Create a comprehensive list organised by probability and impact.
3. **Control and Treat Risks:** Develop strategies to manage risks before they arise or as they occur. Consider business impact, likelihood, and cost. Implement risk reduction, transfer, or insurance measures.
4. **Monitor Risks:** Assign responsibility and accountability to employees for monitoring and executing mitigation strategies. Foster a culture of accountability.

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5. **Improve Risk Management:** Continuously improve processes, streamline communication, and encourage employee involvement. Reward risk sharing to prevent and minimise risks.
6. **Report Progress:** Establish a systematic reporting system to share progress with stakeholders and other relevant parties. Integrate risk reporting into management meetings and be responsive to inquiries.

2 LDS Area Profile

The Area Profile has been prepared at a time when only the Census 2022 summary information was available. This has been used where possible. In all other circumstances the Census 2016 data is referenced.

The LDS covers all rural Co. Waterford but excludes the area covered by the Waterford City boundary. The CSO Census 2016 records the population of area as 67,960 persons. This includes the population of Gaeltacht na nDéise, which had a population of 1,816 people in 2016 and encompassed a geographical area of 62 km².

The summary Census 2022 results confirm that the population of Waterford City and County grew by 10% between April 2016 and April 2022. Over the same period, the State's population grew by 8%. The provisional Census of Population 2022 suggests that the population of rural Co. Waterford was 72,741, representing an increase of 7% over the intercensal period.

Table 6 – Waterford LDS ED Listing

Aird Mhór	Clonea	Grallagh	Mocollop
An Rinn	Clonea	Grange	Modelligo
Annestown	Colligan	Gurteen	Modelligo
Ardmore	Comeragh	Islandikane	Mothel
Baile Mhac Airt	Coumaraglin	Keereen	Mountkennedy
Ballyduff	Dromana	Kilbarry (Part Rural)	Mountstuart
Ballydurn	Dromore	Kilbarrymeaden	Newcastle
Ballyhane	Drumcannon	Kilcockan	Newtown
Ballyheeney	Drumroe	Killea	Pembrokestown
Ballyin	Dungarvan No. 1 Urban	Killoteran	Portlaw
Ballylaneen	Dungarvan No. 2 Urban	Kilmacleague	Rathgormuck
Ballymacarbry	Dungarvan Rural	Kilmacomma	Rathmoylan
Ballynakill (Part Rural)	Dunhill	Kilmacthomas	Reisk
Ballynamult	Faithlegg (Part Rural)	Kilmeadan	Ross
Ballysaggartmore	Fenoagh	Kilmeadan	Seskinan
Bohadoon	Fews	Kilronan	St. Mary's
Cappagh	Fox's Castle	Kilwatermoy East	Stradbally
Cappoquin	Gardenmorris	Kilwatermoy West	Tallow
Carrickbeg Rural	Georgestown	Kinsalebeg	Templemichael
Carrigcastle	Glen	Knockaunbrandaun	Tinnasaggart
Carriglea	Glenwilliam	Knockmahon	Tramore
Castlerichard	Gortnapeaky	Lismore Rural	Whitechurch
Clashmore	Graignagower	Lismore Urban	Woodstown

The Waterford LDS area covers the 92 Electoral Divisions (EDs) listed above. EDs are the smallest legally defined administrative areas in the State and are mapped in Appendix 1.

2.1 Headlines

- The population of rural Co. Waterford was 72,741 (provisional Census 2022). The LDS area represents nearly 57% of the population of Waterford City and County (127,363).
- The LDS area population grew by 7% between 2016 and 2022, which was one percentage point lower than the rate for the State. The population of Waterford City and County grew by 10% over the intercensal period.
- The area covered by the LDS totals 1,857 km², reflecting the compact nature of the county. Based on the provisional Census figure for 2022, the population density of the LDS area was 35.6 persons per km², compared to the State at 71.47 persons per km².
- The five Municipal Districts in Waterford City and County area are as follows: Dungarvan/Lismore, Comeragh, Tramore/Waterford City West (Metropolitan District of Waterford City), and Waterford City East (Metropolitan District of Waterford City) and Waterford City South (Metropolitan District of Waterford City).
- The two main towns in the Waterford LDS area are Tramore and Dungarvan. The 2022 Census records these as having a population of 11,277 and 10,081, respectively.
- Population growth between 2016 and 2022 has generally occurred around existing population centres. The highest rate of change (26.21%) occurred in Aird Mhór, where the population rose from 206 to 260.
- Population decline between 2016 and 2022 was highest in Mountstuart (-8.99%), falling from 89 to 81.
- In 2016, there was a slightly larger percentage of the population under the age of fifteen compared to the State, and nearly 2% more of the population was over sixty compared to the State.
- The Annual Disposable Income per person (2020) in Waterford City and County was €22,157, compared to €23,165 nationally.
- IDA Ireland reports that the county has a strong profile in the life sciences sector and a developing portfolio of financial services companies.
- Pluriactivity and seasonal employment are significant in many parts of the LDS area.
- As elsewhere, tourism is a significant driver for the development of rural areas.
- The LDS area has a very significant stock of natural assets that are of national and European significance, and the county has a network of Natura 2000 sites.

2.2 Demographic Indicators

The LDS covers all of rural Co. Waterford, excluding the Metropolitan Area covered by the City. The CSO Census 2016 records the population of the area as 67,960 persons. This includes the population of Gaeltacht na nDéise, which had a population of 1,816 people in 2016 and encompassed a geographical area of 62 km². Census 2022 provisionally calculates the population of rural Co. Waterford to be 72,741, representing an increase of 7% over the intercensal period. Comparatively, the summary Census 2022 results confirm that the population of Waterford City and County grew by 10% between April 2016 and April 2022. Over the same period, the State's population grew by 8%. Thus, the largest proportion of the population growth in City and County Waterford occurred in the City.

The 2022 Census of Population (Summary Results) confirms that the county has a total population of 127,363, corresponding to 2.5% of the State's total population. Waterford City and County was the nineteenth-most populous county in the State.

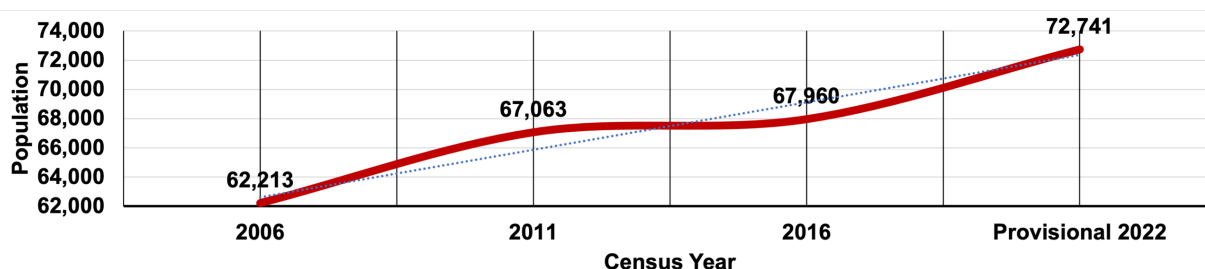
Of the county's five Municipal Districts (MD), Dungarvan-Lismore and Comeragh are entirely within the LDS area. In 2016 the population of Comeragh MD was 18,970. By 2022 this had risen by

7.78% to 20,445. In 2016 the population of Dungarvan-Lismore MD was 29,371. By 2022 this had increased by 7.44% to 31,556. In 2022, the population within the Waterford City East MD was 6,441, within the Waterford City South MD was 667, and within the Waterford City West MD, the population was 13,632.

2.2.1 Population Change

Appendix Map 2 provides the distribution of (absolute) population numbers by Electoral Division (ED) in 2016. Appendix Map 3 shows the population density per km² across all EDs in 2016, whilst Map 4 indicates the relative distribution of (absolute) population numbers by ED using the provisional Census figures for 2022. Map 5 shows the relative change in absolute population numbers by ED between the 2016 and 2022 (provisional) census.

Figure 6 - Population Trend 2006-2022



The EDs showing >20% population increase in the intercensal period 2016-2022 were Ballynamult (20.12), Comeragh (22.99), and Aird Mhór (26.21). Conversely, eight EDs recorded a percentage population decline over the period, as follows: Mountstuart (-8.99), Drumroe (-7.33), Clonea (-3.95), Faithlegg (Part Rural) (-2.83), Kilbarry (Part Rural) (-2.77), Mothel (-2.16), Mocollop (-1.23), and Castlerichard (-0.41).

When population change (2016-2022 provisional) is mapped at ED-level, it is evident that 42.39% of the 92 EDs comprising the LDS area experienced growth of over 7.04%, and 8.69% experienced population decline. In absolute terms, the EDs that returned a loss of more than ten people during the intercensal period were Faithlegg (Part Rural) (-61) which fell from a population of 2,152 in 2016 to 2,019 in 2022 (provisional), Drumroe (-20), Clonea (*GEOGID 25005*) (-17), and Mothel (-10).

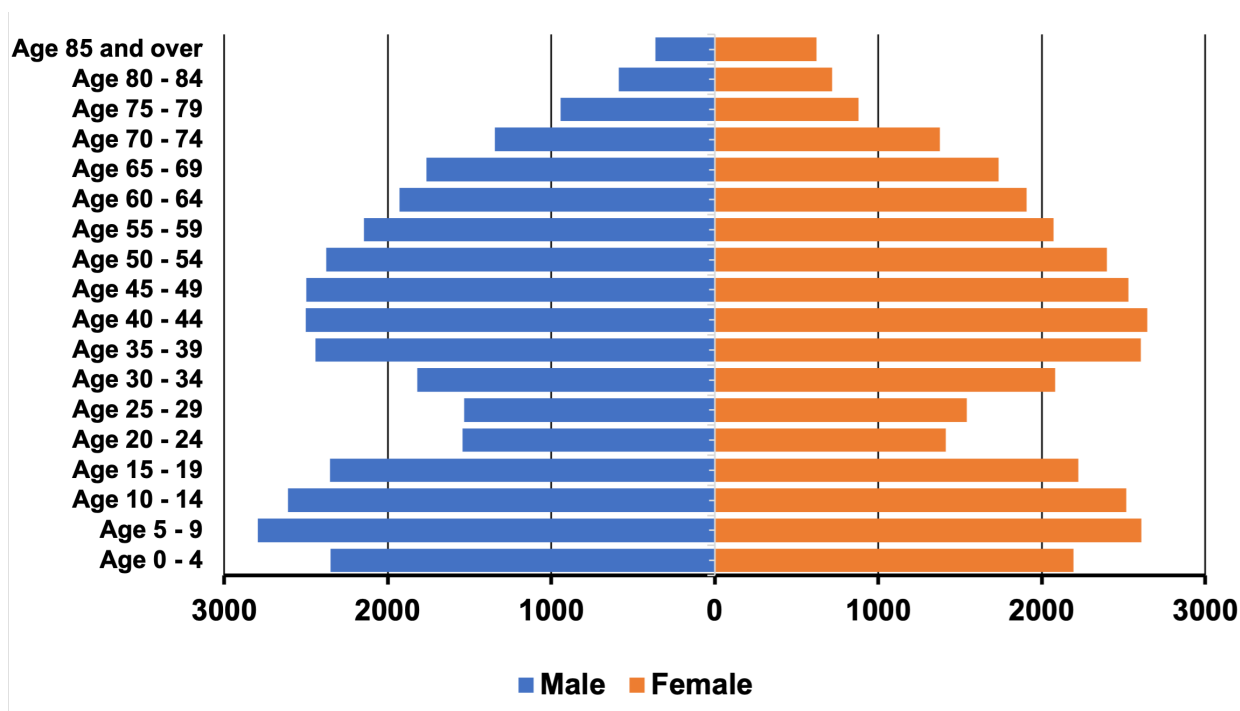
The following EDs returned growth in population numbers >200 during the period 2016-2022 (provisional): Clonea (*GEOGID 25024*) (+218), Tramore (+239), Dungarvan No. 1 Urban (+291), Dungarvan No. 2 Urban (+380), and Islandikane (+652) rising from a population of 2,337 in 2016 to 2,737 in 2022 (provisional).

As nationally, the LDS area's population is projected to age over the coming twenty years and beyond. The proportion of the population aged 50+ is projected to increase significantly. At the same time, there is expected to be a decline, in both absolute and relative terms, in the population aged 24 to 40, over the next ten years, although this is expected to recover in the 2030s with demographic change.

2.2.2 Age Profile

There are notable sub-county level patterns in respect of the distribution of the population, by age, across the LDS area. The age profile is youngest in urban and peri-urban settings, while more peripheral parts of the area tend to have an older age profile. In 2016, the population age profile exhibited a reduction in young people aged 20-29. This is primarily accounted for by migration away from rural areas to attend third-level educational institutions.

Figure 7 - Population by Age Band 2016



The CSO defines dependents as people outside the normal working age of 15-64. Dependency ratios are used to give a useful indication of the age structure of a population, with young (0-14) and old (65+) shown as a percentage of the working-age population (15-64).

In 2016, 22% (15,076) of the population of the Waterford LDS area was under the age of fifteen compared to 21.14% in the State. Fifteen% (10,330) of the LDS area population was sixty-five years old and older, compared to 13.39% in the State.

The young dependency ratio is the number of young people aged 0-14 as a percentage of the working-age population. In 2016, the young dependency ratio for the Waterford LDS area was 35.43. The old-age dependency ratio for the Waterford LDS area in 2016 was 24.28. The comparative young dependency ratio for the State in 2016 was 32.28, and the old age dependency ratio was 20.45. The total age dependency ratio for the Waterford LDS area in 2016 was 37.31.

In 2016, the Waterford LDS area had a relatively older population than that of the State.

2.3 Social Indicators

2.3.1 Headlines

- Just over 11% of the LDS area's resident population has a nationality other than Irish, compared to just under 13% in the State.
- In 2016, there were 158 White Irish Travellers resident in the county.
- Waterford City and County hosts 2.7% of the Ukrainian Migrant Population in the State
- Socio-economic deprivation is most prevalent in certain local authority housing estates in the larger settlements and peripheral rural communities.
- Waterford LDS area had a slightly lower proportion of families headed by a lone parent (16.86%) than across the State (17.96%), and the highest values are in the main settlements.

2.3.2 Ethnicity

Waterford LDS area's population has become increasingly diverse in nationality, ethnicity, and language over recent decades; however, the area lags behind the State in this regard.

The 2016 Census of Population returns indicate that 11.42% of residents in the Waterford LDS area had a nationality other than Irish compared to 12.95% in the State (excluding those who did not state their nationality in the census return). In proportional terms, 13% of EDs exceeded 10% of their nationality being other than Irish. The EDs with the highest percentages were Dromore (14.17), Kilwatermoy East (14.17), Drumroe (14.07), Dungarvan No. 1 Urban (13.43), Cappoquin (13.20), and Dungarvan Rural (12.69).

Over the twenty years to 2016, Waterford City and County witnessed a doubling of the resident population born outside of the State.

Table 7 – Twenty Most Numerous Resident Nationalities

Nationality	Number of Persons	Percentage
UK	3,387	33.38
Polish	2,330	22.96
Lithuanian	498	4.91
Irish-UK	414	4.08
Slovak	364	3.59
Irish-American	337	3.32
Romanian	256	2.52
Pakistani	251	2.47
Hungarian	248	2.44
Latvian	244	2.40
Czech	222	2.19
American (US)	205	2.02
Croatian	198	1.95
Indian	194	1.91
Irish-Other European	193	1.90
Irish-Polish	178	1.75
Irish-Australian	170	1.68
Nigerian	161	1.59
German	160	1.58
Chinese	136	1.34
<i>Total</i>	<i>10,146</i>	<i>100.00</i>

The table above illustrates the number of persons by nationality (excluding Irish) of the twenty most numerous nationalities in Waterford City and County in 2016 (source: Waterford Migrant Integration Strategy 2021-2024).

Based on 2016 data, the Waterford LCDC publication '*Waterford Migrant Integration Strategy 2021-2024*' reports that the migrant population is mainly made up of economic migrants, most of whom have come here to seek employment and a better standard of living for themselves and their families. East European nationals comprise the largest proportion of economic migrants. Other economic migrants include '*guest workers*' from non-EU countries, such as Brazil, The Philippines, India, and Pakistan, who generally work in meat processing, agriculture, and health sectors. Waterford is also home to persons who are fleeing conflict and persecution, and approximately four hundred people reside in '*direct provision*' centres in Lismore (Lismore House

Hotel) Tramore (Ocean View and Atlantic House) and Waterford City (Birchwood House and Viking House) and in the Emergency Reception and Orientation Centre in Clonea.

Irish Traveller Community

In 2016, there were 158 *White Irish Travellers* resident in the LDS area. This was just over 0.5% of the national population of the Irish Traveller community. The proportion of Irish Travellers in the LDS area was 0.24% of the total population, compared to 0.66% in the State. The Traveller population is concentrated in specific settlements rather than dispersed across the county. Nearly 72% of EDs reported no members of the Irish Traveller community in their population in 2016. The settlements with the highest proportions of Travellers in their resident population were Kilonan (4.74), Templemichael (1.70), Dungarvan No. 1 Urban (1.28), Georgestown (0.98), Baile Mhac Airt (0.83), Drumbannon (0.81), and Dungarvan Rural (0.80). It is noted that membership of the Traveller community is generally underreported in census returns.

Ukrainian Community

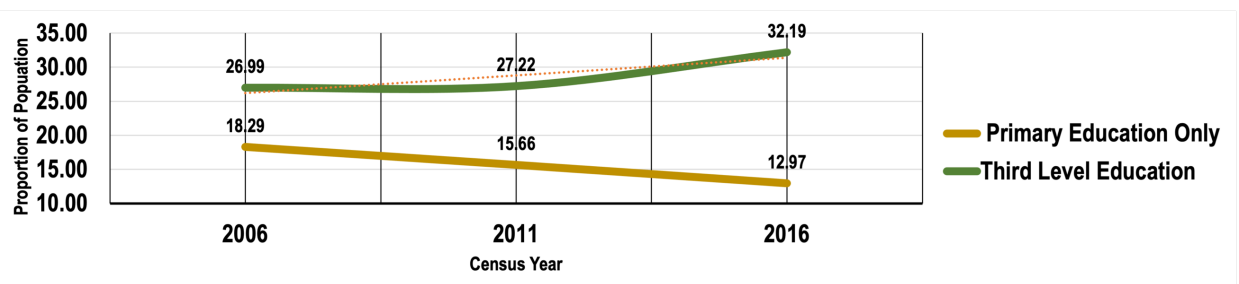
The CSO reports that on 13th February 2023, the Ukrainian refugees in Waterford City and County stood at 1,935 (2.73% of the total of 70,865 in the State). Almost 50% of those arriving from Ukraine (919) reside in the Tramore-Waterford City West Local Electoral Area, with the remainder distributed as follows: Portlao-Kilmacthomas (2.74), Lismore (5.74), Waterford City East (9.35), Waterford City South (15.09), and Dungarvan (19.59). These figures are liable to change as geopolitical events unfold.

2.3.3 Education

- Over one-fifth of the LDS area's resident population has a third-level qualification.
- High levels of educational attainment correlate with proximity to established settlements, while low levels are more prevalent in peripheral parts of the area.

Low levels of educational attainment are associated with an older age profile, rurality, socio-economic deprivation, gender (males) and membership of the Travelling community. The lack of educational attainment is closely linked to the issue of poverty.

Figure 8 – Educational Attainment 2006-2016



In the Waterford LDS area, 10.62% of the population did not progress beyond primary-level education compared to 10.79% in the State. Just over 53% of EDs returned more than 10.62% of their population that did not progress beyond primary-level education. The EDs with the highest proportions of people who did not move beyond primary-level education were in Knockaunbrandaun (23.36), Kilcockan (20.38), Ballysaggartmore (19.91), Glenwilliam (19.27), Gortnapeaky (18.75), Kilwatermoy East (17.05), and Seskinan (17.00). It should be noted that figures may be skewed due to the locations of nursing homes and other long-stay institutional facilities.

The LDS area had proportionately more people with an advanced certificate and had completed an apprenticeship (7.44%) than was the case in 2016 in Ireland as a whole (5.89%).

Targeting Educational Disadvantage

Of the 74 primary schools in Waterford City and County, eighteen (24.3%) have *Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools* (DEIS) status. DEIS is a support programme funded by the Department of Education that offers school-based opportunities for those young people in communities at risk of disadvantage and social exclusion.

Of the DEIS Primary Schools, seven (39%) are designated rural. Additionally, there are seventeen Post-Primary Schools in Waterford City and County, six (35.2%) of which have DEIS designation.

Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

Young people aged 16 to 24 made up 9.62% (6,541) of the total population of the Waterford LDS area in 2016. Of these, over half (63.6%) lived in just twenty-two (20%) of the 92 EDs that comprise the LDS area. More young people are likely to leave school early from DEIS schools. Progressions from DEIS schools to third-level institutions and ITs are likely to be lower than those from non-DEIS schools; therefore, future initiatives must proactively link with these DEIS schools and identify other schools with a low progressions rate.

NEET supports need to be considered for areas where DEIS schools are located. Outcomes for young people from more disadvantaged areas are poorer than those in more affluent areas. Initiatives must carefully examine deprivation scores for small areas to pinpoint potential locations for services. The School Completion Programme (SCP) is a targeted support for primary and post-primary children and young people who have been identified as potentially at risk of early school leaving or who are out of school and have not successfully transferred to an alternative learning site, such as Youthreach or employment. It is a support provided under the DEIS Programme.

2.3.4 Pobal HP Deprivation Index

The Pobal HP Index of Affluence and Deprivation computes data regarding several socio-economic variables on a single scale.

Table 8 – HP Deprivation Labels

Relative Index Score	Label
Over 30	Extremely Affluent
20 to 30	Very Affluent
10 to 20	Affluent
0 to 10	Marginally Above Average
0 to -10	Marginally Below Average
-10 to -20	Disadvantaged
-20 to -30	Very Disadvantaged
Below -30	Extremely Disadvantaged

The Index provides a clear and useful assessment that can be applied at all geographical tiers from the small area (SA) upwards. The area is scored based on a national average of zero and ranges from approximately -35 (being the most disadvantaged) to +35 (being the most affluent).

Disadvantaged Areas

In 2016 the Waterford LDS area returned a PH Deprivation Score of -2.35 with a classification of *Marginally Below Average*. The most deprived EDs were Dungarvan No. 1 Urban (-11.08), Kilmachthomas (-9.28), Comeragh (-7.85), Tallow (-7.78), Cappoquin (-7.42) and Kilbarrymeaden (-7.09).

Waterford Local Development Strategy 2023-2027

Thirty-seven EDs (34%) showed a disimprovement in their Deprivation Scores between 2011 and 2016. The greatest disimprovement was recorded in Knockaunbrandaun (-7.42), Drumroe (-5.47), Glenwilliam (-3.78), Kilbarrymeaden (-3.77) and Ballyin (-3.12).

Disadvantaged and Very Disadvantaged Areas

There are pockets of deprivation revealed across the Waterford LDS area when using the CSO Small Area Population Statistics.

Table 9 – Very Disadvantaged SAPS 2016

Small Area ID	With ED	Total Population 2016	Deprivation Score 2016
228001002	Ballybeg North	323	-24.73
227032003		166	-23.85
227032012	Dungarvan No. 1 Urban	296	-23.41
227032013		329	-23.12
228001004	Ballybeg North	370	-22.25
227032011	Dungarvan No. 1 Urban	398	-21.84
228001005		350	-21.28
228001006	Ballybeg North	229	-21.22
227033004	Dungarvan No. 2 Urban	267	-20.49
228001008	Ballybeg North	312	-20.35
Total Population		3,040	

In 2016, thirty-seven SAPS areas in the Waterford LDS area were categorised as disadvantaged. These accounted for a population of 8,543 and were located within the EDs of Ardmore, Ballyheeny, Cappoquin, Comeragh, Dungarvan No. 1 Urban, Dungarvan No. 2 Urban, Dungarvan Rural, Kilmacomma, Kilmacthomas, Kilmeadan, Portlaw, Rathmoylan, Tallow, and Tramore.

2.3.5 Urban Rural Classification

The CSO report '*Urban and Rural Life in Ireland 2019*' uses a six-way urban/rural classification to examine the social and economic characteristics of life in Ireland. Themes such as income, housing, health, education, and commuting patterns are explored.

According to the Index, in Waterford City and County, satellite urban towns account for 12.3% (14,088) of the population, independent urban towns account for 7.8% (8,892), rural areas with high urban influence account for 15.7% (18,017), rural areas with moderate urban influence account for 17.8% (20,421), and highly rural/remote areas account for 5.3% of the population (6,132).

2.3.6 Health and Disability

Headlines

- Waterford LDS area had marginally fewer persons with a disability at 13.28% compared to 13.51% in the State. The area also had fewer people whose self-declared health status was either bad or very bad.
- In 2022, 82% of people in Waterford City and County stated that their health was good or very good compared with 87% in 2016. This is a similar trend to the national figures, which showed a 4% decrease in the good/very good categories from 87% to 83%.
- Within the county, the proportion of persons with a disability is highest in areas with an older age profile, most notably in rural locations.

- Poor health outcomes are also associated with age, as well as with socio-economic deprivation.

Disability

Just over 13% (13.28%) of the Waterford LDS Area population has a self-declared disability. This compares to 13.51% in the State. The variable correlates strongly with age; having a disability is associated with ageing. Thus, across the LDS area, the highest proportions of persons with a disability are in locations with older age profiles. Two EDs returned self-declared disability at greater than 20%: Dungarvan No. 1 Urban (20.16), and Ballynakill (Part Rural) (29.52). Local values can be elevated due to the location of care facilities (e.g., nursing homes and community hospitals). In contrast, the lowest values in the county are in Mountstuart (3.37) and Georgestown (5.34).

The data reveal an overall inter-censal increase, in absolute and relative terms, in the number of persons with a disability. As the area's population ages, there is likely to be an associated increase in the number of persons with a disability.

Poor Health

Like disability, poor health is associated with an older age profile. It is, however, also associated with socio-economic deprivation. People in poor households and disadvantaged neighbourhoods are likelier to have poor health than the rest of the population. Across the LDS area in 2016, 854 persons (1.26%) declared their health either bad or very bad. This compares to 1.61% in the State.

2.3.7 Housing

Headlines

- Housing occupancy and vacancy rates in the LDS area are like those that pertain across the State as a whole.
- Housing vacancy is most prevalent in rural parts of the county, but vacancy is frequently associated with a range of familial and personal and ownership variables rather than with property speculation.
- In rural areas, housing is overwhelmingly detached, is generally older, and is more likely to be owned outright than in urban centres.
- Residential property inflation has been evident consistently over the past eight years, and the highest property prices are generally in areas within short- and medium-commuting distances of employment centres.
- Over recent years, there has been a predominantly upward trend in respect of the proportion of rental properties that are covered by the Housing Assistance Payment. In 2019 there were 1,952 active Housing Assistance Payments in Waterford City and County.

Housing Stock

In 2022 Waterford City and County had a total housing stock of over 55,159 units, up from 52,491 in 2016. This represented an increase of 5.1% over the period from 2016, during which time the population increased by 9.4%.

At a State level, the Census vacancy rate has fallen to less than 8% in 2022, down from over 9% in 2016 and 12% in 2011. In Waterford City and County, it was 7.1%.

According to the CSO Census 2022, the lowest vacancy levels can be seen around Waterford City. The most common cause of housing vacancy is that the vacant dwelling is a rental property (18.72%). 18.15% of vacancies were caused by the owner being deceased. Just under 15% (14.46) are undergoing renovation. Other reasons for housing vacancy include the house being

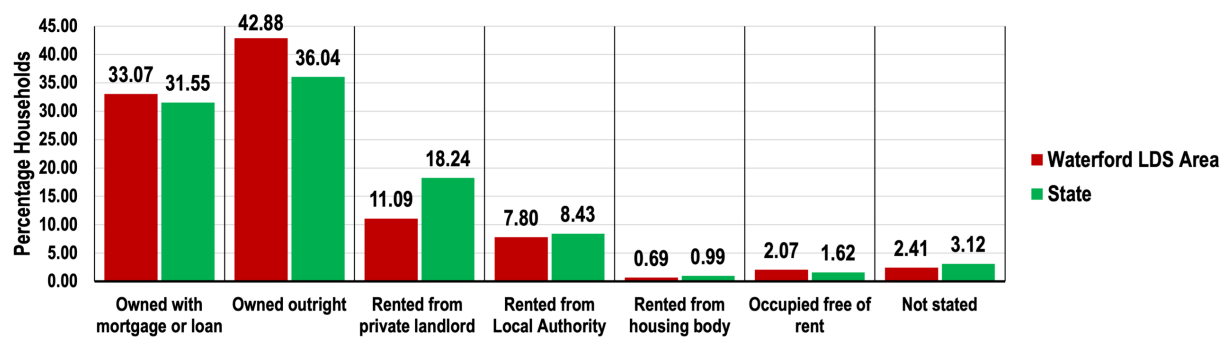
an abandoned farmhouse (9.5), the owner being in a nursing home/hospital, or temporarily living with relatives (7.43).

Forty-one EDs (44.5%) exceeded the national vacancy rate (7.8) in the Waterford LDS area in 2022. The EDs with a dwelling vacancy rate exceeding 15% were Gardenmorris (15.0), Ballysaggartmore (16.0), Dromore (17.2) and Lismore Urban (19.1).

Housing Stock Age

In 2016, 52.5% of the 24,515 households in the Waterford LDS area lived in houses constructed before 2000, compared to 57.6% in the State

Figure 9 – Type of Occupancy 2016



Housing Tenure

In 2016, 76% of all households in the LDS area lived in a property that was either owned with a mortgage or loan or owned outright, compared to 67.6% in the State.

In 2019 there were 1,952 active Housing Assistance Payments in Waterford City and County, with a delivery target of 654 social houses established by the City and County Council.

Housing Affordability

The CSO National Residential Property Price Index noted that the Property Price Index for properties outside of Dublin had increased by 5.6% in the twelve months to April 2023. This was down from 5.1% in the year to February 2023 and from the high values of 15.1% in the twelve months to February and March 2022.

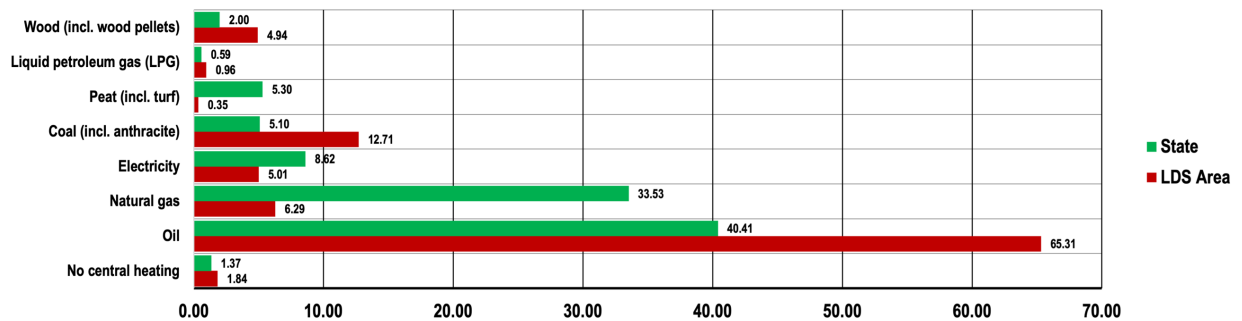
In Waterford City and County, the National Residential Property Price Index reported that the median price for a residential property in April 2023 was €255,000. This price was considerably lower than in Co. Cork (€314,050).

The CSO recorded the number of Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) supported tenancies in Waterford City and County by Local Electoral Area 2021 to be 1,854, comprising Lismore (103), Dungarvan (172), Portlaw Kilmacthomas (111), Tramore Waterford City West (717), Waterford City South (452), and Waterford City East (299).

Home Heating

In 2016 65.31% of households lived in homes heated by oil-fired central heating systems in the LDS area, compared to 40.4% in the State. A further 12.71% of households were heated by coal, compared to 8.62% in the State. Only 0.35% of homes were heated by peat, compared to 5.3% in the State.

Figure 10 – Home Heating Fuel



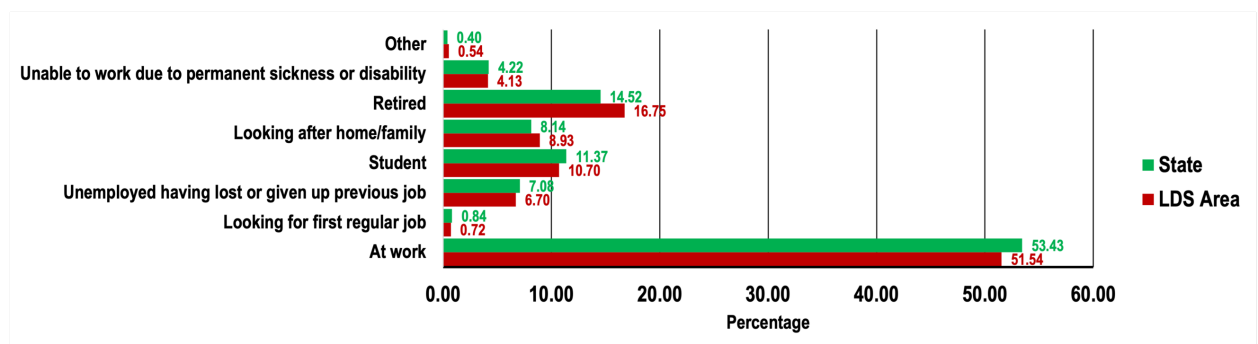
2.4 Economic Indicators

2.4.1 Headlines

- The CSO Business Demography Survey reports that Waterford City and County had approximately 5,459 enterprises in the business economy (excluding activities of holding companies) in 2020. Whilst this information is unavailable at the LDS area level, it provides a helpful indicator of the general economic and employment capacity.
- In 2021, 41 IDA companies employed 8,868 in Waterford City and County.
- Waterford City and County has a diverse industrial base, including Life Sciences, ICT, Engineering, Financial Services, Agri-Food and Agri-Tech, Creative, and Tourism.
- The number of farms in the Teagasc Waterford Kilkenny Advisory Region fell by 5% from 2010-2020, from 6,498 to 6,173.
- The average age of farm holders in the region was 56 years, the average agricultural area was 46 ha, 30% of farm holdings were less than 20 ha, and 13% of farm holders were female.
- Waterford City and County attracted 509,000 domestic visitors and 288,000 international visitors in 2019 (the last complete year unaffected by Covid-19).
- In 2018 there were 797,000 visitor bednights in Waterford City and County, generating €163 million.
- Waterford City and County had a slightly lower rate of PC access than the State as a whole (68.39% compared to 70.8%) as of the 2016 census.

2.4.2 Labour Force

Figure 11 – Population by Principal Economic Status 2016



The figure above shows the population of the LDS area aged 15 years and over by principal economic status in 2016 compared with that of the State. 1.89% fewer in the LDS area population were at work compared to the State.

In 2022 the CSO reported that, at the national level, there was a 3.4% growth in the labour force compared to 2021. The employment rate for people aged between 15 and 64 was 73.2%, compared to 72.2% in 2021. The most significant increase in national employment was reported among 45 to 54-year-olds, with 29,200 people in that age bracket added to that workforce in 2022. However, there were 8,600 fewer people aged between 15 and 24 in employment than in 2021, leading to a youth unemployment rate of 12%, down marginally from the 2021 figure of 12.1%.

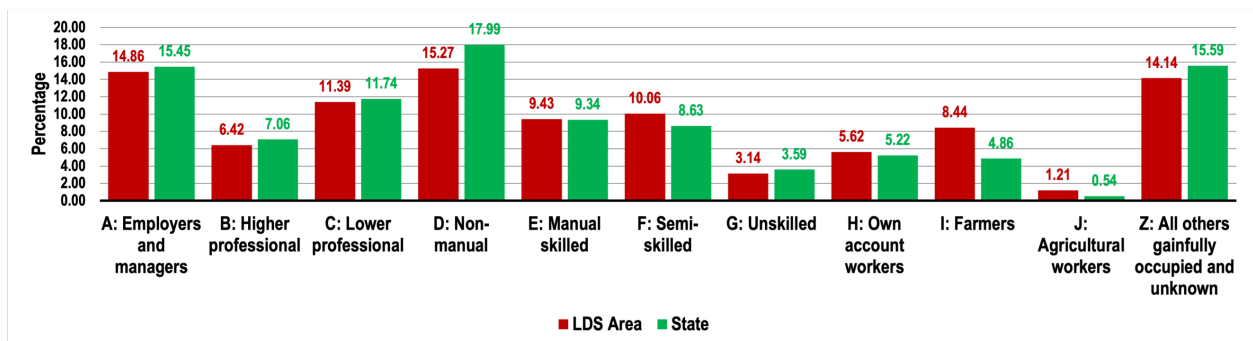
The CSO Labour Force Survey Quarter 1, 2023, records the NUTS 3 South-East Region (Counties Carlow, Kilkenny, Wexford, and Waterford City and County) records 217,300 persons aged 15 to 89 in employment. This represents a 6.3% increase over Q1 2022. The Labour Force Survey Quarter 1, 2023 also notes that in the region, the unemployment rate (persons aged 15 to 74) was 3.9%, compared to 4.1% in the State. The employment participation rate (persons aged 15 to 74) was 61.2%, compared to 64.9% in the State.

In 2016 there were 42,554 people aged between 15 and 64, representing 62.62% of the LDS area's total population. This compares to 65.47% in the State.

2.4.3 Socio-Economic Group

The CSO Census of Population 2016 classifies the population into one of ten socio-economic groups based on the level of skill and educational attainment of the occupation (of those at work, unemployed or retired), while all other persons are classified into the socio-economic group of the person in the family on whom they are deemed to be dependent.

Figure 12 – Socio-Economic Group 2016

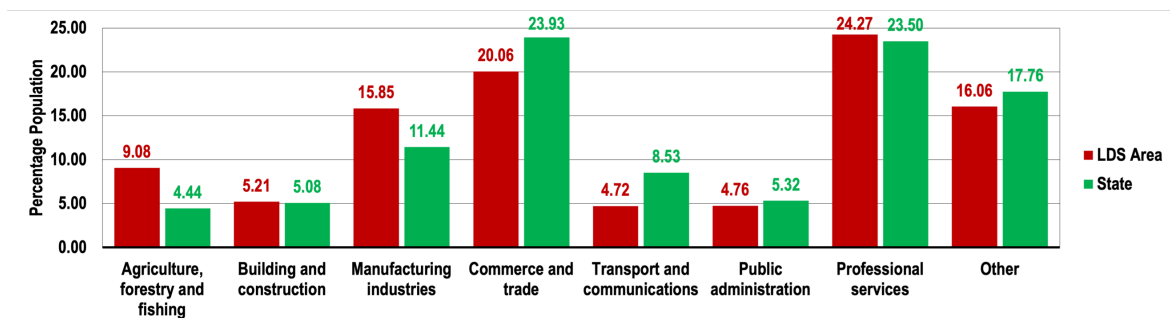


In 2016, Socio-Economic Group I: Farmers represented 3.58% more of the LDS area population than was the case in the State. Similarly, Socio-Economic Group J: Agricultural Workers represented 0.67% more of the LDS area population than was the case in the State. Both figures indicate the continuing importance of agriculture to the LDS area economy.

2.4.4 Persons at Work by Industry

The 2016 Census provides a profile of the population at work by industry.

Figure 13 - Persons at Work by Industry 2016



Waterford Local Development Strategy 2023-2027

Consistent with the Socio-Economic Group profile for the LDS area, Census 2016 recorded 9.08% of the population employed in the Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing sector. This was 4.64% higher than was found in the State.

2.4.5 Economic Activity

Table 10 – CSO Business Demography City and County 2020

Co. Waterford Business Activity	Active Enterprises	Employees
Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	6	5
Mining and quarrying	8	22
Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	19	81
Real estate activities	301	252
Financial and insurance activities (excluding activities of holding companies)	86	392
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	237	492
Other Service Activities	540	731
Transportation and storage	366	1,068
ICT	262	1,117
Information and communication	296	1,323
Administrative and support service activities	323	2,246
Professional, scientific and technical activities	865	2,640
Construction	1,150	3,003
Accommodation and food service activities	478	3,025
Education	366	3,398
Human Health and Social Work Activities	522	3,488
Wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	1,091	5,340
Manufacturing	470	8,966
Business economy (excluding activities of holding companies)	5,459	28,363

The table above is ranked by the number of employees engaged in the business activity sectors.

The CSO Business Demography profile for Waterford City and County 2020 references the key sectors in the economy. Whilst this information is unavailable at the LDS area level, it provides a helpful indicator of the general economic and employment capacity.

Waterford City and County Development Plan 2022-2028 identifies the existing diverse economic base, including: -

- **Life Sciences:** BioPharma, Pharmaceuticals, Medical Devices, Biotechnology, and Nutraceuticals.
- **ICT:** E-commerce, VR, Cloud, IoT, Retail Tech, Device Management, AI, Data Intelligence, and Mobile Development.
- **Engineering:** Advanced Manufacturing, Engineering, Equipment Manufacturing, and Construction.
- **Financial Services:** Global business, Financial Services, Fintech, Regtech, Insurtech, and Global Payments.
- **Agri:** Agri-Food and Drink, Agri-Tech, Bioeconomy, and Ingredients manufacturing.

- **Creative:** Design, Craft Industry, and TV and Film Production.
- **Tourism:** Viking Triangle, Waterford Greenway, Waterford Cultural Quarter, Heritage and Natural Capital, and Mt. Congreve.

Agriculture Sector

The Teagasc Waterford/Kilkenny Advisory Region Strategic Plan 2015-2020 notes that the area has natural advantages of soil and climate and is among the most intensive farming region in the country. The Strategic Plan reports that the average farm size of 44.7ha is the largest of any region in the country, and the standard output per farm, as measured by the CSO, is almost double the national average. The region has an ideal climate and soil type for growing grass, and grazing enterprises predominate.

Dairying is the dominant enterprise in the region from an economic point of view, although only one-third of farms have a dairy enterprise. There is a cattle farming enterprise on almost all farms in the region. Ten% of the agricultural area used is devoted to crops. Tillage crops are concentrated in the Blackwater Valley, west Waterford.

The region has major food processing plants, including Dawn Meats, ABP Foods, and Flahavans.

The CSO Census of Agriculture 2020 confirms that Co. Waterford had 26.5% of its farms classified as '*Specialist Dairying*'. However, the highest rate of farms classified as '*Specialist Dairying*' was recorded in Co. Cork (27.7%). In addition, 14.8% of farmholders in the county in 2020 were female, and the average age of farmholders in the county was 56.3. By comparison, Cork and Tipperary were the only counties with an average age of less than 56 years.

In 2020, Co. Waterford had 793 farms with 89,900 dairy cows. In addition, there were 383 farms with 92,146 sheep in the county.

Fishing

According to the Bord Iascaigh Mhara *Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG) Local Development Strategy South East*² 2016 - FLAG South East, 1,233 people were employed in the marine/seafood sector in the south-east region³. The fishing and aquaculture vessels registered in the area represented approximately 11% by number of vessel owners (248) or 12% by gross tonnage (7,659 GT) of vessel ownership across all FLAG areas.

The main larger fishing ports included Dunmore East, which is a National Fishery Harbour Centre, and Helvick. Dunmore East appeared in the top five ports in Ireland by value, with overall landings to these ports of 10,978 tonnes (value of €16.2m) and 4,437 tonnes (value of €15.6m), respectively, in 2015.

Smaller piers and harbours include Cheekpoint, Passage, Tramore, Dunbrattin, Ballinagoul and Ardmore. The key areas for inshore fishing are in West Waterford, including An Rinn, along the '*Copper Coast*', adjacent to and within the Waterford Estuary from Dunmore East to the Hook head-on to Kilmore Quay.

The FLAG South East area hosts a wide variety of fish seafood landed in the area. The main inshore fisheries are crustaceans and shellfish, including lobster, crab, whelk, shrimp, scallop, razor and surf clams, but other important inshore fisheries include netting, trawling and line fishing for whitefish, herring, sprats and mackerel.

Aquaculture is an important industry worth (€19 million) in the region. Species produced include – Bottom culture mussels (Waterford Estuary) and gigas oysters (Dungarvan Bay and Waterford Estuary).

² *Counties Waterford, Wexford and Wicklow.*

³ *The Business of Sea Food , BIM 2016 – South East area.*

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In 2015 there were twenty-eight processing companies within the FLAG area, with the main seafood processing and added-value activity taking place in Kilmore Quay. In terms of marine leisure, the area offers a wide range of activities, including many passenger and charter boats, with vessels based in Duncannon/Waterford Estuary, Dunmore East and Dungarvan.

The priorities developed for the FLAG South East areas included: -

- Creating and maintaining jobs in coastal areas.
- Adding value to fisheries and aquaculture products.
- Lifelong learning and attracting young people in fisheries and aquaculture areas.
- Promoting innovation in fisheries and aquaculture and supporting diversification inside and outside commercial fisheries.
- Promoting social well-being and cultural heritage in fisheries and aquaculture areas.
- Promoting the environmental assets of the fisheries and aquaculture areas and climate change mitigation.

The CSO recorded 10,741 tonnes of fish being landed in Co. Waterford in 2021.

Table 11 – Co. Waterford Fish Landings 2021

		2019	2020	2021
Irish Vessels	Tonnes	5,515	12,576	10,272
	Percentage	3.17	6.69	5.65
	State	173,922	188,051	181,792
Foreign Vessels	Tonnes	214	16	469
	Percentage	0.21	0.01	0.40
	State	103,386	136,257	116,719

Tourism Sector

Fáilte Ireland's *Tourism Barometer Strategic Research and Insight May 2022* reports that visitor volumes have not reached pre-Covid-19 levels: '31% of accommodation operators have more advance domestic bookings to date this year than normal, 30% have the same level, and 39% have fewer. Overseas tourism is slow to return: 60% of accommodation operators are down on overseas bookings for this summer. Eighty-seven% of tourism businesses are finding it difficult to recruit staff'.

Fáilte Ireland reported that Irish Resident Nights in Waterford City and County in 2019 was 1,267,000. In 2021 this declined by 43% to 728,000. This rate of decline was the sixth largest of the twelve counties in the NUTS 2 Southern and Eastern Region. The length of stay of Irish Resident Nights in Waterford City and County in 2021 was 3.1 nights, the sixth lowest in the region.

Irish Resident Trips in Waterford City and County in 2019 were reported by Fáilte Ireland as 460,000, dropping to 232,000 in 2021. In 2021 the Irish Resident Trips generated a spend of €51 million in Waterford City and County. This outcome was 43% less than in 2019.

In 2015, Waterford City and County was rated tenth nationally for overseas visitors, attracting 263,000 overseas visitors and generating €75m in revenue.

Social Enterprise

The National Social Enterprise Policy for Ireland 2019-2022 defines a social enterprise as: -

- An enterprise whose objective is to achieve a social, societal, or environmental impact rather than maximising profit for its owners or shareholders

- It pursues its objectives by trading on an ongoing basis through providing goods or services and reinvesting surpluses into achieving social goals
- It is governed in a fully accountable and transparent manner and is independent of the public sector. If dissolved, it should transfer its assets to another organisation with a similar mission

The DRCD report 'Social Enterprises in Ireland - A Baseline Data Collection Exercise' (2023) identifies 141 social enterprises in Waterford City and County. When considering the population of each county, Co. Leitrim was found to have the highest ratio, with 26.2 social enterprises per 10,000 inhabitants. Waterford City and County has 11.1 social enterprises per 10,000 inhabitants, placing it ninth of all counties in the State. This placing suggests the potential to generate further social enterprises in Waterford City and County. The report also notes that 43% of social enterprises are to be found in rural areas. This suggests that the number of social enterprises in the Waterford LDS area will be approximately 61, with a ratio of 8.3 social enterprises per 10,000 inhabitants.

2.4.6 State-Assisted Employment Creation

Enterprise Ireland

Powering the Regions, the Enterprise Ireland Regional Plan places Waterford City and County in the South East Region, along with Co. Wexford, Carlow, and Kilkenny. In 2018 there were 19,293 jobs supported by Enterprise Ireland in the region. Over 2016-2018, Enterprise Ireland invested €3.8 million to support its client companies in Waterford City and County.

IDA Ireland

There are 79 IDA Ireland client companies in the South-East, with more than half of these (41) located in Waterford City and County, employing 8,868 people. There is a strong presence of IDA Ireland supported businesses in the life sciences sector and a developing portfolio of financial services companies.

2.4.7 Employment

Between 2016 and March 2020 (the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic), Ireland had a progressive decline in the unemployment rate. Unemployment then began to increase, and it peaked in Q1 of 2021. Since then, as public health restrictions have been gradually lifted, the unemployment rate has decreased, although it began to climb again in 2022.

In May 2023, the seasonally adjusted national unemployment rate was down to 4.1% for males from a revised rate of 4.2% in April 2023 and May 2022. It was down to 3.4% for females from a revised rate of 3.5% in April 2023 and a rate of 4.2% in May 2022.

Youth unemployment has been stubbornly resistant to change over many years. In May 2023, it stood at 6.9% for persons aged 15-24 years (youth unemployment rate), from a revised rate of 7.7% in April 2023.

Persons at Work

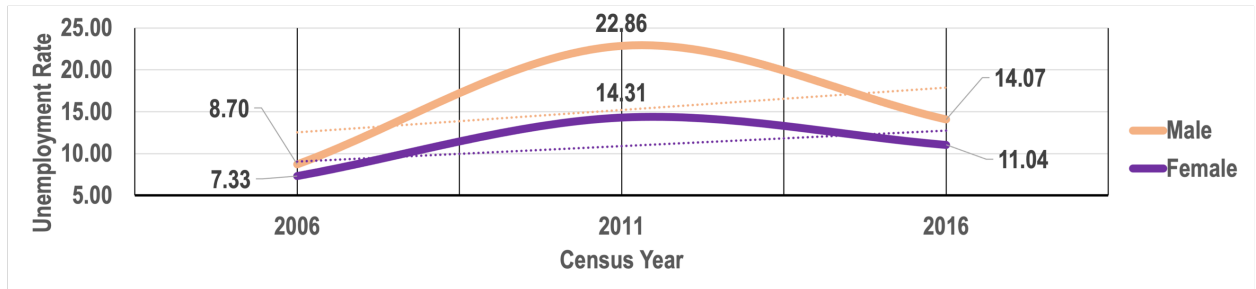
In the report *County Incomes and Regional GDP 2020*, the CSO note that counties in the South East region saw a 1.9% decline in total employment for 2020. Waterford City and County had a density of 2.56% of persons at work, compared to 11.85% in Cork City and County and 34.5% in Dublin.

GDP per person in the South East in 2020 was €45,950, compared to €57,092 in 2019. At the State level, the GDP per person in 2020 was €72,479.

Unemployment Rate

THE CSO reports that the national seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for February 2023 (for all persons aged 15-74 years) was down to 4.3% from 4.4% in January 2023. The rate was lower than the pre-pandemic 4.8% recorded in February 2020. In February 2023, the unemployment rate for males was 4.0% and for females was 4.7%.

Figure 14 – LDS Area Unemployment Rate 2006-16



In 2016 the EDs with the highest male unemployment rate were Comeragh (21.97), Kilmacthomas (22.12) and Dungarvan No. 1 Urban (27.67). The same EDs also returned the highest female unemployment rate: Comeragh (19.27), Kilmacthomas (20.93) and Dungarvan No. 1 Urban (28.57).

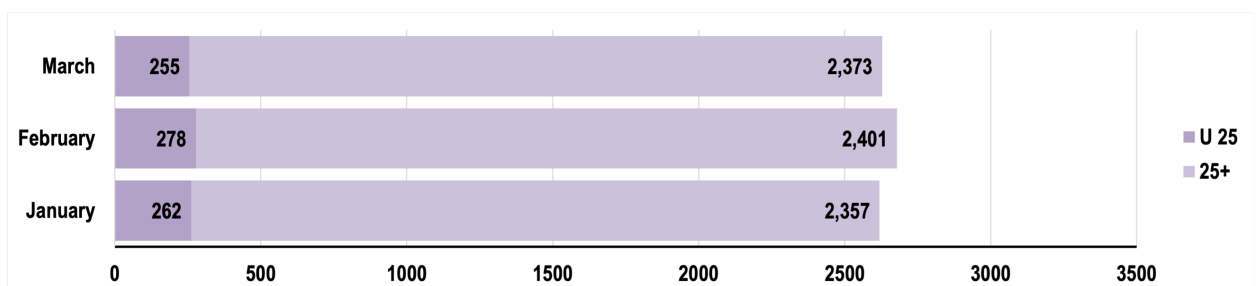
Live Register

The Live Register provides a monthly series of the numbers of people (with some exceptions) registering for Jobseekers Benefit (JB) or Jobseekers Allowance (JA) or for various other statutory entitlements at local offices of the DSP. The Live Register does not measure unemployment since it includes part-time workers (those who work up to three days per week) and seasonal and casual workers entitled to JB and JA.

Figure 15 –Waterford City and County Live Register Male 2023



Figure 16 – City and County Live Register Female 2023



The Live Register figures cannot be disaggregated to the LDS area.

2.4.8 Household Incomes

The median nominal household disposable income was €46,999 per person in the State in 2022. The Southern Region's median nominal household disposable income was €42,690 per person.

2.5 Environmental Indicators

2.5.1 Headlines

- The west of the LDS area is strongly rural in nature. It is the twentieth-largest county by area (1,857 km²), with a population density of 62.7 persons per km².
- The county is well connected, with strategic transport links to Limerick, Waterford, Cork, Dublin, and international airports and major ports.
- The county has access to a network of national universities and colleges, with leading third-level colleges and universities within commuting distance.
- Waterford City and County offers an excellent quality of life within a natural environment of diversity and character.
- Waterford City and County has a stock of natural assets that are of national and European significance, and the county has a network of Natura 2000 sites, including nine Special Areas of Conservation and six Special Protection Areas.
- In the City and County, there are a total of 1,625 structures on the Record of Protected Structures.

2.5.2 Topography

Co. Waterford is located between the counties of Cork and Wexford to the west and east and Kilkenny, Tipperary, and Limerick to the north. Whilst regionally tied to the South East, it is in the Munster Province.

The Knockmealdown Mountains run east and west on the border with Co. Tipperary and Co. Waterford, and the Comeragh Mountains extend northwest-southeast, from the River Suir valley near Clonmel to the coastal lowland north of Stradbally.

To the north and east of the County, Ireland's third longest river, the River Suir, acts as the boundary between Tipperary and Waterford, Kilkenny and Waterford and Wexford and Waterford. In the west of the county, the Munster Blackwater, Ireland's fourth longest river, passes through Ballyduff Upper, Lismore, Cappoquin, and Villierstown, before skirting Clashmore and entering the sea at Youghal Bay.

The central corridor, stretching from Waterford City to Youghal and Fermoy on the Cork border, is a prime agricultural area supporting dairy and tillage farms. It is the birthplace of the Tirlán (formerly Glanbia) nutrition and ingredients group. The former county town of Dungarvan is located on the coast midway between the eastern and western extremities of the county. It is the focus for much of the socio-economic activity in rural Co. Waterford.

The Waterford Estuary frames the county's eastern boundary, whilst Youghal Bay defines the western boundary. The scenic coastal drive from Tramore to Stradbally contains the UNESCO Geopark, one of three in Ireland. The coastal Gaeltacht area of An Rinn and Sean Phobal is a vibrant Irish language and culture centre. The adjoining parishes of Ardmore and Kinsalebeg have attractive beaches and cliff walks.

Waterford has substantial woodland areas, reflecting that many great houses remained intact after the War of Independence and the Civil War.

Natural Amenities

The LDS area has a wealth of natural attractions for residents and visitors alike.

- Comeragh Mountains: The Comeragh Mountains extend northwest-southeast and offer a haven for hikers, mountaineers, and nature enthusiasts.
- The Copper Coast: Waterford's Copper Coast stretches approximately 25 kilometres along the southern coastline and has geological significance, with distinctive rock formations and mining heritage.
- Copper Coast Geopark: Designated as a UNESCO Global Geopark, the Copper Coast Geopark stretches along the LDS area's southern coastline. Its geological heritage spans 460 million years, with cliffs, coves, and beaches. The Geopark offers opportunities for geological exploration, coastal walks, and marine wildlife spotting.
- Waterford Greenway: The Waterford Greenway is a 46-kilometre-long cycling and walking trail that follows the route of the former railway line. It offers views of the River Suir and surrounding landscapes. It is a popular activity destination, providing access to the county's natural beauty.
- Tramore Beach: Tramore is a popular seaside resort town with a long sandy beach offering water-based activities, such as swimming, surfing, kayaking, and sailing.
- Dunmore East: Situated on the south-eastern coastline, Dunmore East is a fishing village with a picturesque harbour and cliff walks.
- The Blackwater Valley: The Blackwater Valley offers excellent opportunities for angling and boating. The valley features green landscapes, rolling hills, and woodland areas.
- Mahon Falls: Located in the Comeragh Mountains, Mahon Falls provides a waterfall within a rich biodiversity surrounding.
- Coumshingaun Lake: It is a glacial corrie lake renowned for its dramatic setting.
- Knockmealdown Mountains: On the border between Waterford and Co. Tipperary, the Knockmealdown Mountains provide opportunities for hiking, hillwalking, and nature exploration.
- The Nire Valley: Located between the Comeragh and Knockmealdown Mountains, the Nire Valley is a glacial valley providing a setting for walks, wildlife spotting, and experiencing rural life.
- Clonea Strand: Clonea Strand is a Blue Flag beach located near Dungarvan. Stretching for several kilometres, the beach is ideal for walking, swimming, and picnicking.
- Colligan Woods: Colligan Woods is a quality woodland area near Dungarvan, encompassing diverse flora and fauna. The woods contain walking trails.
- Passage East and Woodstown Beaches: Passage East and Woodstown are two neighbouring coastal areas with sandy beaches for a more secluded coastal experience.

2.5.3 Natural Environment

Notable examples of designated areas include: -

- Ardmore Head Special Area of Conservation is used for tourism and low-level recreational use. A well-worn path is located along the cliff for much of the site and is regularly used for walking. The historical monuments within the site, such as St. Declan's holy well and the old ruined church at the north of the site, also attract visitors. Drift net fishing, scuba diving and recreational fishing are carried out in the sea surrounding the site.
- Comeragh Mountains Special Area of Conservation contains a general habitat diversity. The site is threatened by land use pressures such as grazing, burning, afforestation and leisure activities. The large site has diverse habitats, including blanket bog, heath, upland grassland, scree, exposed rock, lakes, and streams. The blanket bog represents the south-eastern

extremity of the range of this habitat type in Ireland. Overall, the Comeragh Mountains Special Area of Conservation is of considerable conservation importance.

- Helvick Head Special Area of Conservation is located at the tip of a promontory on the southern side of Dungarvan Harbour. The area extends from Helvick Head south-westward to include Muggort's Bay. The Special Area of Conservation comprises sea cliffs, cliff-top vegetation and an area of marine water off Helvick Head. It forms the eastern extremity of an Old Red Sandstone ridge which extends as far west as Cork City. The area supports typical examples of vegetated sea cliffs and dry heath, with a south to south-east facing aspect, and is important for breeding seabird populations.
- Tramore Back Strand Special Protection Area comprises the innermost part of Tramore Bay that lies east of Tramore in County Waterford. The inner bay, known as Tramore Back Strand, lies behind an extensive dune system (Burrow); these dunes formed because of a classic inshore process - the growth of a spit of shingle and sand across a shallow bay. The Back Strand, which dries out at low tide, is connected to the open sea by only a narrow at Rinneshark and is therefore well sheltered by the dune system. The site is important for wintering waterbirds, providing excellent feeding grounds and sheltered and secure high-tide roosts.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service lists fifteen protected sites in Waterford City and County.

Table 12 - Protected Sites

Special Area of Conservation	Special Protection Area
Ardmore Head	Blackwater Callows
Blackwater River (Cork/Waterford)	Blackwater Estuary
Comeragh Mountains	Dungarvan Harbour
Glendine Wood	Helvick Head to Ballyquin
Helvick Head	Mid-Waterford Coast
Lower River Suir	Tramore Back Strand
Nier Valley Woodlands	
River Barrow and River Nore	
Tramore Dunes and Backstrand	

2.5.4 Built Environment

Waterford City and County has a unique and varied built heritage. This heritage includes castles, country houses, churches, and public buildings, some of which were designed by eminent architects. However, more modest structures such as townhouses, thatched cottages and farm complexes contribute significantly to the county's character. Waterford City and County also has a rich industrial and maritime heritage, including mills, quays, and lighthouses. This wide variety of building stock contributes to the special character of the county.

Sympathetic maintenance, adaptation, and reuse of buildings of architectural or historical merit can generate aesthetic, environmental and economic benefits for future generations whilst maintaining the character. In the City and County, there are a total of 1,625 structures on the Record of Protected Structures (RPS).

The National Monuments Service Archaeological Survey of Ireland identifies twelve monuments and places.

Table 13 – Monuments and Places

Ardmore Cathedral	Dungarvan Castle	Knockeen Portal Tomb
Ballynageeragh Portal Tomb	French Church, Waterford	Matthewstown Passage Tomb
Double Tower	Gaulstown Portal Tomb	Mothel Abbey
Drumlohan Souterrain and Ogham Stones	Kiltera Ogham Stones	Reginald's Tower, Town Defences, Waterford

Numerous National Monuments are located near Bunmahon on the UNESCO Global Geopark Copper Coast.

2.5.5 Climate Change

The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) is responsible for assessing the energy efficiency of domestic and commercial buildings, and the SEAI provides a range of supports to enable home and business owners to maximise insulation and thereby conserve energy. The Building Energy Rating (BER) classifies buildings on a scale from A (most efficient) to H (least efficient). Of the domestic housing stock that the SEAI surveyed in Waterford City and County 2009-2022, 7.92% of homes achieved a BER rating of B2 or higher.

Appendix 7 - Renewable Energy Strategy 2016-2030, WC&CC, reports that the energy demand by sector in 2016 was: residential (831 GWh), industry (661 GWh), services (389 GWh), agriculture (86 GWh), and transport (1,102 GWh). It is projected that by 2030 the energy demand per sector will be residential (696 GWh), industry (797 GWh), services (388 GWh), agriculture (109 GWh), and transport (1,592 GWh). This projection requires a reduction in residential energy demand of 17%.

2.6 Community Indicators

2.6.1 Gaeltacht na nDéise

Tá Gaeltacht na nDéise suite tuairim is naoi gciliméadar siar ó Dhún Garbhán. Tá go leor daoine ón nGaeltacht ag obair i nDún Garbhán, atá tosaíthe ar aitheantas a bhaint amach mar Bhaile Seirbhísí Gaeltachta. Tá achar na Gaeltachta 62 km², ionann le 1 faoin gcéad den cheantar Gaeltachta náisiúnta. Is ceantar beag Gaeltachta é ina bhfuil ceantair Rinn Ua gCuanach agus an tSean Phobal.

Figure 17 - Gaeltacht na nDéise



Sa bhliain 2016, bhí 1,816 duine ina gcónaí i nGaeltacht na nDéise, ionann le 1.8 faoin gcéad de dhaonra iomlán na Gaeltachta náisiúnta. Síneann Gaeltacht na nDéise thar ED iomlán amháin (Baile an Mhoirt) agus cuid de bheirt Teachtaí Dála eile (An Rinn agus an Aird Mhór). Tá fás níos mó ná ceithre chéad duine (32.3

faoin gcéad) tagtha ar dhaonra an cheantair ó 1996 agus ráta fáis níos airde ná an meánráta náisiúnta bainte amach aige. Léiríodh é seo san aoisghrúpa 30-60 atá tar éis bogadh isteach sa cheantar.

Tuairiscíodh i nDaonáireamh 2016 go raibh ardú os cionn aon cheantar Gaeltachta eile sa tír ar líon na gcainteoirí laethúla Gaeilge i nGaeltacht na nDéise. Dúirt 1,286 duine go raibh siad in ann Gaeilge a labhairt (73.9 faoin gcéad den daonra). As an bhfigiúr sin, labhair 467 acu Gaeilge lasmuigh den chóras oideachais, labhair 324 acu Gaeilge sa chóras oideachais amháin, agus dúirt 157 gur labhair siad Gaeilge go seachtainiúil.

In 2019, bhí 149 duine fostaithe go lánaimseartha i gcliantchomhlachtaí de chuid Údarás na Gaeltachta i nGaeltacht na nDéise.

2.6.2 Community and Voluntary Sector Organisations

Waterford City and County Public Participation Network (PPN) is a collective of all the community, voluntary, social inclusion, and environmental groups serving the area. It was established in 2014. The PPN has 593 registered members, with 507 (85.5%) of these being in the Community pillar, 62 (10.5%) comprising the Social Inclusion pillar, and 24 (4.0%) representing the Environmental pillar.

For every 10,000 population in Waterford City and County in 2022, there were seventy Community pillar organisations, eight Social Inclusion pillar organisations, and three Environmental pillar organisations. This outcome suggests there might be potential to encourage new community and voluntary sector organisations interested in environmental matters in Waterford City and County.

2.6.3 Broadband Access

According to Census 2016, 16,091 households in the Waterford LDS area had broadband access. This figure is 65.64% of all households in the area. The rate was five percentage points lower than that of the State, which was 70.69%. The lowest rates of broadband access were found in the EDs of Knockaunbrandaun (31.88), Gaignagower (35.45), Stradbally (35.50), and Kilcockan (40.00)

More recent data on broadband access is available from the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications through the National Broadband Plan. The National Broadband Plan is the government's initiative to deliver high-speed, quality, affordable broadband services to all premises in Ireland. It is the largest-ever telecommunications project undertaken by the Irish State, and its objective is to transform the country's broadband landscape radically. After the rollout of the NBP, all parts of Ireland will have access to a modern and reliable broadband network capable of supporting current and future generations' communications, information, education, and entertainment requirements.

In advance of homes and businesses receiving future-proofed broadband direct to their door, the Broadband Connection Points will provide high-speed broadband to local communities throughout rural Ireland. Each Connection Point will provide 150Mb high-speed broadband access to the local community. This will enable people living in the area to go to the selected location and access broadband for various uses, including remote working, general access and keeping in touch with family and friends.

Waterford City and County PPN confirm that 265 member organisations have broadband access with the service provided by Eir and the National Broadband Plan. Of these, over 53% have a 100 Mbps connection, 14% have a 1 Gbps connection, and almost 19% confirm a 2 Gbps connection.

2.6.4 Key Service Provision

Economic, social, cultural, and environmental service provision should be complementary, crosscutting, and relevant to the effective delivery of the LDS. Coordination and complementarity

must be obtained with existing services and structures to minimise service-level duplication. The level and type of interventions that already exist (and are planned) have been identified and used to determine service gaps.

Statutory organisations and the community and voluntary sector are delivering key services. These include Waterford LEO, Skillnets, Microfinance Ireland, youth services, Fáilte Ireland and other area-based and sectoral interest groups. Relevant programmes and supports include the Back-to-Work Enterprise Allowance (BTWEA), Local Link, Community Services Programme (CSP), Rural Social Scheme (RSS), and the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP). In addition, two final tables outlining programmes and initiatives operated by the Dept. of Rural and Community Development and the Dept. of Agriculture have also been included, as they possess key components closely related to LEADER.

Economic Service Provision

The following economic services and programmes are currently being delivered in the Waterford LDS area: -

- Cappoquin Development Company: workspace provision for start-ups in Cappoquin.
- DAFM, ACORNS: support for rural women starting their own business.
- Dungarvan Enterprise Centre: workspace provision for start-ups in Dungarvan.
- Dunhill Enterprise Centre: workspace provision for start-ups in Dunhill
- Enterprise Ireland, Waterford: regional support to businesses with export potential and HPSU.
- Fáilte Ireland, Waterford: sectoral marketing supports.
- IDA Cork: support for FDI, foreign and Irish multinationals.
- Lismore Enterprise Park: workspace provision for start-ups in Lismore.
- Micro Finance Ireland: financial support for micro enterprises in the LDS area.
- National Broadband Strategy: broadband provision for rural areas by 2027.
- RIKON (SETU): providing regional technical support, community structuring, and business planning.
- SETU, Micro Enterprise Idea Development - Arc Labs: regional provision for HPSU.
- Tallow Enterprise Group: workspace provision for start-ups in Tallow.
- Teagasc: provision of sectoral advice, training, and support.
- Údarás na Gaeltachta: provision of workspace and technical assistance for the Gaeltacht community.
- VECP: workspace provision for start-ups in Villierstown
- Waterford Chamber of Commerce: delivery of Skillnets training for retail and microenterprise in the LDS area.
- Waterford LEO; Dungarvan and Waterford: provision of soft supports for micro enterprise with export potential.
- WC&CC: public service provision.
- WLP CLG: LEADER Implementer providing LDS area enterprise supports.
- WWETB: provision of area-wide training services for all rural businesses.

Summary of Economic Service Provision Gaps

Six action gaps for economic service provision have been identified and these are summarised below: -

1. Financial support for non-export sub-supply businesses who need to make significant capital investment.
2. Supporting adaptation to climate change and the development of the circular economy.

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3. Supporting Activity and Cultural Tourism infrastructure.
4. Supporting rural accommodation infrastructure to underpin the development of activity and cultural tourism.
5. Facilitating the development of historical facilities and a related local events infrastructure.
6. Supporting international-quality festivals and events.

Whilst Waterford LEO and EI are the main providers of supports to micro- and SMEs, a gap has been identified for the provision of financial support for non-export sub-supply businesses who need to make significant investments to ensure their competitiveness. The consultative process outcomes noted that adaptation to climate change and the development of the circular economy will require focussed assistance.

Regarding training and skilling, WWETB have a suite of over 104 training programmes ranging from academic to enterprise to community development, to social enterprise and to studies, climate change and construction. The Waterford LEO provides both training and technical assistance to micro- and SME's. It has emerged that there is an unmet need in the community sector for Tier 2 to Tier 1 Community Development Training, SMART Village and REDZ, bespoke initiatives with the FRC's (such as Social Prescribing) and Elder Care Groups.

WC&CC, Fáilte Ireland and DRCD invest in major tourism infrastructure such as Mount Congreve and the Greenway. They also invest in local, national, and international marketing. The consultation process revealed a gap for investment in Activity and Cultural Tourism infrastructure. Specifically, rural accommodation infrastructure is required to support the development of activity and cultural tourism. Additionally, the development of quality local events to support historical facilities is required.

Broadband access is no longer a major issue from the findings of the LEADER consultation process and from the PPN survey on Broadband accessibility. Both the Eir and the NBI roll out is making significant inroads into Broadband availability. The PPN findings show a very high level of connectivity among community groups. DRCD has also provided broadband hubs in areas where the new services are not yet up and running. WWETB provides significant community based I.T. training for all levels of need and competence. The main gap that has been identified concerns the provision of basic information technology skills for older people using day-care centres.

Climate change is being evidenced in Waterford as in other parts of the country. The Environmental Protection Agency findings on water quality in the area are poor, as are the findings on biodiversity. Enterprise must play a part in the mitigation of climate change. The Southeast Energy Agency, Waterford Council's Climate Action Team, LAWPRO and Teagasc will be the LEADERS in this area. LEADER can assist SMEs to reduce energy costs, cut production waste and, in the tourism sector, reduce the carbon footprint.

Social Inclusion Service Provision

The following social inclusion services and programmes are currently being delivered in the Waterford LDS area: -

- Barnardo's: providing support for children and families most at risk in Dungarvan and West Waterford.
- Brothers of Charity: providing training and support for those who are physically and intellectual challenged in Waterford.
- Cappoquin Community Childcare Facility: serving Cappoquin and environs and providing community childcare facilities for young people to eight years of age.
- Cappoquin Day Care Centre: providing day-care, socialisation, therapy, and meals for the elderly in West Waterford, Cappoquin, Tallow, Villierstown, etc.
- Community Hospital Lismore: Eldercare on a permanent basis for those from West Waterford.

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- Community Section, WC&CC: assistance for community development in disadvantaged communities, supports Tenants Committee's and Waterford Comhairle na nÓg, assists the homeless and the delivery of SICAP across the LDS area.
- Drugs Taskforce: facilitates counselling and training for individuals and families across the LDS area.
- DSP: responsible for social payments and associated actions including Intreo, BTWEA, CE, Tús, and RSS.
- Dungarvan Care for the Aged: providing day-care, socialisation, therapy, and meals for the elderly in Dungarvan and surrounding areas.
- Focus Ireland: Housing provision in Dungarvan and Waterford.
- Foróige: providing services for young people aged 10 to 18 across the LDS area.
- Garda Diversion Programme: providing training and support for young people in the Justice System in Dungarvan and West Waterford.
- HSE/Suicide Prevention: providing counselling, training and support for communities, families, and individuals across the LDS area.
- HSE/Travellers: provision of training and support for the Traveller community.
- Irish Wheelchair Association: providing training, support, and job opportunities for individuals with physical and intellectual disabilities. Services based in Dungarvan, Waterford and Kilkenny
- ISU Mount Sion: providing counselling, advice and support for refugees, asylum seekers, and non-nationals, based in Waterford and Tramore.
- Job Path - Turas Nua: DSP contractor for Labour Market Activation Actions, to support the unemployed, in the designated operational area.
- Le Chéile, Dungarvan: community childcare facilities for young people to eight years of age serving Dungarvan and its environs.
- Lismore Community Childcare Facility: community childcare facilities for young people to eight years of age serving Lismore and its environs.
- MABS: serving people facing financial challenges across the LDS area.
- Muintir Na Tíre: providing community development supports for small rural communities and older people in west, mid and north Waterford.
- Probation Service: provision of support to individuals involved with the courts.
- Rehab NLN: providing training, support and job opportunities for individuals with physical and intellectual disabilities from bases in Dungarvan, Clonmel, and Waterford.
- Sacred Heart FRC: providing a social prescribing service.
- Samaritans: providing counselling and advice for people facing challenges.
- Simon Community: provision of shelter for homeless people in Waterford.
- St. Vincent de Paul: providing supports for the elderly and families at risk.
- Tramore Meals on Wheels: provision of meals-on-wheels services for the elderly in Tramore and environs.
- TREO: providing counselling, training and support for young people (16-24) engaged in the Justice System in Dungarvan/West Waterford and the City.
- Tusla, Child Services and Waterford CYPSC: supporting children at risk across the LDS area.
- WAP CLG: Providing SICAP services for disadvantaged communities.
- Waterford Childcare CLG: providing advice and training for childcare providers and parents.
- WC&CC: providing accommodation for refugees and asylum seekers.
- WLP CLG LAES: contractor to DSP for the delivery of Labour Market Activation Actions across Waterford and South Tipperary.

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- WLP CLG Social Farming: supporting Social/Care Farming – Green Care providing on-farm care for people with intellectual disabilities and young people engaged in the Justice System across the south east.
- WLP CLG: Supporting Tús, RSS, Labour Market Activation, and twelve Farm/Fish Assist on Labour Market Scheme, Unemployed Men and Women, covering all the LDS area and Carrick-on-Suir.
- WSTCYS: provision of youth club counselling, training, and drug abuse awareness-building for 10- to 18-year-olds and based in Tramore and Dungarvan.
- WWETB: provision of Schools Completion Programme, Youthreach (Dungarvan and Tramore), accredited courses for Early School Leavers, and courses for unemployed people.

Summary of Social Service Provision Gaps

There are four social service provision gaps that have been identified for future LEADER investment: -

1. BTWEA – support for a small cohort of eligible start-ups under Enterprise.
2. Capacity Training to deliver practical projects for Tier 1 Groups, Clients of the FRCs, Migrant Rights Groups and Older People.
3. Investment in Social Prescribing and Care Farming Provision
4. Ancillary Services and infrastructure for Youths and NEETs in community-owned projects.

Given the nature of the Programme, LEADER will provide ancillary supports that support social services.

DSP and WWETB are the main support bodies providing both services and training to the long-term unemployed. Activation services are delivered through the LAES on behalf of DSP to those who are more than three years unemployed. DSP and Turas Nua facilitate those one to two years unemployed. WAP CLG through the SICAP Programme also provides supports to all long-term unemployed people. A gap has been identified to assist certain Long Term Unemployed People who engage with the Back to Work Enterprise Area Allowance to set up their own business. Such assistance will be subject to the normal Programme requirements for the economic sustainability of the business.

Family supports are provided through the HSE, Tusla, Barnardo's, Foróige (On behalf of Tusla), and the FRC's. The training element of LEADER might be appropriate to assist services such as the Social Prescribing Initiative operated by the Sacred Heart FRC and Social Farming operated by WLP CLG.

The HSE, the Bothers of Charity, Carriglea, Down Syndrome Ireland and the Irish Wheelchair association provide disability care within the LDS area. It has been identified that farm development support through the LEADER Programme would help to develop the delivery of Care Farming.

Youth and NEETS provision is served in the main by WWETB, DSP, SICAP and WSTCYS and Foróige. LEADER can deliver on gaps in service through the provision of community facilities where there are none or very limited in nature, such as community-owned arts facilities (Music and drama) for those not into sports. Additionally, the Programme can support Social Farming, or through the FRC's, Social Prescribing.

In respect of older people, it has been identified that LEADER can provide a low level of training for the application of new technology skills where the WWETB can't make the necessary provision.

County Waterford from the statistics does not have a large cohort of new communities by national standards. Since the Census, a large cohort of Ukrainians have arrived due to the invasion of Ukraine. The service provision for the Ukrainians on the ground has been provided by the Dept. of Children, WC&CC, DRCD, WWETB, DSP, WAP CLG (The Ukrainian Fund and SICAP). The IPAS Centres (Lismore, Tramore and Dungarvan) are supported by Dept of Children, SICAP (WAP

CLG). The Migrant Rights Centre in Waterford acts in an advocacy role. It has been identified that a Tier 1 migrant representative group, and this might be supported through a development training intervention.

Community facility development was a major investment objective for previous LEADER Programmes. Subsequently, significant investment has been provided through DRCD and WC&CC towards community facilities through the following programmes: -

- CLÁR
- Community Broadband Hubs.
- Community Halls Upgrade.
- New Halls.
- Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme.
- Rural Regeneration and Development Programme.
- Small Grants Scheme.
- Social Enterprise (SICAP, WAP CLG, and WC&CC).
- Town and Village Renewal Scheme.
- Town Centre First.

Within this theme, it has been identified that there is a continuing need to train a small number of groups to become Tier 1 organisations capable of driving their own projects and providing for investment in technology to reduce energy costs in community buildings, ancillary facilities for young people, both NEETs and Non-NEETs.

Climate Change is defined as a social inclusion issue. There is a need to work with one of the SECs to develop a practical energy reduction project in one community as an exemplar.

Cultural Service Provision

The following cultural services and programmes are currently being delivered in the Waterford LDS area: -

- Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann: providing Irish Traditional Music and Dance, for children and adults at Ballyduff Upper, Coolnasmear, Tramore and Rathgormack.
- Booley House: offering Summer Traditional Music Concerts at Ballyduff Upper, Lismore, and An Rinne.
- Udaras Na Gaeltachta: supporting the Gaeltacht community in An Rinn and Sean Phobal.
- Copper Coast Geo Park: providing the exhibition centre and talks on the UNESCO Geo Park at the Geo Park Centre, Bunmahon.
- WC&CC/Dungarvan Arts Centre: Centre for Visual Arts Exhibitions in Dungarvan.
- County Waterford Museum: in Dungarvan.
- Lismore Castle Arts Centre: providing a modern arts venue featuring international standard exhibitions at Lismore Castle.
- Nemeton TV: A television production company specialising in sports, cultural programmes, and documentaries.
- Coláiste na Rinn: the Centre for Historical Irish Literature at An Rinn.
- Húlaí: music and dance training serving the Gaeltacht.
- Blackwater Opera Festival: internationally renown Opera Festival providing classes for up to 600 children, with activity based on Lismore and the wider Blackwater Valley.
- Arts Council: providing support to both the film industry and festivals in the Gaeltacht and Blackwater Valley.
- Fáilte Ireland: supporting Mt. Congreve and festivals.

- DRCD and WC&CC: supporting Mt. Congreve, East Waterford.

Summary of Cultural Service Provision Gaps

There are two cultural service provision gaps that have been identified for future LEADER investment: -

- Provision of support for community-owned cultural infrastructure.
- Support for invest in community-owned arts, crafts and musical equipment.

Whilst large scale cultural projects such as Mt. Congreve will continue to come under DRCD and WC&CC, smaller scale historic community-owned facilities that are being developed for community wide cultural events will continue to require support, as evidenced by the outcomes of the consultation process. LEADER has a track record already with Clonagam Church in Portlaw and Clashmore Community Heritage Centre. Additionally, the purchase of instruments and the development of arts facilities by community organisations is another potential gap for investment. While sports activities are well catered for, it has been identified that there are three potential locations who, with philanthropic support, require multi-purpose facilities due to increased population.

As confirmed by the emerging LECP, there is a requirement for three high-quality national events to be developed in the City and County. It is likely that the LEADER Programme could have a role in supporting such initiatives.

Environment and Conservation Service Provision

- DAFM and Teagasc: environmental schemes to support the farming community.
- DECC and Uisce Éireann: provision of water and sewage treatment.
- Dunhill, Fenor, Boatstrand, and Annestown Community Enterprises Ltd: development of constructed wetlands at Fenor Bog.
- WC&CC, Climate Action Unit: provision of technical assistance and grant aid, LDS area.
- Environmental Protection Agency: provision of environmental monitoring.
- The Heritage Council: provision of small grants and advice.
- DRCD and WC&CC: maintaining built heritage and gardens.
- National Parks and Wildlife Service: protection of the natural heritage.
- SETU/National Biodiversity Centre, National Technical Support Unit and the National Data Centre.
- South East Energy Agency: provision of advice and expertise on energy management, conservation, and renewable energy.

Summary of Environment and Conservation Service Provision Gaps

There are four environment and conservation service provision gaps that have been identified for future LEADER investment: -

- There are three voluntary, practical, exemplar biodiversity projects in the county where the public can see community run biodiversity and regenerative farming projects in action. LEADER has experience through the Ann Valley and Fenor Bog in managing such initiatives.
- Investment in small enterprise and tourism businesses to reduce energy and raw material input wastage and encourage the circular economy using recycled raw material.
- With the South East Energy Agency, WC&CC Climate Action Group and one of the SECs, to establish a practical pilot project for village electricity generation.
- Installation of smart electronic management systems into community-owned facilities.

Environmental and conservation service provision involves guidance, planning, enforcement, and investment.

In terms of guidance, the WC&CC Heritage Officer, and the Climate Action Team. the NPWS, the EPA, IFI, Teagasc and DAFM all provide community guidance and training on environmental matters. Under the outgoing LEADER Programme, support was provided in biodiversity and water quality training to Tidy Towns groups.

Planning and enforcement is the responsibility of WC&CC, the Environmental Protection Agency, Teagasc, NPWS and IFI.

Under the Programme for Government, DECC and DAFM through Teagasc will be providing substantial support in biodiversity training and actions through direct payments to farmers through the Acres Scheme, the Eco Scheme for Organics, and TAMS for investment into farm facilities. Sixty% investment is provided for in solar panel installation for dairy farms, and the various Cooperative run schemes provide dairy farmers a per litre bonus for following environmentally friendly farming practices.

2.6.5 Waterford LCDC and Key Service Provision

In 2021, Waterford Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) developed a Social Inclusion Statement of Intent and supporting Information to inform the work of Waterford LCDC and others and the new Waterford Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP).

The objectives of the project were: -

- To develop a report encompassing a Social Inclusion Statement of Intent and supporting Information to inform the work of Waterford LCDC and the Waterford Local Economic and Community Plan.
- To develop and present a report and recommendations to the LCDC on how best to embed social inclusion as a core principle in the new/reviewed LECP
- To carry out a desktop exercise to identify the main social inclusion/exclusion issues in Waterford and make recommendations in relation to the major social inclusion/ social exclusion issues to be addressed in the new/reviewed LECP.

The LCDC, in their deliberation, outlined their view on LEADER in the following excerpt.

LEADER

One of the areas which this review was asked to consider was the LEADER Programme and its social inclusion potential. In considering the role of this programme in the area of social inclusion, it must be borne in mind that the LEADER Programme is not one which provides ongoing support to any business, community, group or organisation.

- *It is essentially a project-based programme, and while it should, in principle, be willing to accept a level of risk which those providing support to a venture on a commercial basis would not, it is, nevertheless, important that a pathway to success and sustainability can at least be envisaged in the application for project funding. A project with no chance of success or one where the possibility of such success cannot be demonstrated in the application for support is not appropriate for funding.*
- *Secondly, the LEADER Programme operates within a framework set down at the European and national level. It must abide by strict operational rules which limit the discretion of the Local Action Group to apply its own rules.*
- *Finally, the LEADER Programme depends on projects being proposed by businesses, organisations or communities which it can fund. At the same time, its Project Officers do seek to stimulate such projects and provide well-received support to those who are seeking to bring*

an idea to fruition, their capacity and available time to engage in such activity has been limited in the recent iterations of the programme.

Despite these limitations, the LEADER programme has a social inclusion focus regarding some of its Themes and sub-Themes. One theme of LEADER is Social Inclusion, and two sub-Themes that operate under that theme are Basic Services Targeted at Hard-to-Reach Communities and Rural Youth.

Notwithstanding these designations, the restrictions under which the LEADER Programme and those who deliver it must work do not provide the opportunity for actions directly targeted only at those who may be considered socially excluded. Experience from evaluations of LEADER Programme implementation across the country is that socially excluded groups and communities have limitations on the capacities, skills, organisation and resources which are needed to enable them to make successful applications for funding for projects which they will also be in a position to manage to a successful and sustainable future. What often tends to happen, therefore, is that the social inclusion element of the projects funded under LEADER are ancillary elements of projects which serve the community at large. This does not mean that benefit does not accrue to the socially excluded but that it is not as focused as the title of the theme and sub-Themes might suggest.

This overall situation does not, of course, mean that no such targeted projects take place. These, however, tend to be in the mentoring/capacity-building area. While very important, the scale of projects the LEADER Programme can support in this area is limited when its overall intent is considered.

It has also emerged from evaluations of the LEADER Programme that, what would benefit its social inclusion function significantly, would be the implementation of capacity-building, mentoring and other support activities amongst excluded groups and communities under other programmes, particularly SICAP so that they would have the capacity to develop and successfully apply for funding under the LEADER Programme. At present, an interim LEADER Programme is being implemented. However, the next full programme, like all publicly funded programmes, will likely have a significant climate action focus. In the context of that focus, marginalised and excluded groups must be supported and mentored to be able to engage with the considerations which the new programme will incorporate and to identify projects and activities which will help to address any issues of social exclusion which might arise from such a focus.

The drawing up of a collaborative protocol between organisations which would facilitate such an outcome is, therefore, recommended.

2.6.6 LEADER Programme Performance

The LEADER Programme generally operates as a co-funding mechanism. It encourages rural development by supporting interventions that enable project promoters to proceed in otherwise impossible situations. The delivery of the Programme requires that projects do not create local displacement, do not represent deadweight (where the initiative would have proceeded without the intervention), and where sustainability can be demonstrated.

Appendix A8 provides a summary of the Mid-Term Evaluation of the LEADER Programme in Co. Waterford. This incorporates an assessment of the spatial performance of the outgoing LEADER Programme by reference to the claims that have been paid.

3 CLLD and Participative Planning

As a long-established local development company, Waterford LEADER Partnership CLG (WLP) recognises the need for a defined methodology to underpin and ensure an extensive local consultation. Establishing evidence-based needs is essential to underpin the LDS. It forms one of the three pillars upon which the objectives and their actions stand (the other two being the national and local policy framework and the related State Programmes that action those policies and the socio-economic profile of the area).

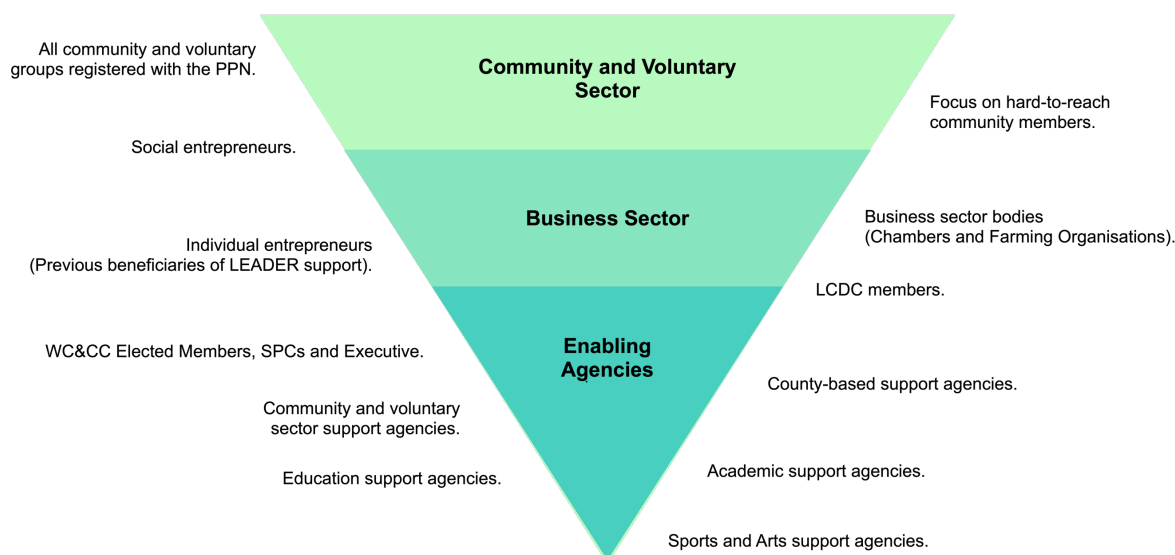
3.1 Community-Led Local Development and Participative Planning

Community-Led Local Development (CLLD) is one of the original '*specificities*' of the LEADER approach to rural development. CLLD values the bottom-up approach to policy development. It encourages the community to take ownership of the planning process by contributing meaningfully to local development. Based on many years of experience in successful delivery to the community of rural Co. Waterford, a participative planning process was devised and implemented over four months, commencing in January 2023.

3.1.1 Defined Methodology

Extensive use was made of WLPs network of community, business, and agency partners in devising the consultation methodology.

Figure 18 – Consultation Hierarchy



The process followed a three-tiered approach summarised above. The methodology used was as follows: -

- A review of the current operational ecosystem in which LEADER operates.
- The development of a clear concise, plain English presentation to be used in all the interactions with the public, i.e., the same presentation was made across all the platforms.
- The presentation highlighted using the current rules regarding what LEADER could fund and could not fund. The opportunities and constraints were highlighted in advance.
- A confirmation of the 80+ Groups actively working with the implementer, WLP CLG.

- Engagement with the PPN to highlight and publicise the process and the literature.
- An online survey issued to 500 plus Community Organizations detailing the Themes and asking for detailed responses through the PPN.
- Eight Town Hall meetings were selected and held.
- The PPN was engaged and consulted. The PPN were very helpful in the consultation process.
- WC&CC was engaged and consulted on the LEADER with regard to underpinning the LECF.
- The Migrant Rights Centre in Waterford was consulted.
- The relevant State Bodies and their contractors were consulted, e.g., WWETB, WC&CC, DSP, the LEO, Fáilte Ireland, the Climate Action Team in the Council, Teagasc, SETU, Waterford Area Partnership CLG, Foróige, WSTCYS, and Tusla.
- One-on-one meetings with the IFA and other stakeholders who could not attend the public meetings were also held.
- A focus group breakfast morning consultation meeting with Enterprise and Tourism interests was held in Dungarvan.

The findings from all the meetings have been distilled down into what is eligible under the current LEADER rules, what is realistic and what is not actioned by another Government Programme.

Stakeholder Consultation Platforms

The interaction mechanism with rural stakeholders ranged from face-to-face meetings in community halls (eight Town Hall Meetings across the electoral areas. These meetings were promoted through the PPN, local press, and social media.) Platforms used included Teams and Zoom (for online meetings), one-to-one meetings, breakfast meetings for business, and meetings with community and voluntary sector support groups for hard-to-reach communities. Additionally, a county-wide web-based survey was promoted extensively.

Facilitated Engagement Approach

Employing *World Café* design principles, the consultation meetings were collaborative. For example, the group sessions were broken down into tables, and each table carried out a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis based on the three LEADER Themes. Following the meeting, participants were provided with a collective view of the outcomes of the deliberations.

3.2 Public Consultation

The broad principles of '*A Guide for Inclusive Community Engagement in Local Planning and Decision Making*' were applied to the public consultation process.

3.2.1 Town Hall Meetings

Eight Town Hall Meetings were held throughout the County; two of these covered the west of the county (Lismore and Dungarvan), three were held in the Comeragh's (Ballymacarbry, Clonea Power, and Stradbally), and one in Tramore. Two were held in the Estuary area, one in Passage East, and one in Dunmore East. The locations were chosen based on three indicators: -

- Interaction and drawdown of LEADER Funds at the midterm review.
- Interaction and drawdown of LEADER funds by the close of the programme (January 2023).
- Future development of REDZ and the SMART Village process.

Attendance was very varied, and the engagement was generally solid and progressive. The stronger groups who are familiar with LEADER went online or came in personally.

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The Town Hall meetings were successful in that they were the first public meetings after COVID-19, and they forced many people who were wary of public interaction to come out and participate. The offline discussions were sometimes more useful than the formal interactions. The meeting numbers are included in the appendices. Between the Town Hall meetings, the one-on-one with some groups and the online survey, virtually every village was captured by the process.

Attendees

The following community groups attended the public consultation meetings: -

1. Dunmore East Regeneration Committee
2. Cheekpoint Boat Owners Association
3. Cheekpoint and Faithlegg Development Group
4. Tramore Allotment Committee
5. Lafcadio Hearne Japanese Gardens CLG
6. Bonmahon Tidy Towns Committee
7. Cheekpoint Scouts
8. Tramore Development Trust
9. Clonea Power Old School CLG
10. Rathgormack North Waterford Community Development Ltd
11. Kilmacthomas Enterprise Group
12. Portlaw Development Group
13. Ballymacarbry Community Centre
14. Comhlucht Forbartha na ndéise
15. Fiontar Pobail
16. Clashmore and Kinsalebeg Community Council
17. Stradbally GAA
18. Dungarvan Museum Society
19. Mt. Melleray Abbey
20. St. Declan's Walk Committee
21. Dungarvan Active Retirement
22. Dungarvan Scouts
23. Villierstown Education and Culture Project
24. Lismore Men's Shed
25. Ballysaggart Community Development Group
26. Blackwater Valley Opera Festival
27. Villierstown Community Development

Community Services Representatives

The following community service organisations were consulted during the LDS preparation process: -

- Anne Nolan, Migrant Rights Committee and Csilla Czelvikker, Waterford Migrants' Integration Forum
- Margaret Collins, Tusla
- Alison Golding and Ann Steward, Dungarvan (CYP) Community Youth Programme
- Michael O'Brien and Liz Duffy, WWETB
- Gerard Hurley, Waterford Chamber of Commerce and Jenny Beresford, West Waterford Chamber

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- Liam O'Reilly, Department of Social Protection
- Heather Kiely, Social Prescribing
- PPN, SICAP, Waterford LEO, SETU
- Edmond Connolly, South East Regional Skills Forum, Teagasc and IFA

Table 14 – Attendees: Town Hall Meeting and Enterprise Breakfast Morning

Location of Town Hall Meeting	Number of Attendees	Under 40's Present	Male	Female
Dunmore East	5	Yes	5	0
Passage East	7	No	5	2
Clonea Power	30	Yes	14	16
Stradbally	8	No	5	3
Ballymacarbry	7	Yes	4	3
Tramore	11	Yes	5	6
Dungarvan	24	Yes	11	13
Lismore	25	Yes	13	12
Enterprise, Tourism and Crafts Breakfast Morning	24	Yes	16	8

3.2.2 Online Survey Platform

An online survey was made available for those unable to attend the consultation meetings. A summary of the outcomes of the online survey is contained in the appendices.

3.2.3 Hard-to-Reach Communities

Hard-to-reach communities were engaged through their representative bodies. This approach was taken after a review of the survey returns, the public meetings and the discussions with WC&CC. It ensured that those who might be less willing to engage with facilitators were provided with an intermediary with whom they were familiar.

In some circumstances, the intermediary facilitated direct access to target group members.

Who are the Harder-to-Reach Communities?

The harder to reach communities in the LDS area can be summarised in the following categories.

- European Migrants – Ukrainians (The Roma are outside the LDS and LAG area)
- Middle Eastern and African Migrants (IPAS residents, Lismore and Tramore)
- People with Disabilities (Intellectual Disability)
- Very Long Term Unemployed (3 years plus)
- Youths in difficulty with the Justice system (Potential Garda Diversion Candidates)
- Older Men and Women (Sheds)
- Communities where the local group has been undermined (100% funding has unintentionally facilitated the reduction in communal participation, thus reducing resilience).
- Traveller Community.

How was the Engagement Achieved?

European Migrants

The Ukrainian migrants who have arrived because of the war in Ukraine are in a better situation than the IPAS migrants from outside of mainland Europe. Because they have been referred to the Implementer through DSP Programmes, the Implementer has been able to build up a picture of needs. The main needs are: -

- Language skills
- Some of the migrants are well educated and skilled, and hence the second need is for appropriate job opportunities commensurate with their skillset.
- They want in the main to live in well serviced urban centres.

Overall, they are a well-organised group of people.

Middle Eastern and African Migrants

The migrant community are mainly located in IPAS centres. Again, the Implementer, through both office location, involvement up to last year in the Community Sponsorship programme for Syrian Families and the operation of several DSP programmes has regular contact with this cohort. The implementer met the younger people (See Youth) and the adults from the IPAS Centre in Lismore. The Implementer has also worked with the Syrian Community and indeed some are on DSP programmes operated by the implementer.

Unlike the Ukrainians, the level of cohesion in the centres is fractured by a number of factors such as migrants from safe countries actually obtaining preferential treatment over those from non-safe countries in terms of waiting for and obtaining the right to work, for others it is access to language training and then there is culture. Their needs are: -

- Language Skills
- Prompt review to allow the right to work.
- Facilities for the Children
- Access to cooking facilities in the IPAS Centre (Standard Meals are served)
- Access to Training
- Access to large towns to obtain training and jobs.

Other Sources of Contact with This Grouping

As well as the Implementers' contacts, formal contact and consultation was conducted during the LDS development process with the Migrant Rights' Centre in Waterford, the SICAP Sub Committee of the LCDC and the local migrant support group in West Waterford.

People with Disabilities

The Implementer has significant weekly interaction with individuals with intellectual disabilities, their guardians, carers, the services that support them, and occupational therapists and their umbrella organizations that advocate for them through the Southeast Social Farm Programme which is part of Social Farming Ireland. From a LEADER perspective their needs are:

- Socialisation within the wider community.
- Physical Activity.
- Respite for the guardians.
- A sense of purpose for individual.

Very Long Term Unemployed

The Implementer operates the LAES Programme for Waterford City and County and South Tipperary on behalf of DSP. The LAES engages directly with 1,790 LTU's per annum on a one-to-one basis over a twelve-month period.

From the Consultation process with the FRC, LEADER could assist LTU's attending Social Prescribing one to one meetings through training supports to compliment the efforts of the Social Prescribing Team in the County, as many LTU's have a multiplicity of barriers to returning to work.

Youths Engaging with the Justice System

Through the implementers Social Farming Programme there has been direct contact with the Gardai and the Youth Diversion Programme. There has also been direct contact with South Tipperary and Waterford Youth Services, who operate some of the diversion programmes. Under LEADER, Farms delivering Social Farming to this cohort may be eligible to apply for non-agricultural capital investment to provide the service.

Older Men and Women

The Implementer has been engaged over a number of years with the Dungarvan and Lismore Men's Shed. During the consultation, one to one engagement was made with Lismore Men's Shed. The SICAP Committee raised the needs of the Women's Shed in Dungarvan.

The Lismore Men's Shed requires capital investment, while the Women's Shed is seeking capacity building so that they can apply directly for funds that become available through DRCD and other organizations.

Communities where Communal Participation is Challenged

There are several communities, some quite affluent, where civic interest and engagement has declined for a few reasons. These communities may not even realise the need for structured participation, as long as 100 per cent funding for communal projects keeps flowing into their villages for location reasons (Scenic Village, etc.) rather than the village been a dynamic unit, as structured interaction has no place until a crisis happens, or funding stops and the community is then unable to respond due to a lack of resilience.

LEADER through a structured facilitation approach will endeavour to ignite in a practical manner genuine civic interest and action in those locations.

Traveller Community

This cohort is a very small cohort of the population of the LDS area. Their needs have a significant number of supports and staff in place and LEADER's capacity to add additional complementarity to address the gaps is very limited, with the major needs been around health, education, housing, and employment. The Implementer, under the LAES, is heavily involved with this cohort around DSP initiatives on employment.

Outcome of Engagement

The outcome of the engagements above, viewed from an operational LEADER perspective, is detailed in Theme 2, Local Objective 2, Strategic Actions 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3.

3.2.4 Business Sector

Representatives of the Business Sector were accessed through various mechanisms, including a Business Breakfast Meeting, meetings with representative organisations (such as the IFA), direct calls, and online meetings with Chambers of Commerce and local tourism and social enterprise interests.

The businesses and tourism operators were micro and small-scale businesses involved in sectors/actions that LEADER could assist. Retail and service businesses such as hairdressing, transport and primary agriculture production were not involved.

3.2.5 Enabling Agencies

In-person, online, and group meetings were held with the Economic Unit and the Social Unit of WC&CC. As appropriate, these meetings touched on the interface between the LECP preparation process and SICAP. Additionally, meetings were convened with the Waterford Local Enterprise Office (LEO), WWETB, SETU, WAP CLG, Waterford Children and Young People's Services Committee (CYPSC), the LCDC, DSP, Family Resource Centres (FRC), Fáilte Ireland, the secretariat of the PPN and Údarás na Gaeltachta.

3.2.6. Engagement with Youth

Rural Youth and their ties to their rural area is an important action area under the LEADER Programme. The policy and hence process to consult with Rural Youth was to directly engage with the following organisations: -

- Tusla
- Waterford Children and Young Peoples Services (Umbrella Group – Banardos, etc.)
- Waterford and Wexford Education and Training Board
- Foróige
- South Tipperary and Waterford Youth Services
- GAA and Soccer Clubs
- Area-based community organisations
- Sacred Heart Family Resource Centre
- The SICAP Social Inclusion Committee
- Waterford Area Partnership CLG.

Despite the policy above, there was direct discussion with fifteen young migrants through Teams. There was also direct consultation with young adults in the various community meetings (under 40 years of age).

The context for consulting directly with youth organisations was as follows: -

- The consultation process is a particular view at a point in time.
- LEADER is a Programme to deliver a 6-year strategy, with a mid-term review.
- A young person's view today, while very valid, may not be rooted in the experiences and vagaries of life which are important to consider when developing a multi-year sustainable strategy for an area.
- LEADER is an action process. As such requires actors to make applications for resources and those resources often must be match-funded.
- The guidelines from the Ombudsman for Children require consent forms for engagement with minors, which is totally acceptable and logical.
- The above organisations have a very deep knowledge of what young people need as well as want and through their staff, corporate knowledge and corporate memory of what processes worked and which did not, understand and know how to place young people's needs on the agendas of relevant and related programmes and importantly apply for the relevant funds.
- LEADER, by its name and nature, requires collaborative action with the expert players in the field.

Direct Contact with Fifteen Young Migrants

Despite the policy of not directly engaging with minors, the consultation team agreed to meet a migrant group on Teams. The expectation was that they would be mainly parents, as both the LCDC and the Implementer abided by the Ombudsman for Children guidelines on consultation.

Fifteen young people aged between 8 and 16 appeared at the Teams virtual meeting. There were no parents and one youth worker. There were no consent forms in sight. The consultation team continued with the meeting, as courtesy overcame their online safeguarding concerns. The meeting lasted one hour, as each young person was interacted with in a constructive manner. The needs identified were: -

1. The need/desire for sweets and soft drinks vending machines in their accommodation, as the local shops were expensive.
2. The need/desire to have days out in malls, etc.
3. Games and toys.
4. Access to arts equipment.
5. For the older teenager's, access to sporting and exercise facilities.

All these requests were valid, but LEADER as a Programme can only address these if funding was in place (points 4 and 5). A knowledgeable and experienced youth organisation would have sorted out or applied for needs of points 3 to 5 already, as there are other sources of funding available. The Implementer, outside of LEADER, put the youth officer in contact with the local sports clubs and the St. Vincent de Paul regarding the games, toys, and arts equipment.

Young People Under 40

At all the hall-based meetings, younger people (except Passage East and Stradbally) were involved in the structured discussions with older and more experienced elders. There was also online input to the online survey.

3.3 SWOT Analysis

The SWOT⁴ analysis reflects the outcomes of the community consultation, focus group meetings, enterprise and tourism consultations, the statutory agency inputs, the mid-term performance review of the previous LEADER Programme, and the demographic and socio-economic baselines. The SWOT also references the outcome of the local-level EoI process and is focussed on the stated Themes and objectives of the RDP Programme.

3.3.1 Geographic SWOT Analysis

Consultees were asked to reflect on LEADER Themes 1, 2, and 3.

Table 15 – Dunmore East SWOT

Dunmore East: Tuesday, 21st March 2023.

Strengths	Opportunities	Needs	Challenges
Well known scenic tourist area.	Close to Waterford City with population of approximately 55,000.	• More carparking, accommodation/community hostel. • Whale watching/river cruises - boat trips. • Information for visitors and better heritage signage.	Seasonality and winter shut-down.

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⁴ SWOT: (Internal) Strengths, (Internal) Weaknesses, (External) Opportunities and (External) Threats

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Strengths	Opportunities	Needs	Challenges
Large harbour.	- Development of unused buildings. - Wind industry.	- Creation of space for new businesses. - Community meeting space. - Men's Shed facility. - Sea Scouts centre.	DAFM Property Services.
Population growth.	Demand for services.	- Outdoor exercise equipment. - Internet connectivity. - Men's Shed facility. - Sea Scouts centre.	Lack of public owned land and co-operation of private owners.
Building works ongoing.	Use local services.	Ring Road around village.	Objections.
Lots of community groups in area.	Participating in Town and Village Renewal Scheme.	Facilitation process to unite groups to drive projects.	Getting groups to come together.

Table 16 – Passage East SWOT

Passage East: Wednesday, 22nd March 2023

Strengths	Opportunities	Needs	Challenges
Visually attractive area for tourism.	River access. Proposed Blueway. Barge berthing.	Basic infrastructure for marine activities, including , kayaking and stand-up paddling.	River groynes causing build up in harbour and unattractive.
Skilled, strong community group.	- Recruit additional members. - Development of Old Boathouse at Rookery. - Business digital hub.	Modern local meeting space (current reading room too small and outdated).	Private ownership and other community drivers.
Serviced school, shop, local hotel, golfclub, playground and pontoon.	- Improve the basic offering. - Provision of a small café.	Restaurant, café, tearooms, toilets and showers close to harbour.	Local objections and access to property.
Park and Walks including Minaun.	- Develop walks. - Develop cycle trails. - Develop greenway. - Provide Zip Wire facility.	Footpaths and lighting.	Insurance and overhead costs.
Heritage - Local river skills and fishing.	Fishing heritage centre at harbour.	- More cultural tourism. - Heritage fisheries and boat building.	Power Station pollution.
Visitors coming to area.	- Glamping. - Camping.	Tourist accommodation.	Private land shortage and planning process.
Thriving soccer club and progressive school	- Growing population. - Good age profile.	Modern Scout Hall for youth.	Match funding.
Some council land.	Land to develop for biodiversity.	- Parking. - Street signage. - Footpaths. - Flood defences. - Dredging of harbour. - Removal of groynes. - School drop-off and pick-up. - Faithlegg.	Road infrastructure hampering new housing and transport.

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Table 17 – Tramore SWOT

Tramore: Thursday, 23rd March 2023.

Strengths	Opportunities	Needs	Challenges
Victorian seaside experience with strong footfall and coach tourism	- Eco and wellbeing. - Create sustainable tourism model. - Promote good food offering with acclaimed cafés.	- Better accommodation, including campervan park and campsite. - Develop food trails.	Change image and achieve buy-in.
Second biggest town in county.	Develop a greenway linking to Waterford City.	Improve facilities and services for all residents.	Satellite to Waterford City - connecting outlying areas.
Good fibre broadband, schools and transport.	Expansion of local airport.	- Parking. - Park-and-Ride. - Better bus connections with the hospital.	Parking.
Cultural tourism and unique gardens.	- Create a mine tour. - Develop the brand and connect with Mt. Congreve - interactive experience. - Involve volunteers in local projects.	- Large cultural venue, event centre and café/restaurant. - Better overall signage. - Tour guides required.	Access to land. Planning issues.
Beach, dunes and Copper Coast.	- Create Metal Man cliff walk with sea access to the cliff caves underneath. - Develop other coastal paths and bicycle lanes. - Create a board walk.	- More marine activity tourism products such as wave machine, kayaking, surfing, skateboard park, and outdoor exercise equipment. - Wheelchair accessibility. - Dog warden and dog bins. - Wildlife ranger. - More toilets and showers. - Protection of SAC dunes (plant marram grass). - Flood protection and sea defences.	- Funding. - Coastal erosion. - Environmental education. <i>Leave no trace.</i>

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Strengths	Opportunities	Needs	Challenges
Growing population.	- Diverse community. - Educate on the coastal environment. - Encourage water storage and harvesting.	- Allotments. - More diverse indoor and outdoor activities for youth and seniors. - Water stations – reusable bottling.	- Cost and lack of housing. - Long-term rents - Encourage more integration. - Many local groups who need to unite.

Table 18 – Stradbally SWOT

Stradbally: Tuesday, 28th March 2023

Strengths	Opportunities	Needs	Challenges
Coastal environment.	Coastal walks and trails.	- Link local villages to Greenway and <i>Copper Coast</i> - Accessibility for less abled.	- Insurance. - Access to beach.
Woodhouse Estate facilities.	- History and garden tours. - Biodiversity planting.	Tourism products.	More flexibility on open to public.
Farm buildings.	- Repurpose for accommodation. - Enterprise hub.	Lack of accommodation.	- Cost of land and houses. - Lack of rental accommodation. - Broadband coverage.
Lots of visitors in summer.	- Electric charging points. - Enhance local services and demand.	- More local services, such as café and tea rooms. - More tourist products. - Better signage. - Accessible public toilets.	- Access to property. - Planning issues. - Keeping tourists overnight. - Insufficient Local Link services.

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Strengths	Opportunities	Needs	Challenges
Nice playground. Old handball alley. Good field sport facilities. Strong drama. Strong tradition of scouting.	Cater for other youth interests.	Provide greater range of activities.	Planning issues and land access.

Table 19 – Ballymacarbry SWOT

Ballymacarbry: Thursday, 30th March 2023.

Strengths	Opportunities	Needs	Challenges
Tourism destination with fishing, hillwalking, and mountain biking.	- Develop fishing spots. - Walking routes. - Mountain biking trails. - Development of an adventure hub.	Coordinated tourist offering of products.	- Funding. - Planning. - Organisation.
Well-connected and located.	Develop a working hub.	- Safer travel (footpaths) within the village. - More housing. - Playground. - Generate local investment and employment.	- Lack of housing. - Planning issues.
Tourism accommodation available.	- Guesthouse. - B&B. - Community Hostel.	Café and restaurants.	- Access to property. - Access to funds.
Strong Tidy Towns.	Repurpose derelict buildings.	Improve aesthetics.	Funding.
Excellent community facility.	- Develop outdoor area and community garden. - EV Charging points. - Recycling centre. - Installing solar panels.	- Enhance community facilities. - Create recreational area and upgrade showers etc. in hostel. - Cheaper electricity and running costs.	Space and location.

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Strengths	Opportunities	Needs	Challenges
Bee keeping in the community. Planting of flowers. Maintaining hedgerows.	- Plant wildflowers. - Conservation of local habitat. - Young knowledgeable farmers willing to plant and preserve wildlife on non-accessible areas of farm to machinery.	- Information awareness. - Creation of exemplar projects from learning of other community projects and schemes.	More knowledge required.

Table 20 – Clonea Power (Comeragh Area) SWOT

Clonea Power (Comeragh Area): Wednesday, 29th March 2023.

Strengths	Opportunities	Needs	Challenges
Scenic landscape. Comeragh Mountains - hiking, walking, cycling, glacier lakes, and fishing.	- Support quality activity products and promotion of the unique glacier lakes - Create Clonea to Portlaw river walk. - Promote wellbeing.	- Coordinate promotional effort of Comeragh area with shared costs. - Facilitation support. - Cafés and shops. - Promotion of existing services.	- No overriding vision for the area. - Wants versus needs. - Working capital not financed.
Limited accommodation.	- Development of pods. - Repurpose derelict sites and buildings.	Investment in a range of accommodation to cater for families, groups, including hostels, glamping, and repurposing old buildings.	- Keeping tourists in the area. - Encouraging spend - Lots of derelict buildings in the area. - Cost and planning. - Availability of skilled professionals - Sewerage system.
History and heritage. Festivals and events.	- Link with Whiskey distillery, Curraghmore. - Leverage local festivals and events.	Establish links with Portlaw and greater Comeragh area – Greenway.	Funding. Planning.

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Strengths	Opportunities	Needs	Challenges
Well-connected Go offroad infrastructure.	- Proximity to mountains and coast. - Low-cost business set up. - Solar lighting.	- Use Local Link to support hiking tours etc. - Enterprise development – link with employers and Community Employment Schemes. - Public toilets and outdoor seating.	Solar farm. Expand local transport service.
Rathgormack all-weather pitch and outdoor space with MUGA playground.	Link into hostel accommodation and recreational facilities.	- Link into shops, café and local services. - Fibre broadband availability.	Working together.
Old School House building – community hub group.	- Providing gaming/coder dojo for young people. - Digital connectivity hub. - Events, festivals and farmers market.	- Link with youth groups – Foróige etc. Waterford Walls – amenities for youths. - Facilitate home working. - Activities and classes for seniors (adult exercise equipment), and Men's Shed. - Broadband. - Training and education. - Encourage more volunteers.	Counter isolation of youth and improve mental health. Insurance. Volunteer fatigue.
Air quality. Conducive natural environment.	- Preservation of different landscapes. - Create biodiversity area. - Community garden. - Allotments.	Education and awareness of biodiversity for all ages. Survey what's in the area. Link in with schools GAISCE GROW. Promote car-pooling.	Change in farming practices. Biodiversity decline. Funding and land. Reduce commuting reliance on private cars.

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Table 21 – Dungarvan SWOT

Dungarvan: Tuesday, 4th April 2023

Strengths	Opportunities	Needs	Challenges
Educated workforce with University nearby.	• Business connectivity hub. • Link into large employers. • Start up support. • Young vibrant community to drive projects.	• Broadband and phone coverage. • Expand solar technology. • Strengthen community groups.	Land and funding. Aging population. No WiFi Sean Phobal.
Location and landscape (coast, mountains and rivers).	• Water sports. • Glamping, camper van parks. • Blueway on the Blackwater. • Develop more trails. • Promote religious pilgrimages. • Promote wellbeing tourism. • Develop sailing and boating – pontoon. • Develop sun, wind and hydro energy.	• More services and upgrades to existing services. • Serviced campervan sites. • Investment in accommodation – glamping. • Local loop walkways. • Link into meditation and yoga practitioners. • Bundle packages. • Dredging of harbour. • Preservation of natural environment to maintain quality of life for residents.	Limited resources and access to funding. Competition for donations etc. Applying for funding – slowness. Limited places to eat and drink. Awareness and cohesiveness. Silted harbour No availability to sell to grid. Planning policy.
Good infrastructure.	• To attract inward investment. • To attract tourists. • Public swimming pool. • Non sport activities for youth. • Create outdoor community spots.	• Accommodation, restaurants, and cultural centres. • Link into Rural Link services with more regular timetable. • Greater funding support for community insulation and upgrading. • Charging points.	Promotion and funding. Lack of rental properties and housing. Insurance and heating costs.

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Strengths	Opportunities	Needs	Challenges
Culture - The Gaeltacht and Colaiste na Rinne, Nemeton.	- Promotion of the language and culture. - Link to other heritage facilities and community space such as the Heritage Centre, Clashmore, Lismore and Ardmore Hall. - Broadcasting/TV coverage locally. - Digital story trails. - Access for children and teenagers – making it relevant.	Joined up thinking between local, regional and Gaeltacht.	Are Údarás na Gaeltachta talking to other bodies? Integration.
Good farmland. Organic farms. Oyster farms.	- Rewilding. - Work with farmers on biodiversity projects. - Allotments. - Community polytunnels.	- Work with farmers and landowners. - Education on environment.	Reduce pesticide. Windfarms are destroying environment.
Greenway.	Extend.	Toilets and service upgrades. Parking.	Land and planning.
Good festivals. Festival of Food creates a strong reputation for food.	- Encourage pubs to diversify. - Oyster Festival creation.	Diverse offering.	Funding and volunteerism fatigue.

Table 22 – Lismore SWOT

Lismore: Thursday, 6th April 2023.

Strengths	Opportunities	Needs	Challenges
Heritage town. Castle. Cathedral.	- Promote cultural tourism and further develop Blackwater Valley Opera Festival. - Convert stable block at castle into arts and crafts village.	- Tourist accommodation including glamping and caravan park. - Car parking.	No private land available. No facilities for RV's. Absentee landlords.
Location close to towns and cities.	- Newly extended school. - Remote working hub to stimulate start-up's – demand for services.	- Further demand on school to cater for migrants. - More hospitality, retail and places open in the evenings. - Rural broadband.	Transport for more remote areas with disability access. Younger people leaving the area for jobs.
Open Houses and gardens, including Dromana and Salterbridge, Ballyinn	- Concert Hall and entertainment space. - Unique experience for visitors.	- Upgrading of public services. - Better marketing.	Hotel – not open to visitors. Building restrictions – heritage status.
Scenic environment including rivers, mountains, woods, and the Vee.	- Develop activities. - Blueway development – river products. - Canal barges – tourist accommodation. - Horse riding and trekking.	- Promote sustainable tourist products. - Picnic sites on the Vee	Fishing access. Respect natural amenities. Eradication of invasive species. Wind turbines. Mono agriculture.
St. Declan's Way.	- Greenway extension and linkages – trails, hiking – QR code. - Revamp derelict buildings such as the Old Convent.	- Hostel accommodation. - More looped walks.	Upgrade of water and sewerage facilities.

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Strengths	Opportunities	Needs	Challenges
Organised community groups and clubs.	- Upgrades needed to some community spaces. - Men's Shed development. - Golf Club collaboration with community facility. - Library extension. - Solar panels on farm sheds and community centres. - Strong local support for climate change initiatives. - Scenic deciduous woods for walks to promote biodiversity education. - Good funding available - Car sharing initiatives.	- Community space not utilised enough. - More services for seniors living remotely. - Youth recreational facilities, including swimming pool and skate park. - Community allotments. - Calendar of local events/activities/identifying all relevant groups in area. - EV charging points. - Drinking fountain. - Education on biodiversity and circular economy. - Compost waste communal recycling. - More tree planting for pollinators.	Youth inclusion and diversity. Lack of funding. Access to land. Protection of the freshwater pearl mussel.

3.2.2 Enterprise SWOT Analysis

Industry Breakfast, Park Hotel, Dungarvan: Friday, 21st April 2023 at 8.30am.

Table 23 – Engineering and Manufacturing Outcomes

Theme 1: Economic Development and Job Creation			Theme 3: Rural Environment
Identify opportunities for growth and development.	How best can LEADER and SERSF support you?	Education and training supports for upskilling staff.	What funding supports would be beneficial to your business to reduce carbon and become more environmentally friendly?
Local job advertising – environmental impact and signage.	Webpage and signage.	Evaluation: retain versus new jobs. Protect and future proof.	Solar panel investment: better grant support - SEAI process considered limited and cumbersome to access.
Local Facebook page – employment business.	Energy Audit.	Specialist Courses – Engineering.	Energy Audits – calculate carbon footprint and funding to address solutions.
Educate parents and teachers at secondary level stage of options: apprenticeship versus college to overcome preconceptions and attitudes.		Mentorship for leaders and employers	Grant aid to invest in more efficient equipment.
Digitalisation of technology resulting in greater efficiency and long-term cost effectiveness – build client confidence.			

Table 24 – Food and Beverage Outcomes

Theme 1: Economic Development and Job Creation			Theme 3: Rural Environment
Identify opportunities for growth and development.	How best can LEADER and SERSF support you?	Education and training supports for upskilling staff.	What funding supports would be beneficial to your business to reduce carbon and become more environmentally friendly?
Energy Audit – Calculate carbon footprint and green washing.	Specialist advice on energy - looking at waste and supporting solutions to address real needs.	Training for finance and bookkeeping for small business.	Energy audit.
	Make application process less onerous and greater degree of flexibility to real world situations.		

Table 25 – Tourism Outcomes

Theme 1: Economic Development and Job Creation			Theme 3: Rural Environment
Identify opportunities for growth and development.	How best can LEADER and SERSF support you?	Education and training supports for upskilling staff.	What funding supports would be beneficial to your business to reduce carbon and become more environmentally friendly?
Green energy advice.	Specialist advice on green energy.	Basic health and safety training supports.	Greater funding or incentives for projects supporting carbon reduction.
Accommodation variation – Camping, pods, RV's, Hotels and hostels.	Funding feasibility studies – barn conversions etc.		
Outdoor recreation – Blackwater: kayaking, boating, hiking and cycling.	Peer studies, competitor analysis. Use examples of LEADER projects elsewhere.		
Services development – Transport.			

Table 26 – Services Outcomes

Theme 1: Economic Development and Job Creation			Theme 3: Rural Environment
Identify opportunities for growth and development.	How best can LEADER and SERSF support you?	Education and training supports for upskilling staff.	What funding supports would be beneficial to your business to reduce carbon and become more environmentally friendly?
Training in English language provision – mobile and flexible.	Recognition of qualifications.		Greater supports for businesses to go greener.
Housing.	Quicker response time for LEADER funding approval.		EV charging points for staff car parking.
Quality of life and wellbeing.			

3.4 LDS Priorities

The development of the LDS involved a three-step process, as follows: -

- A review of available demographic and economic data.
- Wide-ranging consultation process rooted in the three themes of the LEADER Programme.
- LAG review of priorities.

Available Demographic and Economic Data Review

In preparing the LDS, detailed analysis was carried out on the available current statistical data, the level of state and 3rd party provision of economic, social and cultural services and funds to civic society in Waterford, including a review of the various societal eco systems and what programme was active and relevant to varied constituencies in order to ensure the level of leverage and complimentary between initiatives for the benefit of all citizen's within the LDS area.

This review of data provided a matrix of the provision scape within the LDS area to allow decisions on potential LEADER actions that should not be made as that need or action is already covered by another entity who is quite often under the umbrella of the LAG. This assisted in highlighting potential gaps for direct LEADER intervention that would be complimentary. This is in line with the purpose of the LAG as a proactive repository for expertise and a multiplicity of resources to deal with the opportunities and needs of the LAG area on a collegiate basis.

Wide-Ranging Consultation Process

The consultation process was rooted in the three themes of the LEADER Programme and was both wide and varied. At the outset, a significant local and social media campaign was launched across the PPN, WLP CLG and WCCC sites, in the local press and on Facebook. This was to highlight the new LEADER Programme Themes and guidelines, but also to counter consultation fatigue. As well as the town hall meetings, there was an online survey, meetings with WCCC on the LECP and gaps thrown up by that consultation process, the LCDC SICAP Social inclusion Committee, meetings with State Bodies, representative groups, community organizations, business groupings, disadvantaged groups, the implementers associated 80+ community sponsor

organisations who provide placement opportunities for the implementers/DSP's Tus participants in the community and individuals. From the statutory bodies the process gleaned the level of state intervention and from the non-statutory side a list of the bread-and-butter issues/opportunities. The information gleaned from both the state and its customers provided two needs analysis, one met by the state and one leaving several gaps relevant to LEADER. These are outlined in the 2.6.4. and 3.3.1

LAG Review of Priorities

Following steps one and two above, the LAG reviewed the draft action plan. Three main areas of consideration for the LAG were to review the proposed actions against the findings of the Midterm Review by Dr. Ciaran Lynch, where an emphasis on animating the Estuary and the Comeragh's was suggested. Secondly, against the LCDC's social inclusion strategy and thirdly against the draft LECP.

Following their review of the LDS, the LAG was satisfied that the actions outlined in the LDS were complimentary to and supportive of the thrust in all three documents, while been collaborative in nature as per the LEADER ethos with other statutory initiatives in the LDS area.

3.4.1 Community Consultation Outcomes

The consultation process has revealed significant social inclusion changes that will influence the future LDS provision.

Table 27 – Social Inclusion Changes

Significant Changes	Key Gaps and Priorities for Development
1. Increase in the Migrant Community, particularly since the start of the Ukraine war. 2. Climate Change and war in Africa will lead to more displacement and demand. 3. Ageing Population and the need to assist them in plugging into digital services. 4. Women, particularly older women who have retired from work looking to connect with others. 5. Rural women seeking to set up their own businesses. 6. Young people not involved in mainstream sports/cultural activities are becoming isolated in a virtual world. 7. Social Prescribing is now in place countywide. 8. Large-scale Community infrastructure is now really funded directly by DRCD through WC&CC. 9. Community Facilities are still analogue. 10. Many social enterprises have inadequate sources of independent income needed to create operating reserves.	1. Work and liaise with the migrant's rights centre on training needs. 2. Refer where possible migrants to the appropriate body in a timely manner. 3. The increased digitisation of community-run day-care centres. 4. Assist Dungarvan Women's Shed in structuring itself so they can reply positively to funding opportunities. 5. Work with the PPN to ensure that training is provided to PPN members on applying to targeted calls from all funders. 6. Work with WAP CLG to have a pathway for 9 Community Groups to undergo significant training in Community Structure. 7. A number of Capital Projects for young people who are not mainstream sports orientated. 8. A number of recreational facilities for young people in high-development locations. 9. Closer alliance of WWETB, SETU, WAP CLG, SH FRC, Foróige and WSTCYS to rural needs.

11. Greater recognised need for equitable services to people with intellectual and physical disabilities in rural areas.	10. Continue to develop Greencare (Social Farming) throughout the South East. HSE assistance focused on service provision to those with an intellectual disability or physical disability in rural Co. Waterford.
12. Sustainable rural communities.	

The SWOT analyses from the community consultations, industry sector and service provider consultation and a summary of the feedback from the fifty-eight responses from Survey Monkey provide a localised view of the perceived and real needs of the participants. In developing the objectives and actions for the LDS, these have been distilled down alongside the facts and figures for the area, the operational actions, and activities of all the organisations delivering services in the local area, especially the LEO, WC&CC, WWETB, Fáilte Ireland, Teagasc, EI, DSP, PPN, BIM/FLAG, SICAP, HSE/Social Prescribing, CYPSC, Foróige, WSTCYS, SETU, and Skillnets. These have been benchmarked against the three LEADER Programme Themes.

In the community sector, many of the actions previously supported by LEADER, such as infrastructure investment, climate action initiatives, local training, and village renewal, are now covered by up to twenty other initiatives. This is a welcome development, as it allows LEADER to focus on a couple of Key Objectives outlined below.

3.4.2 Enterprise/Tourism Consultation Outcomes

Summary Statement Enterprise

The enterprise sector consultation, which was well attended, highlighted key points that the statistical data also confirms: -

- In real terms, the country is at near-full employment.
- There is a labour shortage in many sectors.
- Indigenous enterprise is moving up the industrial food chain. The products they produce are of a higher quality and a higher value. The last LEADER Programme has played a part in that.

Unlike in 2016, when unemployment was the major issue, the major issues and opportunities now relate to: -

1. Employee retention.
2. Employee upskilling.
3. Strategic investment to increase productivity and quality.
4. Delivering sustainability and a carbon-neutral future.

In the Action Plan, LEADER will invest in Enterprise through: -

- Theme 1: Economic Development
 - 1a The Green Economy
 - 1c Rural Tourism and Recreation
- Theme 3: Sustainable Development of the Rural Environment and Climate Action Mitigation and Adaptation
 - 3a. Sustainable Development of the Rural Environment

Summary Statement Tourism

In the tourism sector, much accommodation has contracted to support migrants. There is an enhanced focus required to ensuring that sub-supply services such as boat charters, cycling tours, activity centres, coffee shops and restaurants can build and maintain footfall. To underpin this focus, activity tourism, cultural tourism, and bespoke small scale environmentally sensitive accommodation such as glamping, camping and hostelling will be investment targets under

LEADER, with collaboration with WC&CC on three high end festivals delivering national renown for the County.

In the action plan LEADER will invest in Tourism through: -

- Theme 1: Economic Development and Job Creation
 - 1a The Green Economy
 - 1c Rural Tourism and Recreation
- Theme 3: Sustainable Development of the Rural Environment and Climate Action Mitigation and Adaptation
 - 3a Sustainable Development of the Rural Environment

Enterprise and Tourism Eco System

The consultation process has indicated that economic development has maintained its position as the key to sustaining rural communities. However, within the county, agriculture is now largely defined as a business of scale based on dairying. This has moved it away from the family farm model, effectively diminishing its impact on keeping the rural village alive.

Unemployment is currently not an issue. However, job retention, upskilling and moving staff skills and productivity towards multinational standards is now the goal of the more ambitious small indigenous businesses. These are the businesses that will keep the rural areas alive.

Investment in key infrastructure such as office facilities (distinct from hubs) that LEADER carried out in conjunction with community groups and a local philanthropist are starting to bear fruit. In the new programme, such initiatives will be left to WC&CC under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund. Consequently, LEADER will focus on the SMART Village and REDZ development to gear up local communities both organisationally and strategically to work with the WC&CC and other agencies.

In recognition of the multi-dimensional complexity of local development, LEADER has agreed during the consultation phase that it will work in unison with the LEO, Fáilte Ireland, Skillnets and the WWETB across the three indigenous drivers, indigenous services, indigenous manufacturing, and indigenous tourism providers (excluding hotels). Further expertise from SETU may also be called on through RIKON⁵.

LEADER will invest in capital technology in rural SMEs to promote the circular and green economy (Sub-Theme 1a), to ensure reduced energy usage and material waste reduction. In the current programme, considerable investment went into new technology in industry, which achieved this objective.

Sub-Themes Not Included in the Action Plan

Sub-Theme 1b Agricultural Diversification, 1d Enterprise Development, 1e Rural Food Production and 1f Social, Community and Cooperative Enterprises will be excluded. Due to budgetary constraints, priority is placed on addressing these Sub-Theme headings under other Sub-Themes reiterating the natural synergy between them. For example, Sub-Theme 1b Agricultural Diversification is supported under Sub-Theme 1a Green Economy for equipment investment in a food related business, upgrading farm accommodation for visitors is supported under SA1.2 Repurposing Farm/Industrial Buildings, Sub-Theme 1c Rural Tourism and Recreation supports tourism related activities (SA1.3/SA1.4) and renewable energy is covered under Sub-Theme 3a Sustainable Development of the Environment (SA3.2). Sub-Theme 1d Enterprise Development is catered under Sub-Theme 1a Green Economy, SA1.1 Capital Investment in greener technology as well as Sub-Theme 1c Rural Tourism and Recreation SA1.3 Activity Tourism. Sub-Theme 1e Rural Food Production is supported under Sub-Theme 1a The Green Economy SA1.1 Capital

⁵ RIKON is a hybrid centre of innovation in Business Technology Management situated in SETU.

investment in greener technology. Sub-Theme 1f Social, Community and Cooperative Enterprises are supported under Sub-Theme 1c Rural Tourism and Recreation SA1.4 and SA1.5 for tourism/cultural initiatives.

3.4.3 Social Inclusion Consultation Outcomes

Summary Social Inclusion Statement

As with the economic development above, service provision in rural Waterford is comprehensive and significant, with many social inclusion providers active and operational in the county. Following involvement in and a review of the Social Inclusion Policy document approved by the Waterford LCDC in 2022, plus a review of the most recent data, existing service provision and an extensive consultation process, LEADER will focus on capital and training provision for youth in several specific areas, green care, community training to Tier 1 status, i.e., SMART Villages and REDZ, Social Prescribing, Women's and Men's Sheds and the PPN.

To support this focus, there will be an investment in measures through structured community development training for groups like the Women's Shed and a County based Migrants Group, plus area based tier 11 groups wishing to become Tier 1 groups, and (Tier 1) bespoke outdoor activities for youths in three locations, investment in the arts through both capital and training for younger people not into sport and interventions to assist social prescribing and care farming -

- Theme 2: Rural Infrastructure and Social Inclusion
 - 2.b. Accessible Services
 - 2.d Rural Youth

Social Inclusion Eco System

As with economic development and as per the LCDC Social Inclusion recommendation, LEADER will work very closely with SICAP to try and move a portion of tier 3 community groups and tier 2 community groups to become tier 1, community groups. This will include the Men's and Women's Sheds. LEADER will also work closely with youth organisations around arts provision to all young people. In addressing dependency, LEADER will work closely with Sacred Heart FRC to support their Social Prescribing initiative.

Expertise from SETU may also be called on through RIKON.

Sub-Themes Not Included in the Action Plan

Referring back to section 2.2.7 and under Analysis of Social Service Provision, rural infrastructure supports are plentiful and well catered for which is why the narrow focus was adopted here to maximise LEADER support and eliminate Sub-Theme 2a Rural Infrastructure. Sub-Theme 2c Optimising Digital Connectivity was also not included as digital connectivity is either well covered or in the planning under the National Broadband Plan and other local broadband providers.

3.4.4 Environmental Consultation Outcomes

Summary Statement Environment and Climate Change

Under the last programme, training was provided to Tidy Towns Groups and a small number of biodiversity and water quality projects were supported. From reviewing the actions and investments at the mid-term review, several facts became obvious.

1. To practice biodiversity, a group or an individual requires access to land that they can then tend as a biodiversity area.

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2. Unless one has a herd number, there is no economic return for a group or individual to adopt biodiversity practices on what is an asset in very short supply, i.e., land. In Waterford, land costs, on average, €17,500 per acre.
3. Farmers can access the ACRES scheme, The ECO Scheme and the Tirlán bonus scheme for taking positive steps towards climate action.
4. If LEADER is to assist in biodiversity actions that are to have any meaning, the following steps are required: -
 - Two to three place-based environmental groups, one east, one in the centre and one in the west, would be formed. This is underway in the current programme.
 - The three groups would liaise with large landowners who could afford to partner using some of their land (under a licence agreement) in a civically-minded climate action where up to 0.4 km² would be committed to biodiversity practices overseen by the voluntary environment groups. This process is already under way with two such groups in consultation with landowner to take over 28 acres collectively to be transformed into an exemplar biodiversity area. One more group is preparing to replicate the action in another part of the County.
 - This action would mimic in keyways the Anne Valley project that LEADER was involved with some 23 years ago, which has gone from strength to strength.
5. Work closely with WC&CC Climate Action Unit and the South East Energy Agency in introducing biodiversity practice in the public realm and local housing estates.

Secondly, LEADER will invest in capital technology in rural SME's to promote the circular economy, reduced energy usage, and material waste reduction. In the current programme, considerable investment went into new technology in industry, which achieved this objective. This will be an action under the Environmental Theme in the new programme.

Finally, under WC&CC policy on energy reduction, where it is hoped that there will be a reduction in domestic energy usage and subject to the LEADER Rules, it is planned to invest in a community energy solar project in an estate in one of the two Sustainable Energy Communities located in the West of the County.

- Theme 3: Sustainable Development of the rural Environment and Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation
 - 3a. Sustainable Development of the Rural Environment
 - 3c. Climate Change Mitigation and adaptation

Environmental Eco System

The environmental eco system has developed rapidly and positively in the last two years. WC&CC have a substantial well-funded climate unit in place, which is providing advice, instruction, and capital investment. The Southeast Energy Agency is very active in training and advising local community groups. The SEAI is very active through its one stop shops in Waterford and now Dungarvan.

Teagasc are operating the ACRES Scheme, the Eco Scheme and Tirlán are also encouraging Biodiversity. In this comprehensive environment LEADER will focus on the potential actions listed above. LEADER will not be involved in climate actions under Sub-Theme 3b and 3c, as it is well covered by the other players, including WWETB.

Sub-Themes Not Included in the Action Plan

One Sub-Theme has been chosen, 3a Sustainable Development of the Rural Environment as it is all encompassing with the omission of 3b Climate Change Capacity Building and 3c Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation. As outlined above, climate action measures are well supported by other expert groups and from the consultation process, a practical approach and the creation

of exemplar projects was deemed the most popular course of action for communities to learn from and engage in the process.

4 Strategic Integration

4.1 Policy Context

To compliment European, National and Local Policy implementation, the Local Development Strategy must align the LEADER Themes and subThemes to the overarching policy context outlined in the DRCD guidance document. This section aligns the LDS strategy to the key policies, as alignment between the LEADER Themes and sub-Themes and the overarching policy framework is necessary for an integrated and coordinated approach to development.

4.1.1 Overview

During the consultation process and in the preparation of the LDS, the following policies were considered to ensure that the proposed actions under the relevant LEADER Themes and Sub-Themes would be in line with international, national, and local policy guidelines and that the outcomes and outputs would be aligned to meeting national objectives. The following tables provides a listing of the key strategic policy statements. Additionally, cognisance was taken of a range of other policy statements, including *‘Embracing Ireland’s Outdoors National Outdoor Recreation Strategy 2023-2027’*.

Table 28 – Policy Review

International Policies	National Policies	Regional and Local Policies
United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development	Project Ireland 2040	Southern Region Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy
Common Agricultural Policy 2023-2027	National Planning Framework	Waterford Metropolitan Area Strategy Plan
EU Rural Pact and EU Rural Action Plan	National Development Plan 2021-2030	Waterford City and County Dev. Plan
European Green Deal	Programme for Government – Our Shared Future	Waterford Economic Strategy 2040
A Long-Term Vision for the EU’s Rural Areas	Climate Action Plan 2023	Waterford LECP High Level Goals 2023-2029
EU Charter for Fundamental Rights	Our Rural Future: Rural Dev Policy 2021 - 2025	County Tourism Strategy
	Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2025	LCDC Social Inclusion Policy
	Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Communities	SMART Villages
	Draft Fáilte Ireland Strategy	REDZ
	Town Centres First Policy	Belbin

Appendix 9 contains a summary of the above policies.

4.2 Networking

Waterford LCDC and its implementing partner, Waterford LEADER Partnership CLG have long recognised the importance of networking in the success of the LEADER Programme, as it facilitates collaboration, knowledge exchange, and the sharing of resources among stakeholders.

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The partnership between the LAG and the Implementer will continue to bring together the various stakeholders, including the Local Authority, WWETB, the LEO, DSP, the Community and Voluntary Groups and Business. It allows the identification of common goals, the alignment of effort, and the achievement of shared objectives.

In the 2023-2027 LEADER Programme, the synergies and networking between the Sustainable Energy Community Groups in the County, LEADER, the Southeast Energy Network, the Climate Action Unit in the Council, DRCD, and the SEAL will be critically important to action two to three practical exemplar climate action projects in the County.

In terms of developing the SMART Village concept in the east of the county and the associated REDZ initiatives, networking between what are usually competitive villages will be a key objective of the programme. LEADER will act as a fulcrum, not an oracle for knowledge and best practice approaches to development, with SETU, DAFM, WC&CC, and the communities themselves bringing their knowledge and experience to attain thriving rural villages.

In terms of Enterprise, synergies with the LEO around climate action initiatives for small rural businesses and with Fáilte Ireland around product development will be critical to the success of the programme.

In terms of Social Inclusion, networking with the FRC's and the Day Care Centres will be pivotal to project implementation success.

The LAG and the Implementing Partner will continue to network with external experts and will endeavour to continue the positive relationship with Philanthropy.

While Northern Ireland is no longer part of the LEADER Programme due to BREXIT, networking will continue with Mid and East Antrim Council on rural opportunities, as they have been a solid cooperation partner with Waterford since 2007.

It has been shown that in the Waterford LDS area networking fosters the development of trust and social capital among the stakeholders involved in the LEADER Programme. Communities with strong Social Capital are better equipped to overcome obstacles, implement projects, and create sustainable change.

The LAG and the Implementing Partner will continue to participate in all the appropriate Programme networks established in Ireland. Participation will also continue in respect of the EU CAP Networks in Ireland, and the National Rural Network.

4.3 Cooperation

It is understood that Cooperation Projects will not have a stand-alone fund in the next programme and such projects will be funded through the main programme. Over the last two programmes, Waterford has focused on transnational activity with Northern Ireland. There were two reasons for this focus: -

- It was easier for local community organisations from Waterford to work with community organisations in Antrim, as a shared vision could be communicated and understood.
- Joint projects, usually capital projects, could be developed simultaneously in both LEADER areas, which allowed a sharing of joint knowledge and the development of other projects in other programmes like the *Shared Island Fund*.

Subject to the New LEADER Rules when they are unveiled, Cooperation Projects will focus on three elements: -

- *Greencare* or *Care Farming* with a LAG in the Netherlands (*Greencare* provided by Farm Families).

- The development of Ancillary Services (Hostels/Food) along long-distance pilgrim walks with a LAG in Northern Spain.
- Energy usage in small rural villages – LAG in Finland.

Subject to the rules and funding, only one of the above transnationals may be possible, as the Cooperation Project will focus on the successful delivery of an informed capital project that will benefit the LDS area. The fact that the Partners will be mainland European will not cause a difficulty to the implementing partner whose staff have managed such initiatives in the past and have learned a lot of practical project management steps because of the earlier LEADER Programmes.

4.4 Sustainability

4.4.1 Economic Sustainability

There are many definitions of economic sustainability. For the LDS in Waterford the LAG has chosen the following definition as its guidance on the sustainability of economic actions, as it encompasses the variety of definitions appropriate for the LEADER Programme: *'Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.'*⁶

The Strategy and Quality Employment

The strategy is very focused on upscaling indigenous small business to focus more on high end sub-supply into ICT, Pharma, Food and Fabrication sectors by investing in new technology that will reduce the carbon footprint, improve product quality, increase product value and result in a demand for higher skills thus creating better, more sustainable rural jobs. This strategy fully aligns with the European Green Deal. While the Brundtland Commission's vision for sustainability is the bedrock of the strategy, the operational guidance is the Mittelstand model of Southern Germany, where small local businesses provide high-end local employment, and the management carries full responsibility for the firm and shoulders all the risk. The importance of naming responsibility means that the local actor is the guarantor of success.

Social Sustainability: Public Participation and Ongoing Engagement

In terms of the LDS, the OECD definition of Public Participation is the keystone for the Programme. It states that citizen and stakeholder participation includes *'all the ways in which stakeholders (including citizens) can be involved in the policy cycle and in service design and delivery'* (OECD, 2017). The LDS incorporates four operational components that deliver on the OECD definition, as follows: -

1. The LDS was designed with the assistance of a County wide open public consultation process.
2. During the lifetime of the programme, programme funding will be administered through open targeted calls advertised in the local print media, online, in social media and through the PPN. This will allow all citizens in the LDS area to apply for assistance to shape and design their own actions and futures.
3. For Groups who are not sufficiently well organised or structured, LEADER will provide quality facilitation and organizational development so that such groups will have the capacity to participate on an equal footing within the Community and further afield.
4. Assist the PPN by training tier 3 Community Groups to participate in small funding calls to build their capacity to participate at a more operational level within the PPN.

⁶ The Brundtland Commission

Environmental Sustainability

Many academic treatises focus on 5 key areas for climate change mitigation and adaptation. 1. Wetland Preservation; 2. Sustainable Agroforestry and Land use; 3. Decentralised Energy Distribution; 4. Land Rights and 5. Improvement in Mass Transit.

As outlined in the LDS, LEADER has only 5% of the CAP budget, so the priorities and actions in the LDS are very targeted, practical and are intended to act as exemplars for the wider community to learn from and improve on.

Several of the actions will involve investment in exemplar land use projects and wetlands, where ponds, agroforestry and biodiversity will be either maintained or developed by local voluntary environmental organisations as demonstrator projects for the wider area.

Subject to the LEADER Rules, in collaboration with the South East Energy Agency and a local SEC that has attained the EMP status, a community solar panel generation company will be established where up to thirty dwellings in a village will have solar panels fitted by the community group who will in turn create a micro energy generation business.

Finally, in Tourism, Enterprise, and Community Infrastructure, investment in green tech will be supported to reduce energy wastage, reduce raw material input, improve design and upskill both the owners and staff to produce higher-end sustainability addresses both climate action, diversity and a reduction in the risk of poverty.

4.5 Innovation

LEADER has been operating for thirty years. In those years, Innovation has become a ubiquitous quality of the programme.

A current succinct definition of innovation is – *‘Innovation is the creation of value by using relevant knowledge and resources for conversion of an idea into a new product, process, or practice, or improvements in an existing product, process, or practice. Innovation strategy is an organization’s relative emphasis on different types of innovations and the associated pattern of resource allocation, in alignment with its strategy at the corporate and business unit levels. Strategic innovation is the creation of value by using relevant knowledge and resources for conversion of an idea into a new product, process, or practice with the potential to have a major transformational effect on the evolution of markets and industries.’*

The éminence grise of innovation, Peter F. Drucker, identified seven sources of opportunity that drive innovation: -

1. **An organisation’s own success and failure, and that of competitors** – In terms of LEADER, it has been very successful in mobilising and organising action-orientated communities. Every county in the country has a series of bespoke community projects. These were encouraged and part-funded by LEADER. In the last four years, this market has been cornered by the Rural Regeneration Programme, Town, and Village Renewal and several other DRCD Programmes. This shift has allowed LEADER to innovate by moving out of community facilities as a mainstream activity into creating communal value through high-end professional facilitation in the 2023-27 LEADER Programme to deliver the *Smart Village* and the REDZ Programme in identified locations.
2. **Incongruities in a process like manufacturing, distribution, or in consumer behaviour** – In terms of LEADER, the incongruities of what the customer, i.e., the community/small business and cultural interests want and what the Programme perceives they need has thrown up actions in tourism and enterprise, soft support needs to tier 2 and tier 1 community organisations and the need to downsize established LEADER actions in preceding Programmes to allow a refocusing on the current needs. It has also created the opportunity of

cross-Programme cooperation, where LEADER will transfer opportunity to other funding sources and focus on the development of 'place' in terms of community and economic activity.

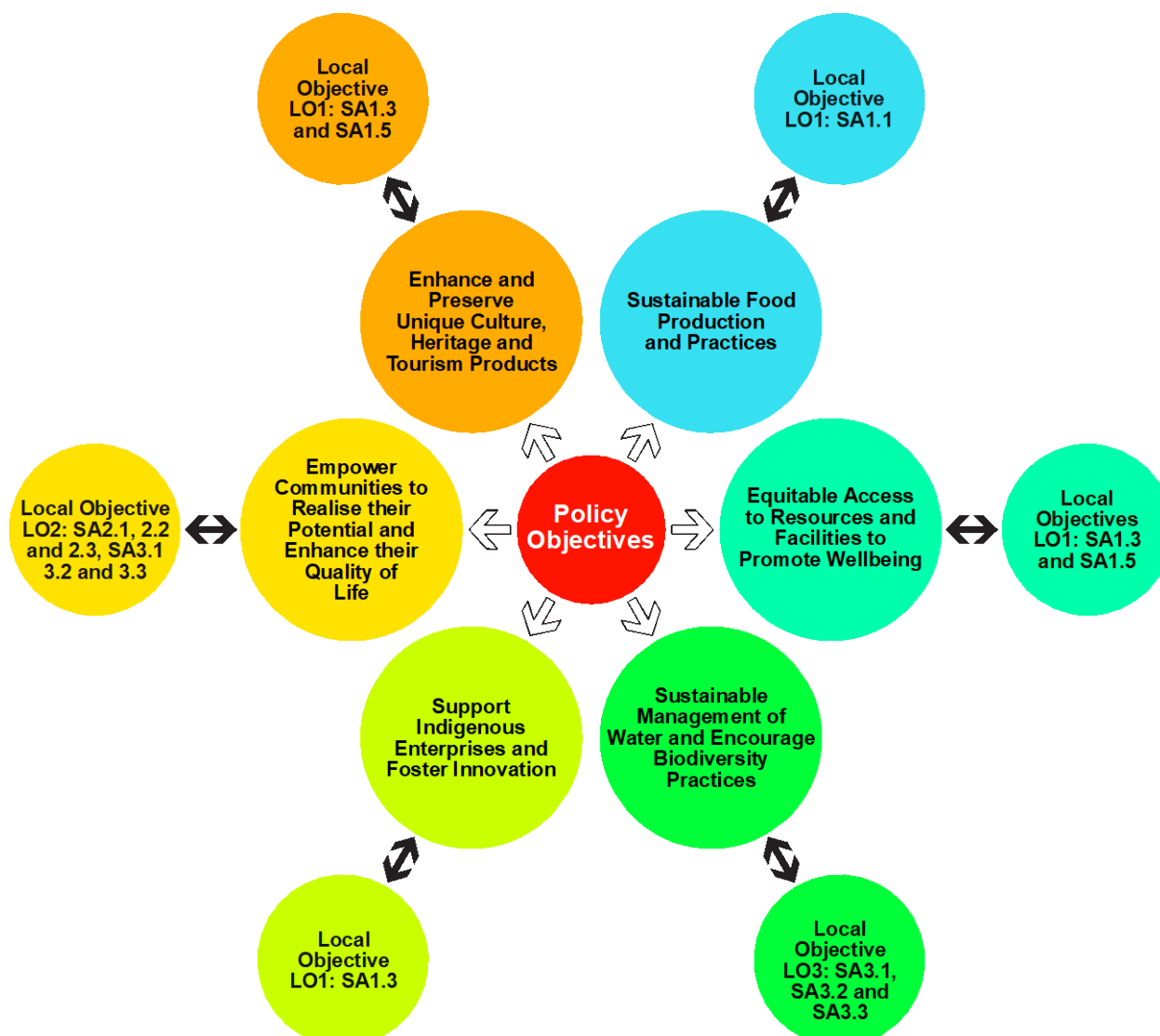
3. **Process needs** – The call process is a central need of the Programme in terms of providing opportunity and equal access to LEADER. The LCDC, through the Implementer, will operate a 100 per cent targeted call process where all calls and hence all applications will go through a refined targeted call process every quarter where potential applicants will attend two public sessions, one prior to the EoI process and one prior to the application to ensure that any interested party in the county has an equal opportunity to apply for funding. This approach has led to a high participation rate and a solid drawdown rate.
4. **Changes in industry and/or market structure** – The new programmes emanating from DRCD on community infrastructure, and the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications on climate change funding has narrowed and altered the wider development eco-sphere for LEADER. In Waterford, this is a source of innovation for LEADER and an opportunity to carve out an expertise in process and project management delivery of a very targeted programme with restricted resources. This expertise will have transferability elements to both the local community groups and other programmes.
5. **Changes in demographics** – Demographics have changed over the last decade. In rural communities, one significant change is the concentration of productive farming, i.e., dairying into 600-700 farms out of 2,000 farms in County Waterford. These farms are large, many are now limited companies, not family farms, and their positive impact on rural villages and communities is much diminished economically, while their environmental impact is significant. In terms of opportunity, the strengthening of rural villages through the REDZ and SMART Village Programme and related economic development to create non-agriculture related jobs in the villages is both a necessity and an opportunity. In terms of the environment, an exemplar regenerative farm project may provide a practical model for farm families.
6. **Changes in meaning and perception by customers** – Rural communities no longer perceive themselves as agricultural. A very small proportion of the community are directly or indeed indirectly employed in agriculture. For small business, be it tourism, engineering or food, the leaders are now well trained and educated. Their perception of what is on offer in mainstream supports and what is needed has provided a source of innovation for the LEADER Programme in terms of targeting capital investment into low-energy and circular economy focused production techniques. In terms of the communities, the development of SMART Villages and their linkage to geographic locations, e.g., four villages in the Comeraghs working collectively as the Comeragh's Economic Development Zone will provide 'Third Spaces' and economic critical mass for local off farm rural dwellers.
7. **New information, new knowledge** – New knowledge, particularly in new energy production, may provide opportunities for the local high end engineering businesses to become sub-suppliers to European major players in this field. New trends in cultural and activity tourism will provide opportunities for both social enterprises and private businesses to supply both accommodation and activities to more environmentally conscious tourists.

To summarise, innovation in LEADER is about evolution and adaptation to new circumstances through evidence-based analysis, detailed knowledge of the place and a flexibility to accept change which is a constant.

Sources 1-4 are internal to the organisation, i.e., the LCDC and the Implementing Partner. Sources 5-7 are external to the LCDC/Implementer.

5 LDS Action Plan

Figure 19 – LDS Action Plan Schematic



5.1 Local Objectives

1. Economic Development and Job Creation - investment in indigenous rural enterprises to foster job creation and support a greener economy.
2. Support for the development and enhancement of rural tourism amenities across the county.
3. Social Inclusion - underpinning social inclusion initiatives in rural areas through investment in physical and human capital.
4. Rural Environment - sustainable development of the rural environment.

While LEADER actions do not address all Themes and Sub-Themes specifically, a more focused approach has been adopted to ensure the best use of limited resources and non-duplication of supports across other service providers. There are several cross-cutting Sub-Themes, for example, Sub-Theme 1b Agricultural Diversification is supported under Sub-Theme 1a Green Economy for equipment investment in a food related business, farm upgrade accommodation for

visitors is supported under SA1.2 Repurposing Farm/Industrial Buildings, under Sub-Theme 1c Rural Tourism and Recreation for tourism related activities (SA1.3/SA1.4) and under Sub-Theme 3a Sustainable Development of the Environment (SA3.2) for renewable energy initiatives. Sub-Theme 1d Enterprise Development is catered under Sub-Theme 1a Green Economy, SA1.1 Capital Investment in greener technology as well as Sub-Theme 1c Rural Tourism and Recreation SA1.3 Activity Tourism. Sub-Theme 1e Rural Food Production is supported under Sub-Theme 1a The Green Economy SA1.1 Capital investment in greener technology. Sub-Theme 1f Social, Community and Cooperative Enterprises are supported under Sub-Theme 1c Rural Tourism and Recreation SA1.4 and SA1.5.

Under Theme 2 Rural Infrastructure and Social Inclusion, two Sub-Themes are prioritised: 2b Accessible Services and 2d Rural Youth. Referring to section 2.2.7 and under Analysis of Social Service Provision, rural infrastructure supports are significant, which is why the focus was adopted to maximise LEADER support and eliminate Sub-Theme 2a Rural Infrastructure. Sub-Theme 2c was not included as digital connectivity is either well covered or in the planning under the National Broadband Plan and other local broadband providers.

In the Environmental Section Theme 3, one Sub-Theme has been chosen, 3a Sustainable Development of the Rural Environment as it is all encompassing with the omission of 3b Climate Change Capacity Building and 3c Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation. While the Climate Action Service within WC&CC offers climate action supports and awareness, from the consultation process, a practical approach and the creation of exemplar projects was deemed the most popular course of action for communities to learn from and engage in the process. Each action is linked to the Local Economic Community Plan (LECP) which is adopted from International and National Policy objectives.

Figure 20 – Cross-Cutting Themes and Actions



LDS Action Plan

5.2 Theme 1: Economic Development and Job Creation

Local Objective 1: Strategic Actions 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5

Title of Local Objective	Investment in indigenous rural enterprises to maximise efficiencies and competitiveness, increase the offering for visitors whilst supporting a greener sustainable environment.
LEADER Theme/Sub-Theme	Economic Development and Job Creation – Sub-Theme 1a The Green Economy and 1c Rural Tourism and Recreation.
Rationale for the Objective	Small rural enterprises are the cornerstone of the local economy, providing much-needed employment and creating a demand for rural services. Supporting rural enterprises is tantamount to sustaining local services. Investment in greener, more energy-efficient technology enhances performance but is also kinder to the environment. Similarly, investment in redundant farm/industrial buildings and repurposing into sustainable accommodation is vital in rural areas where accommodation is at an all-time low due to the Ukrainian crisis. Lack of accommodation is severely impacting tourism providers trying to enhance their offering and bundling same with other providers to attract overnight visitors.
Link to the LECP	Objective 1: Low carbon and sustainable economy Goal 1.1: Develop a flagship green economy, including the circular economy, and maximising opportunities while transitioning to a low carbon and resilient economy. Objective 2: Economic Diversity and Sustainable Growth Goal 2.2: Scale established indigenous enterprises to maximise their global growth and job creation potential.
Financial Allocation	LEADER; €2,970,717 Matched: €2,970,717 Total: €5,941,434
No. of Strategic Actions	5

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Local Objective 1: Strategic Action 1.1 1a Green Economy

Title of Strategic Action	Capital Investment in Existing and Start-Up Technology that embraces greater efficiency and supports the environment.
Brief Description of Strategic Action	Assist and Invest development of ICT, engineering/fabrication, micro pharma, artisan food and traded services businesses in local villages. Emphasis will be placed on energy efficiency, recycling of waste and greener technology linking to LO3, 3a/c.
Link to LECP	Objective 1: Low carbon and sustainable economy. Goal 1.1: Develop a flagship green economy, including the circular economy, and maximising opportunities while transitioning to a low carbon and resilient economy. <i>and</i> Objective 2: Economic Diversity and Sustainable Growth. Goal 2.2: Scale established indigenous enterprises to maximise their global growth and job creation potential.
Primary Target Group(s)	Private Business Promoters with the skills to operate in the fields listed above.
Geographic Area	The Call will be countywide.
Organisation who will deliver the action	WLP CLG
Collaborating Organisations	Waterford LEO to provide all the soft supports, SEAI, SETU
Timeframe of Delivery of the Action	Q1 2024 to Q3 2026
Anticipated Outputs/ Indicators and Targets	Number of Projects to be Funded: 7 Existing: 5 New: 2 Projected Jobs: 29FTEs Sustained Jobs: Dependent on the applicant. Type of Initiative: ICT, Light Engineering, Micro Pharma, and Traded Services and artisan food producers Total Capital: €1,171,714 LEADER: €585,857 Private/Community/State: €585,857 Cost per Job: €40,000 <i>*NB. The above estimates are based on EOIs</i>

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Local Objective 1: Strategic Action 1.2 1a Green Economy

Title of Strategic Action	Repurposing farm and industrial buildings into niche visitor accommodation.
Brief Description of Strategic Action	Repurposing old farm and industrial buildings into much-needed niche accommodation to support LO1/SA1.3 and SA1.5 There is currently very limited accommodation available to visitors due to the government's support of housing the Ukrainian community over the next 5-year period.
Link to LECP	Local Objective 3: Sustainable Placemaking and Destination Management. Goal 3.6: Develop Waterford as a sustainable and accessible place attractive to both domestic and international visitors with a sense of place and connected tourist amenities to enhance and support local communities and realise additional economic growth for Waterford.
Primary Target Group(s)	Rural Dwellers establishing Private Businesses.
Geographic Area	The locations for such enterprises will be on the 2 Estuaries, The Suir Estuary and the Blackwater Estuary, Dunmore East, Tramore, The Copper Coast, Dungarvan, The Gaeltacht Coast to Ardmore Coastline, the Waterford Greenway and the Comeragh's, St. Declan's Walk and the Anne Valley Walk.
Organisation who will deliver the action	WLP CLG
Collaborating Organisations	WC&CC, Fáilte Ireland, Heritage Council, Teagasc
Timeframe of Delivery of the Action	Q1 2024 to Q3 2026
Anticipated Outputs/ Indicators and Targets	Number of Projects to be Funded: 4-6 Existing: 2 New: 4 Projected Jobs: 10 FTEs Sustained Jobs: Dependent on the applicant Type of Initiative: 1 – 2 Recreational Vehicle Parks, 1 -2 Glamping/Camping Sites, 1 -2 Community Hostels. These facilities could service the Greenway, the Comeraghs/Knockmeldowns, Copper Coast, Dungarvan, Gaeltacht, Ardmore Total Capital: €1,389,440 LEADER: €694,720 Private/Community/State: €694,720 Cost per Job; €40,000 Visitor numbers; 2,500-3,000 per annum per project

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Local Objective 1: Strategic Action 1.3 Sub-Theme 1c Rural Tourism and Recreation

Title of Strategic Action	Support and develop activity tourism products in the county to entice visitors to overnight.
Brief Description of Strategic Action	Invest in the Start-up/Expansion of Existing Activity Tourism/Rural Recreation Businesses focused on Cycling, Kayaking, Chartering, Angling, Mountaineering, Walking, Mountain Biking, and non-core Activity Sports, as well as the specific auxiliary services to support these activities. Based on the proposed infrastructure, EV charging points will be created where possible to support electric cars and bicycles. This action is also linked to LO1/SA1.2, SA1.4, LO2/SA2.3 and SA2.4.
Link to LECP	Objective 3 - Goal 3.6 Goal: Develop Waterford as a sustainable and accessible place that is attractive to both domestic and international visitors with a sense of place and connected tourist amenities to enhance and support local communities and realise additional economic growth for Waterford.
Primary Target Group(s)	Rural Dwellers establishing Private Businesses; Community-owned Social Enterprises.
Geographic Area	The 2 Estuaries - Suir and Blackwater, Dunmore East, Tramore, The Copper Coast, Dungarvan, The Gaeltacht Coast to Ardmore Coastline, the Waterford Greenway and the Comeragh's, St. Declan's Walk and the Anne Valley Walk.
Organisation who will deliver the action	WLP CLG
Collaborating Organisations	WC&CC, Fáilte Ireland
Timeframe of Delivery of the Action	Q1 2024 to Q3 2026
Anticipated Outputs/ Indicators and Targets	Number of Projects to be Funded: 8 Existing: 4 New: 4 Projected Jobs 28 FTEs Sustained Jobs: Dependent on the applicant Type of Initiative: Activity Tourism Businesses/Activity Centres/Charter Businesses/Bike Rental/Pilgrim Route Total Capital: €1,126,760 LEADER: €563,380 Private: €563,380 Cost per Job; €40,000 Visitor numbers; 12,000 increase per annum <i>*NB. The above estimates are based on EOIs</i>

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Local Objective 1: Strategic Action 1.4 Sub-Theme 1c Rural Tourism and Recreation

Title of Strategic Action	Community Hostels, RV Parks and Glamping/Camping
Brief Description of Strategic Action	Investment in Private/Community Hostels/Visitor Centres, RV Parks, Glamping/Camping. This action is also linked to LO1/SA1.3 activity tourism provision, 1.5 Culture and Heritage and 3.3.
Link to LECP	Local Objective 3: Sustainable Placemaking and Destination Management. Goal 3.6: Develop Waterford as a sustainable and accessible place attractive to both domestic and international visitors with a sense of place and connected tourist amenities to enhance and support local communities and realise additional economic growth for Waterford.
Primary Target Group(s)	Rural Dwellers establishing Private Businesses; Community operated Social Enterprises.
Geographic Area	The call will be countywide.
Organisation who will deliver the action	WLP CLG
Collaborating Organisations	WC&CC, Fáilte Ireland
Timeframe of Delivery of the Action	Q1 2024 to Q3 2026
Anticipated Outputs/ Indicators and Targets	Number of Projects to be Funded: 6 Existing: 3 New: 3 Projected Jobs: 42 FTEs Sustained Jobs: Dependent on the applicant Type of Initiative: 1-2 Recreational Vehicle Parks, 1-2 Glamping/Camping Sites, 1-2 Community Hostels. These facilities could service the Greenway, the Comeraghs/Knockmealdowns, Copper Coast, Dungarvan, Gaeltacht, Ardmore Total Capital: €1,690,140 LEADER: €845,070 Private: €845,070 Cost per Job; €40,000 Visitor numbers; 9,000 per annum per project <i>*NB. The above estimates are based on EOIs</i>

*1 FTE = €50,000 investment

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Local Objective 1: Strategic Action 1.5 Sub-Theme 1c Rural Tourism and Recreation

Title of Strategic Action	Culture and Heritage Product Development.
Brief Description of Strategic Action	Invest in developing the rich cultural and heritage base in Co. Waterford to ensure the natural product is accessible, preserved and enjoyed by the visiting public and supporting the SMART Village concept of creating and appreciating a sense of place. This action is also linked to LO2/SA2.1, SA2.3 and SA2.4.
Link to LECP	Local Objective 3: Sustainable Placemaking and Destination Management. Goal 3.7: Protect, manage, and enhance the natural heritage, biodiversity, landscape and environment of Waterford in recognition of its importance as a non-renewable resource, providing a unique identity and character for Waterford.
Primary Target Group(s)	Great House-Gardens, Social Economy Groups involved in Cultural Products, Cultural Organisations whose centres are or will be fully open to the public, Organisations involved in Interpreting and Promoting the Gaelic Culture and the Planter/Quaker Culture, Preservation of old traditional skills/crafts at risk of disappearing.
Geographic Area	Focus areas include the Blackwater and Suir Estuaries, the Gaeltacht of An Rinn/Sean Phobal, Dungarvan and Tramore and the Comeragh's.
Organisation who will deliver the action	WLP CIG
Collaborating Organisations	WC&CC, Údarás na Gaeltachta, Fáilte Ireland, FLAG, Heritage Council.
Timeframe of Delivery of the Action	Q1 2024 to Q3 2026
Anticipated Outputs/ Indicators and Targets	Number of Projects to be Funded: 4 Existing: 3 New: 1 Projected Jobs: 10 FTEs Sustained Jobs: Dependent on the applicant Type of Initiative: Cultural Facilities, Gaeltacht Interpretation, Gaeltacht Visitor Facilities; Visitor Facilities for the Great Houses/Gardens, National Museum of Ireland Standard Interpretation Facilities; Traditional Music, Dance and Literature, Quaker/Planter Cultural Projects, Traditional skills/crafts Total Capital: €563,380 LEADER: €281,690 Private: €281,690 Cost per Job; €40,000 Visitor numbers; 6,000 per annum per project <i>*NB. The above estimates are based on EOIs</i>

5.3 Theme 2: Rural Infrastructure and Social Inclusion

Local Objective 2: Strategic Actions 2.1, 2.2, 2.3

Title of Local Objective	Underpinning Social Inclusion Initiatives in Rural Areas through investment in Physical and Human Capital.
LEADER Theme/Sub-Theme	Rural Infrastructure and Social Inclusion - Sub-Themes 2b Accessible Services and 2d Rural Youth.
Rationale for the Objective	Most towns and villages within the county have benefited from LEADER and other community funding schemes to refurbish community centres and halls to a high standard. However, not all communities have benefited from LEADER funding (see map in the appendix) due mainly to the need for capacity building and the limitations of this intervention on the implementor under the RD operating rules. Training is needed for a small number of groups to become tier 1 organisations, i.e., structured and prepared for funding opportunities. These groups can then join forces with neighbouring villages to create projects of scale under SMART Villages/REDZ. Promotion of activities and ancillary facilities to support youth (both NEETs and Non-NEETs) outside the classroom is also required, particularly those who do not take part in field sports, to develop their social skills and sense of well-being.
Link to the LECF	Objective 3: Sustainable Placemaking and Destination Management Goal 3.5: Drive the delivery of sustainable communities with connected amenities and housing of all types (affordable, social and private) in key areas in Waterford for existing communities and to attract inward migration and talent.
Financial Allocation	LEADER: €1,005,633 Matched: €55,398 Total: €1,314,553
No. of Strategic Actions	3

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Local Objective 2: Strategic Action 2.1 Sub-Theme 2b Accessible Services

Title of Strategic Action	Facilitation support and capacity building for new/established Voluntary Groups.
Brief Description of Strategic Action	The project involves providing training targeted at voluntary, not-for-profit groups to bring them together and help strengthen and consolidate their leadership ability to deliver a cohesive plan for their village/town. Previous experience has shown that this intervention consolidates one representative community group in an area where there may be many to design and deliver unified actions. Portlaw Community Enhancement Group is one example which conducted a study of the needs in their area and identified some priority actions which are now being realised through securing Rural Regeneration Funding.
Primary Target Group(s)	Community training to Tier 1 status, i.e., SMART Villages and REDZ, Women's and Men's Sheds and the PPN.
Geographic Area	The Estuary - Dunmore East, Passage East and Cheekpoint, Comeragh area – Portlaw, Clonea Power, Ballymacarbry, Stradbally, Women and Men's Shed.
Organisation who will deliver the action	WLP CLG
Collaborating Organisations	PPN, WAP, SETU
Timeframe of Delivery of the Action	Q1 2024 to Q4 2025
Anticipated Outputs/ Indicators and Targets	Number of Projects to be Funded: 8-10 Training Initiatives Existing: 40/80 Volunteers New: N/A Projected Jobs: 0 FTEs. Based on experience, this soft support intervention has a huge multiplier effect with a 50% success rate in transforming voluntary members/groups into structured and organised entities capable of harnessing funding and implementing worthwhile projects. Sustained Jobs: None. Progression to capital funding Type of Initiative: Training Total Capital: €131,455 LEADER: €118,309 Private: €13,145 Cost per Job; N/A <i>*NB. The above estimates are based on EOIs</i>

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Local Objective 2: Strategic Action 2.2 Sub-Theme 2d Rural Youth

Title of Strategic Action	Support for rural youth facilities to encourage participation and social interaction.
Brief Description of Strategic Action	To support youth facilities in the rural areas that are currently lacking, providing an alternative to field sports and catering for more diverse needs representative of emerging communities. Initiatives to be supported include performance arts, drama and music and scouting activities to encourage more active outdoor experiences. Linked to LO1/SA1.3 and SA1.5. This action will also be linked to the implementer's Care Farm initiative facilitating youths to experience life on the farm and undertake meaningful tasks.
Primary Target Group(s)	Rural Youth 12 - 18 yrs
Geographic Area	Lismore, Tramore, Kilmacthomas, Dungarvan and Ring.
Organisation who will deliver the action	WLP CLG
Collaborating Organisations	Intreo, Macra na Feirme, WWETB, Teagasc, Waterford LEO, WAP, TUSLA, Comhairle na nOg, Care Farming, Clann Credo.
Timeframe of Delivery of the Action	Q1 2024 to Q3 2026
Anticipated Outputs/ Indicators and Targets	Number of Projects to be Funded: 5 Existing: 3 New: 2 Projected Jobs: 0 FTEs. Most Community Facilities are staffed through DSP Programmes. Sustained Jobs: Dependent on the applicant. Type of Initiative: Capital Investment in Youth Equipment/supports Total Capital: €56,338 LEADER: €42,254 Private/Community/State: €14,084 Cost per Job; N/A <i>*NB. The above estimates are based on EOIs</i>

Local Objective 2: Strategic Action 2.3 Sub-Theme 2d Rural Youth

Title of Strategic Action	Investment in three outdoor activity facilities.
Brief Description of Strategic Action	Investment in three outdoor facilities to support rural youth to become more active and participative in their community. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a hugely negative impact on this target group, where people have been forced to isolate and operate in a virtual world. Many now suffer from anxiety and retreat indoors. The locations chosen are based on interest from the communities and feedback from the public consultation process.
Primary Target Group(s)	Rural Youth
Geographic Area	Ring, Dungarvan and Knockanore
Organisation who will deliver the action	WLP CLG
Collaborating Organisations	WC&CC, WLP CLG, Local Communities
Timeframe of Delivery of the Action	Q1 2024 to Q3 2026
Anticipated Outputs/ Indicators and Targets	Number of Projects to be Funded: 3 Existing: 0 New: 3 Projected Jobs: 0 FTEs. Most Community Facilities are staffed through DSP Programmes. Sustained Jobs: Dependent on the applicant. Type of Initiative: Capital Investment Total Capital: €1,126,760 LEADER: €845,070 Private/Community/State: €28,169 Cost per Job; N/A <i>*NB. The above estimates are based on EOIs</i>

5.4 Theme 3: Rural Environment

Local Objective 3: Strategic Actions 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3

Title of Local Objective	Supporting sustainable environmental initiatives.
LEADER Theme/Sub-Theme	Sustainable Development of the Rural Environment and Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation – Sub-Theme 3a Sustainable Development of the Rural Environment.
Rationale for the Objective	Creating exemplary biodiversity and renewable energy projects within communities will raise awareness and educate on a practical level. Experience from the consultation process has highlighted the lack of clarity around some of the jargon used in the public arena and the resulting lack of knowledge. Similarly, working with the experts in the field and creating an alternative village electricity scheme and building on the tradition of hydropower in the county, supporting a hydro scheme to generate greener energy.
Link to the LECP	Objective 3: Sustainable Placemaking and Destination Management Goal 3.7: Protect, manage, and enhance the natural heritage, biodiversity, landscape, and environment of Waterford in recognition of its importance as a non-renewable resource, providing a unique identity and character for Waterford.
Financial Allocation	LEADER: €592,958 Matched: €452,112 Total: €1,045,070
No. of Strategic Actions	3

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Local Objective 3: Strategic Action 3.1 Sub-Theme 3a Sustainable Development of the Rural Environment

Title of Strategic Action	Support of exemplar projects in biodiversity.
Brief Description of Strategic Action	The provision of support for three community groups to develop exemplar biodiversity projects similar to the Anne Valley in East Waterford through land donated by estate owners under a license agreement. Where community groups have access to council land or donated ground to create community allotments/gardens.
Primary Target Group(s)	Community groups who have access to local authority/donated land.
Geographic Area	Countywide
Organisation who will deliver the action	WLP CLG
Collaborating Organisations	Teagasc, EPA, WC&CC, SETU, South East Energy Agency, GIY.
Timeframe of Delivery of the Action	Q1 2024 to Q3 2026
Anticipated Outputs/ Indicators and Targets	Number of Projects to be Funded: 3 Existing: 0 New: 3 Projected Jobs: 0 FTEs. This cannot be estimated at the time of application. Indicators will be kept to create a future baseline. Sustained Jobs: Dependent on the applicant. Type of Initiative: Capital support Total Capital: €281,690 LEADER: €211,268 Private/Community/State: €70,422 Cost per Job; N/A <i>*NB. The above estimates are based on EOIs</i>

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Local Objective 3: Strategic Action 3.2 Sub-Theme 3a Sustainable Development of the Rural Environment

Title of Strategic Action	Development of Renewable Energy.
Brief Description of Strategic Action	LEADER will work with one of the SECs to develop a practical energy reduction project in one community as an exemplar, as the county's energy strategy heavily emphasises reducing residential energy usage. In addition, hydropower will also be supported, given the abundance of large rivers and tributaries within the LDS area and the history of hydropower in the now-defunct milling industries in places like Portlaw and Kilmacthomas.
Primary Target Group(s)	Rural Dwellers.
Geographic Area	Interest has been expressed in the River Glasha, Anne Valley and Clashmore area and one SEC area in West Waterford.
Organisation who will deliver the action	WLP CLG
Collaborating Organisations	WC&CC; LAWPRO, South East Energy Agency.
Timeframe of Delivery of the Action	Q1 2024 to Q3 2026
Anticipated Outputs/ Indicators and Targets	Number of Projects to be Funded: 2 Existing: 0 New: 2 Projected Jobs: 14 FTEs Sustained Jobs: Dependent on the applicant. Type of Initiative: Capital Investment into 2 Micro Hydro Power Facilities Total Capital: €563,380 LEADER: €281,690 Private/Community/State: €281,690 Cost per Job; €40,000 <i>*NB. The above estimates are based on EOIs</i>

Local Objective 3: Strategic Action 3.3 Sub-Theme 3a Sustainable Development of the Rural Environment

Title of Strategic Action	Installation of smart electronic management systems into community-owned facilities.
Brief Description of Strategic Action	As previously stated, due to the plethora of community-funded schemes towards the refurbishment and upgrading of community facilities, the consultation process highlighted the need for exploring alternative use of some of these facilities to address rising overhead costs. This, coupled with the reliance on a limited number of volunteers responsible for some of these centres, ignited a smarter solution to give remote access to these facilities. Investment in this new technology will be supported as this action will also link into LO1/SA1.4 Investment in Community hostels, etc.
Primary Target Group(s)	Rural Dwellers.
Geographic Area	The Greenway hinterland and St. Declan's Way.
Organisation who will deliver the action	WLP CLG
Collaborating Organisations	WC&CC, SEAI, South East Energy Agency
Timeframe of Delivery of the Action	Q1 2024 to Q3 2026
Anticipated Outputs/ Indicators and Targets	Number of Projects to be Funded: 4-6 Existing: 4-6 New: 0 Projected Jobs: N/A Sustained Jobs: Dependent on the applicant. Type of Initiative: Capital equipment Total Capital: €200,0000 LEADER: €100,000 Private/Community/State: €100,000 Cost per Job; N/A <i>*NB. The above estimates are based on EOIs</i>

Appendices

A1 LAG Auditors Report

WC&CC Annual Financial Statement can be accessed here:

[https://www.waterfordcouncil.ie/media/meetings/2022/plenary/may/6\(i\).%202021%20AFS%20Subject%20to%20Audit%20Plenary%2012th%20May%202022.pdf](https://www.waterfordcouncil.ie/media/meetings/2022/plenary/may/6(i).%202021%20AFS%20Subject%20to%20Audit%20Plenary%2012th%20May%202022.pdf)

A2 Governing Documents of the LAG (if applicable).

Waterford Local Community Development Committee: Standing Orders

Statutory Instrument 234/2014 Regulation 37 states that *'The Committee shall adopt standing orders governing the procedures to be followed at its meetings and the performance of its functions generally'*.

The purpose of these Standing Orders is to ensure the orderly and effective conduct of the meetings of the Waterford Local Community Development Committee (LCDC). These Standing Orders also apply to the LCDC in its capacity as a Local Action Group (LAG).

1.0 Meetings of the LCDC: Scheduling and Notification

- 1.1 The LCDC will hold as many meetings as necessary for the performance of its functions but in any event, should meet no less than six times in any calendar year.
- 1.2 At the last meeting (December) of the preceding year, the Chief Officer shall, with the agreement of Chairperson, produce an annual programme of meetings.
- 1.3 No less than five days clear notice of any meeting will be given (excluding day of posting and day of meeting) (Regulation 38).
- 1.4 Notice shall specify the place, date and time of the meeting.
- 1.5 Notification of meetings of the Committee shall be emailed directly to each Committee member unless an alternative method is requested.
- 1.6 'Community' shall be a standing item on the agenda of every other meeting
- 1.7 Members shall, where practicable, notify the Chief Officer in good time in the event that they are unable to attend a meeting of the Committee. Where three meetings in a row are not attended by a member, without a valid reason(s), the relevant member may be removed from the LCDC and replaced with a representative from the same agency or another suitable agency
- 1.8 Where the Chief Officer ascertains that it shall not be possible to raise a quorum of the Committee, they shall, in consultation with the Chairperson, notify the members of such and postpone and reschedule the planned meeting (Regulation 42).
- 1.9 Attendance at meetings is to be recorded.

Special meetings

- 1.10 A special meeting of the LCDC may be convened at any time by the Chair or by the Vice Chair in consultation with the Chief Officer (Regulation 43).
- 1.11 Where a special meeting is convened, notice must issue at least three clear days in advance of the meeting containing the time and place of the meeting and specifying the business to be transacted thereat to every member (Regulation 44).
- 1.12 The Chairperson may, on their own initiative, or shall upon request to do so by a requisition signed by not less than two thirds of the members of the Committee, rounded to the nearest whole number (i.e. 13 members), request the Chief Officer to convene a special meeting of the Committee.
- 1.13 If the Chairperson does not within 7 days convey a request to convene a special meeting as requested, any two thirds of the members, rounded to the nearest whole number, may, upon expiration of those 7 days, make a request to the Chief Officer to hold such a meeting.

2.0 Agenda

- 2.1 The Chief Officer of the Committee in consultation with the Chairperson, shall agree the Agenda and the objectives and expected outcomes of the meeting.
- 2.2 The Agenda and all documentation relevant to the business of the Committee are to be circulated no less than three working days in advance of any meeting.

3.0 Quorum and Decision-Making Processes

- 3.1 The quorum for a meeting shall be 50% of the membership rounded up to the nearest whole number, plus one (Regulation 18) i.e., 11 members. Where a quorum cannot be raised meetings are postponed and rescheduled.
- 3.2 All acts of the LCDC, and all questions coming, or arising before it, will be determined by consensus of those members present and eligible to vote. Where agreement cannot be reached, the members present and eligible to vote shall vote on the matter before it (Regulation 19).
- 3.3 Every vote shall be determined by a roll call or show of hands by agreement of members present each having one vote. Where there is an equality of votes, a matter before a meeting shall be determined by a second or casting vote of the person chairing the meeting. This does not apply to the LCDC acting in its capacity as a LAG.
- 3.4 Neither public authorities nor any single interest group should represent more than 49% of the voting rights. A vote taken or decision reached where any single interest group or public authority represents more than 49% of the voting rights is invalid.
- 3.5 The balance of members attending and eligible to vote on issues must be weighted in favour of the private sector members at all times. If a private sector member has to absent themselves from deliberations and decision making processes in respect of a particular issue, the balance of members remaining eligible to vote must still be weighted in favour of the private sector members.
- 3.6 The Chief Officer will arrange for the keeping of records of all LCDC decisions, including the results of votes taken.
- 3.7 Subject to Regulation 18, the proceedings of the Committee shall not be invalidated by any vacancy or vacancies among its members or any defect in the appointment of the Committee or any member thereof.
- 3.8 Full participation in meetings (i.e. attending, contributing and decision making) is confined to LCDC members. Where policy matters of particular interest to local interest groups or other local authority members arise, the LCDC may meet with those local authority members or interest groups, as appropriate.
- 3.9 Apart from the LCDC members and the Chief Officer, only those persons who are invited to attend and participate should be present at LCDC meetings.

4.0 LCDC as a Local Action Group: Governance and Conflicts of Interest

A Local Action Group (LAG) for the purposes of LEADER, is a group of local actors whose purpose is to outline and implement a development strategy for their area based on a full and comprehensive analysis of the needs and potential of their area. The criteria in relation to the composition of a LAG are outlined in Article 32 of EU Regulation 1303/2013 which states: -

Community led local development shall be:

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'led by local action groups composed of representatives of public and private local socio economic interests in which, at the decision making level neither public authorities, as defined in accordance with national rules, nor any single interest group represents more than 49% of the voting rights'.

At least 50% of the votes in selection decisions by the LAG shall be cast by partners which are not public authorities (Article 34 of EU Regulation 1303/2013). Neither the public sector nor any single interest group, will represent more than 49% of the voting right.

A minimum 50% of the LAG membership must be present to validate a decision on project funding. The 50% requirement applies to decisions validated by the LAG membership after all relevant conflict of interest issues have been addressed. Funding decisions that do not comply with the 50% requirement will be deemed invalid. (Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs Circular 12/2017).

See Section 6.0 for Conflicts of Interest.

5.0 Minutes

4.1 Minutes of the meeting of the LCDC shall be drawn up by the Chief Officer.

4.2 The minutes shall include:

- ✦ The members in attendance at a meeting (Regulation 48).
- ✦ A record of any selection of a Chairperson, Vice Chair, or temporary Chair as may be the case, at a meeting.
- ✦ A record of any resignations of members notified to the LCDC.
- ✦ Details of any new members attending the LCDC for the first time, including the sector that they represent.
- ✦ Matters brought before the LCDC, whether by the Chief Officer or another person.
- ✦ Any decisions taken and any votes put before the LCDC, and their outcomes.
- ✦ Details of persons who are not members of the LCDC (other than the Chief Officer) who attended and /or participated in the meeting.
- ✦ Any sub-committees set up by the LCDC and their defined purpose.
- ✦ The dissolution of any sub-committees or task groups set up by the LCDC.

4.3 The minutes shall be kept and made available electronically. Once agreed at the subsequent meeting the LCDC minutes will be posted online on the Waterford City & County Council website.

6.0 Code of Conduct & Conflicts of Interest

All Committee members are required to maintain proper standards of integrity, conduct and concern for the public interest. The provisions contained in the *Code of Conduct for Councillors* and the *Code of Conduct for Employees*, published by the Department of Environment, Community & Local Government under S169 of the Local Government Act, 2001, will apply to local authority members and local authority officials, as appropriate.

Each member must declare at the relevant meeting of the Committee any interest they have in:

- ✦ An application for funding or other support for decision by the Committee.
- ✦ Any initiative taken by the Committee.
- ✦ Any contract (service level agreement) or proposed contract that the member, or a person connected with the member may be directly or indirectly involved; or
- ✦ Any matter from which the member, or anyone connected with the member, might benefit directly or indirectly from as a member of the Committee.

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Where a conflict of interest is declared by a member, that member will leave the meeting and will not be entitled to vote on the matter in which they are interested. Upon returning to the meeting the member will be notified of the decision by the Chair and no further discussion will take place.

7.0 Disorderly Conduct

7.1 If in the opinion of the Chairperson any member of the LCDC has been or is disorderly by persistently disregarding the ruling of the Chair, or by behaving irregularly, improperly or offensively, or by otherwise obstruct the business of the meeting, and the Chairperson has conveyed his or her opinion to the members present by naming the member concerned, then the Chairperson or any member may move “that the member named leave the meeting” and the motion, if seconded, shall be put and determined without discussion.

Where the LCDC decides in accordance with the above that a member leave a meeting, that member shall immediately leave the meeting and shall not be entitled to speak or to take any further part in that meeting on that day.

Where in the opinion of the Chairperson:

- (a) there is general disorder which impedes the orderly transaction of the business, or
- (b) where a member against whom it was resolved that he or she leave the meeting by virtue of this paragraph refuses to do so;

the Chairperson may adjourn the meeting for such period as he or she considers necessary in the interest of order.

8.0 Standing Orders

- ✦ The LCDC may, by resolution for which at least one half of the total number of members of the Committee vote in favour, amend or revoke standing orders and make new standing orders.
- ✦ A copy of standing orders shall be sent or delivered to each member of the LCDC.
- ✦ A copy of any amendment to standing orders shall likewise be supplied to each member.

9.0 Order of Debate

Except with the permission of the Chair no member shall address the meeting for more than 5 minutes.

- ✦ The Chair’s decision in determining a point of order or personal explanation shall be final.
- ✦ When two or more members at the same time offer to speak, the member called upon by the Chair shall have precedence.
- ✦ A member speaking shall not be interrupted except upon a question of order, but may give way to a member desiring to make a personal explanation.
- ✦ The Chair is the sole judge of order in the meeting and has authority to maintain order and enforce prompt obedience to his / her ruling. When during a debate the Chair rises, any member then speaking shall sit down and give way to the Chair.

Adopted at the meeting of Waterford LCDC on 12th April 2018.

A3 Operational Procedures

See Governing Documents of the LAG above.

A4 Job Descriptions: LEADER Staff Members

A4.1 Job Descriptions and Qualifications

CEO – B.A. in Legal Science and Sociology, 2.1: Barrister at Law

- Manage the Company under the direction of a Voluntary Board.
- Ensure proper governance and financial control.
- Ensure proper Staff management.
- Ensure proper implementation of contracted programs such as LEADER, LAES, TUS, RSS, Social Farming and the Rural Recreation Scheme and the attainment of related KPI's.
- Attract new programs that meet the objectives of the company and that are compatible with the existing suite of contracts.
- Attract Philanthropic funding to local initiatives (Mainly LEADER) (€3m in the last five years).
- Animate and implement 40% of LEADER Applications from Targeted Call to Final Payment.

Assistant CEO and Financial Controller – Certified Public Accountant; Diploma in Governance for the Charitable Sector; Certificate in Leadership for Performance Change.

- Preparation of annual budgets for all programmes, quarterly management accounts and monthly income and expenditure statements. Regular review of actual expenditure against budgets and analysis of the reasons for these variances.
- Preparation of annual accounts to trial balance stage. Responsible for liaising with company auditors to prepare annual financial statements and completion of annual audit.
- Completing returns for and correspondence with various funding bodies, including Department of Rural and Community Development, Department of Social Protection, Pobal and The Department of Justice.
- Preparation and submission of statutory returns for the Charities Regulatory Authority, Companies Registration Office, Register of Beneficial Ownership and the Lobbying Register.
- Review of project applications and claims, as part of an internal audit role, for programmes including the Rural Development Programme 2014-2022, The Walks Scheme, Small Capital Grants Scheme, etc.
- Completion of staff contracts, payroll, revenue returns and liaising with HR support advisors.

Project Officer - Bachelor of Arts Degree in European Studies and Spanish (Hons): Post Graduate Diploma in Business Administration (Hons.2.1): Post Graduate Diploma in Project Management

- Animate new projects within the scope of the LDS.
- Provide back up to individuals and groups.
- Manage the Targeted Call Process.
- Animate and implement 60% of the LEADER Applications from targeted call to final payment.
- Provide advice and technical support to interested parties.
- Drive interest in the three Themes
- Project manage outsourcing to secure required specialist skillsets.

Administrator - London Chamber of Commerce Examinations: GDPR Training /Public Procurement Rules in the Public Sector; Procurement Essentials.

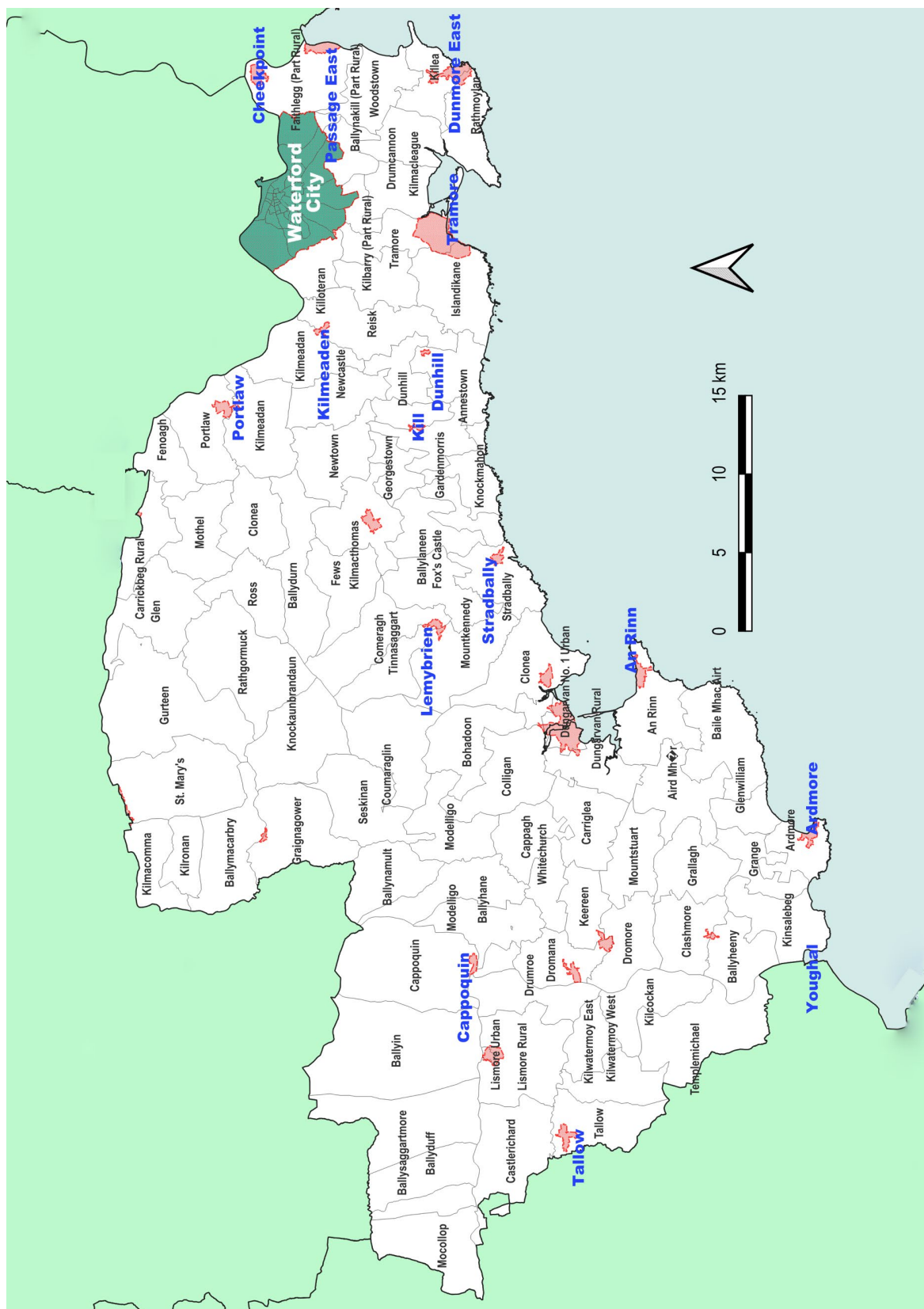
- Independent LEADER Evaluation Committee: Manage and minute the evaluation process reviewing all LEADER Applications by the independent evaluation committee.

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- Preparing all recommendations from the evaluation committee and forwarding same to the LCDC.
- **IT:** Research and procure IT hardware and supplies allowing the business to be innovative, efficient, and current. Maintaining relationships with external IT contractors ensuring a companywide cohesive approach that serves WLP core business needs.
- **Communications:** Set up and maintain the company website and social media sites, facilitating information output, press releases and media requests, social media and/or advertising
- **Procurement:** Responsible for capital and stationary acquisitions. Buying products or services and ensuring that suppliers comply with legal and company policies.

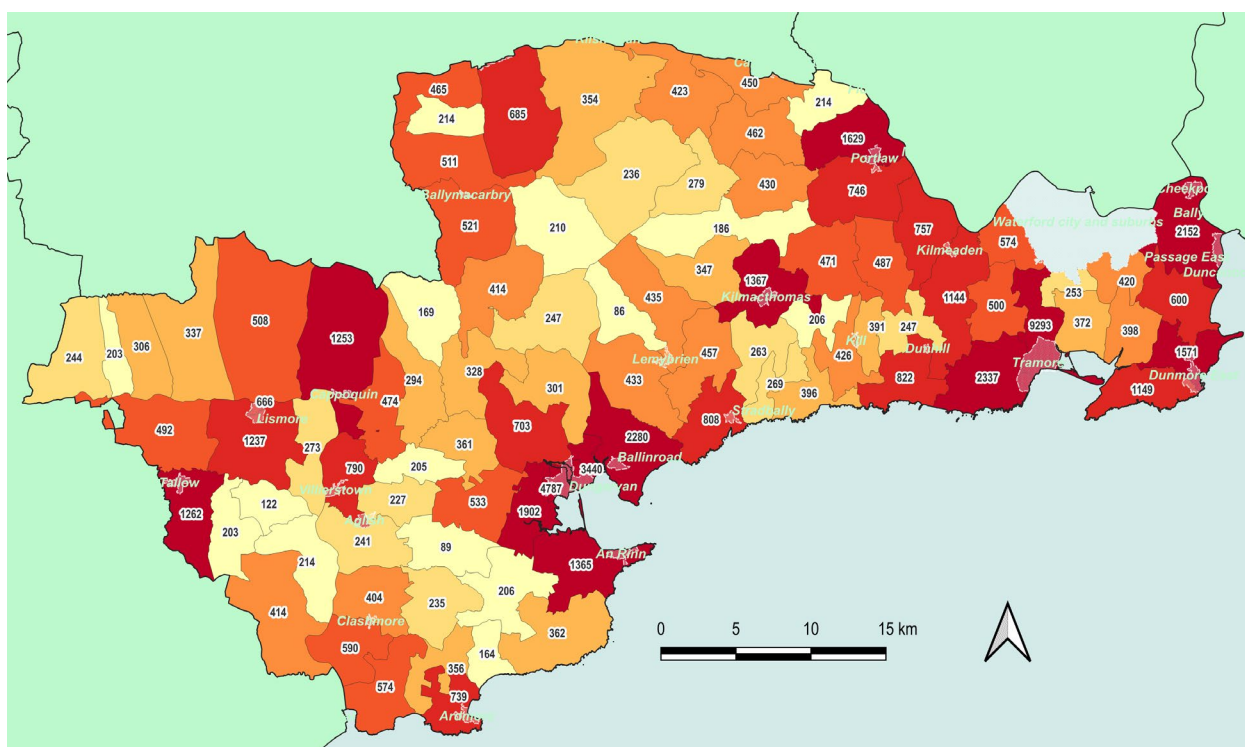
A5 Waterford LDS Area Mapping

Map 1 – Waterford LDS Area by ED

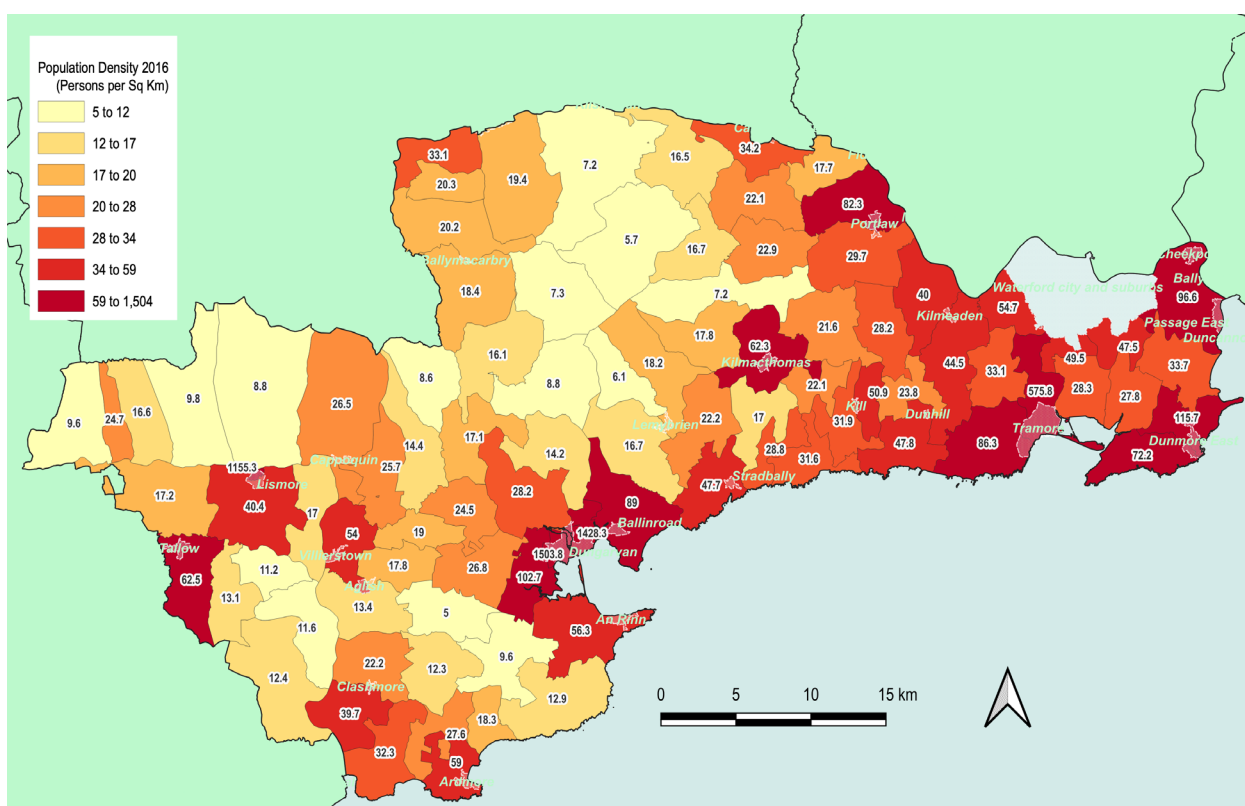


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Map 2 – Waterford LDS Population by ED 2016

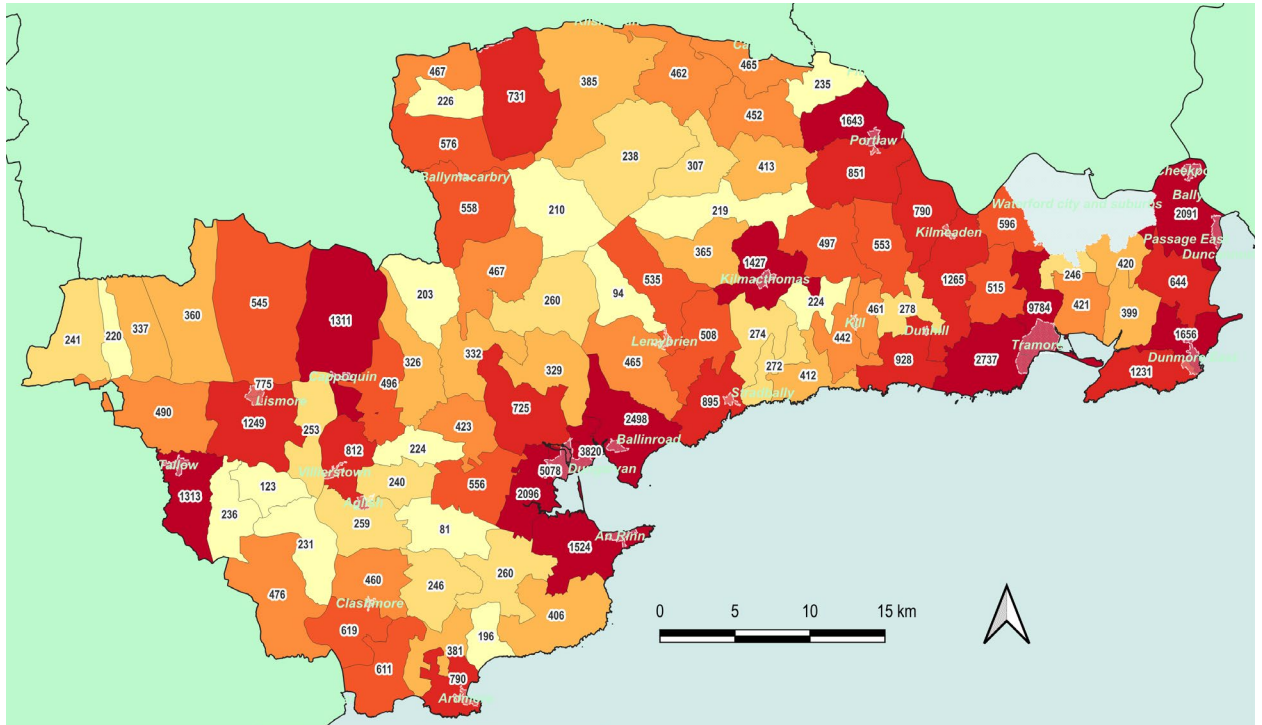


Map 3 – Waterford LDS Persons per Km² by ED 2016

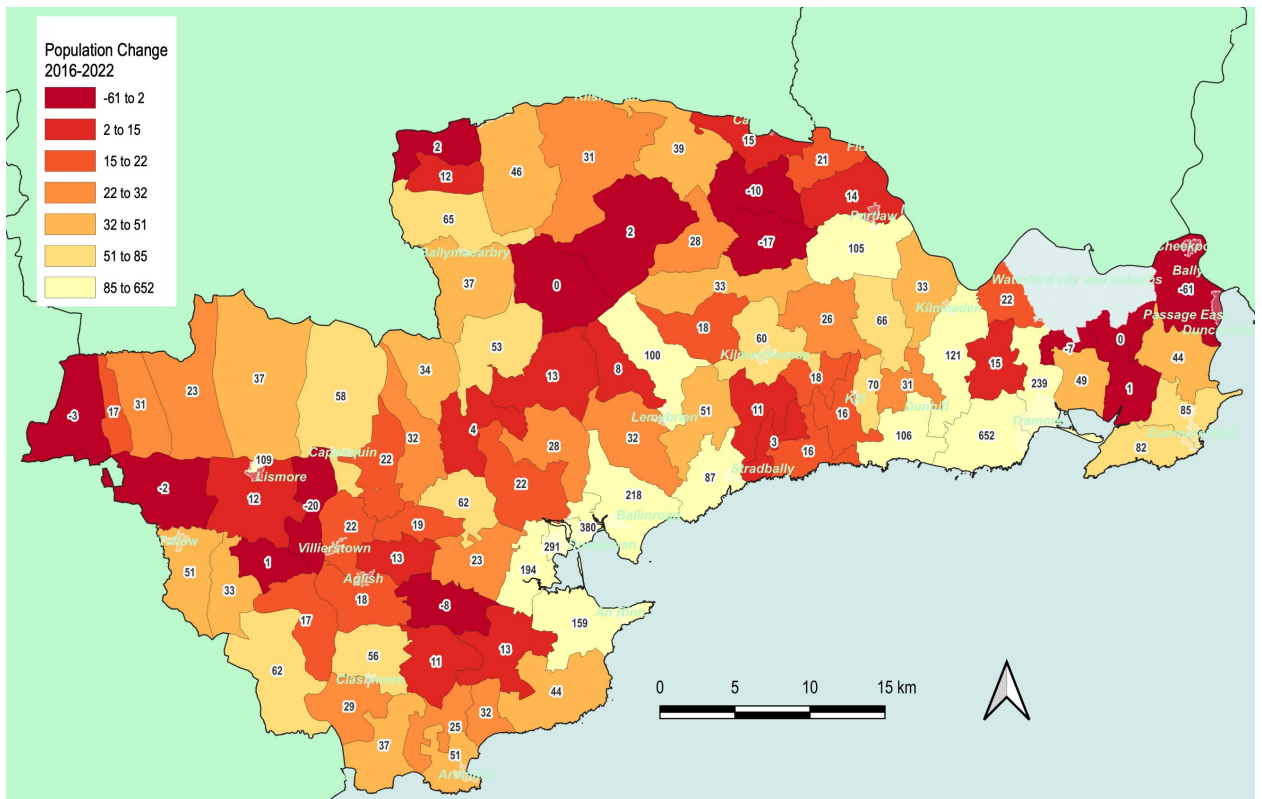


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Map 4 – Waterford LDS Population by ED 2022 (Provisional)



Map 5 - Waterford LDS Pop Change 2016-22 (Provisional)



Map 6 – SAPS Disadvantaged Areas >-10

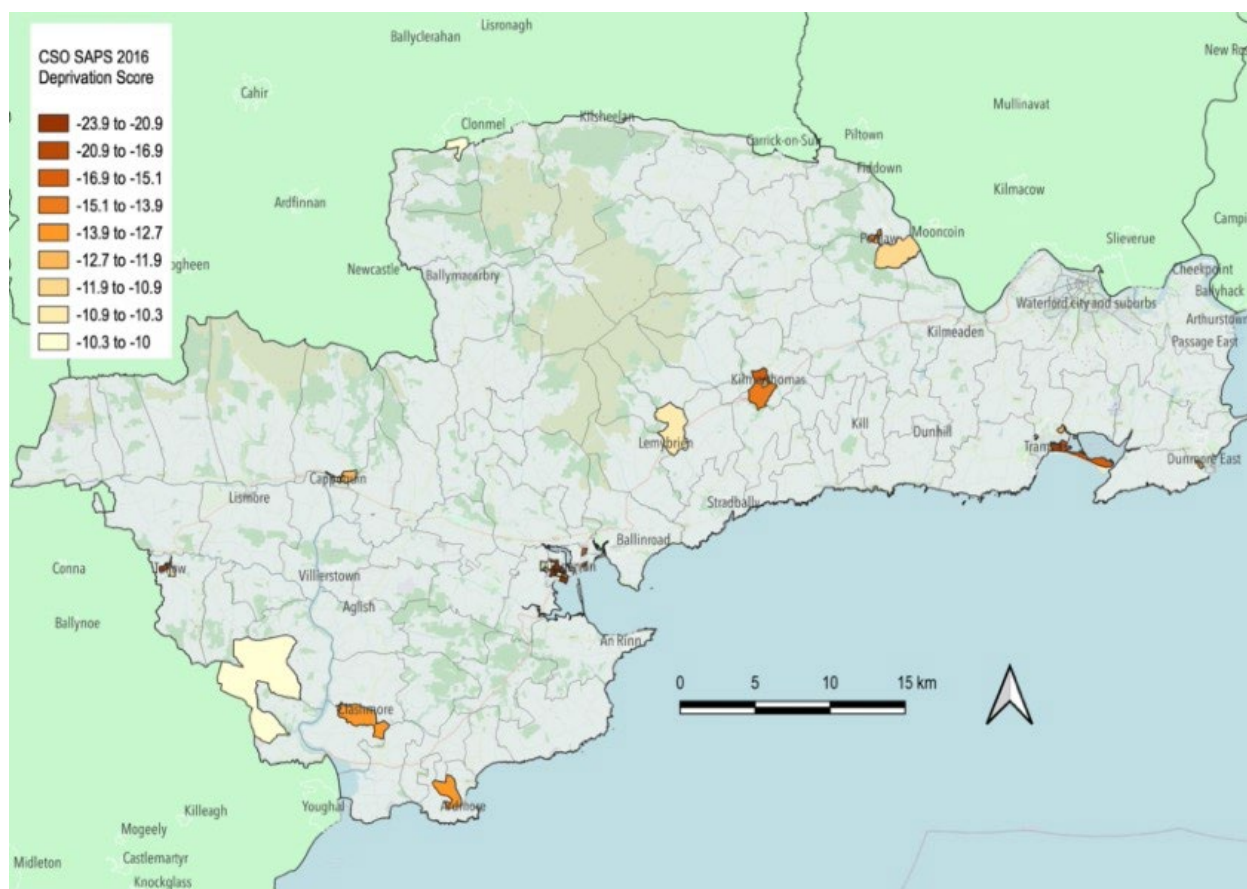


Table 29 - Pobal HP Deprivation Index Standard Labels

Relative Index Score	Standard Deviation	Label
Over 30	> 3	Extremely Affluent
20 to 30	2 to 3	Very Affluent
10 to 20	1 to 2	Affluent
0 to 10	0 to 1	Marginally Above Average
0 to -10	0 to -1	Marginally Below Average
-10 to -20	-1 to -2	Disadvantaged
-20 to -30	-2 to -3	Very Disadvantaged
Below -30	< -3	Extremely Disadvantaged

A6 LECP Draft Economic Objectives

A6.1 Goal 1: Low Carbon and Sustainable Economy

Ref.	Draft Objective
1.1	Develop a flagship green economy, including the circular economy, and maximise opportunities while transitioning to a low-carbon and resilient economy.
1.2	Identify and develop opportunities in the commercial and industrial sectors for renewable energy generation and micro generation.
1.3	Enhanced connectivity and sustainable mobility.
1.4	Integrate climate change and adaptation considerations into land-use policy objectives and decision-making processes to enhance our resilience to the effects of climate change and reduce our carbon footprint.
1.5	Strategic use of public procurement and socially responsible public procurement.
1.6	Mobilise South East Technological University (SETU) in support of the delivery of this High-Level Goal and Objectives.

A6.2 Goal 2: Economic Diversity and Sustainable Growth

Ref.	Draft Objective
2.1	Attract substantial investment and new enterprise with significant employment income and growth potential.
2.2	Scale established indigenous enterprises to maximise their global growth and job creation potential.
2.3	Enhance opportunities for clustering and collaboration for active sectors on the world stage.
2.4	Increase Waterford's human capital base by attracting, retaining and empowering people with the skills for the future and environmental, social and governance talent.
2.5	Identify, coordinate and continually improve the provision of infrastructure necessary to allow Waterford to grow and prosper over the long term.
2.6	Support regeneration and active land management, including developing strategic employment locations and other potential sites and providing associated services identified in the CCDP 2022-2028.

A6.3 Goal 3: Sustainable Placemaking and Destination Management

Ref.	Draft Objective
3.1	Establish Waterford as a place of choice for inward migration, talent and investment and market Waterford as such.
3.2	Build Waterford City's critical mass to fulfil its role as a driver for economic development for the South East.
3.3	Create urban centres which offer a diverse choice of attractive, high-quality places centred on the human scale and accessible to all.
3.4	Support the sustainable economic development of rural areas to advance rural economic regeneration.
3.5	Drive the delivery of sustainable communities with connected amenities and housing of all types (affordable, social, and private) in key areas in Waterford for existing communities and to attract inward migration and talent.
3.6	Develop Waterford as a sustainable and accessible place attractive to domestic and international visitors with a sense of place and connected tourist amenities to enhance and support local communities and realise additional economic growth for Waterford.
3.7	Protect, manage and enhance the natural heritage, biodiversity, landscape and environment of Waterford in recognition of its importance as a non-renewable resource, providing a unique identity and character for Waterford.

A6.4 Goal 4: Sustainable Placemaking and Destination Management

Ref.	Draft Objective
4.1	Develop Waterford as a SMART City to make Waterford more efficient and liveable to boost Waterford's location profile as an innovative place
4.2	Drive the revitalisation of rural communities through social and digital innovation and community and support their transition from traditional villages to SMART Villages status
4.3	Drive the further digitalisation of public services to ensure maximum digital optimisation and transformation for citizens, businesses, and government. (Waterford's Digital Strategy)
4.4	Drive a step-change in the digital transformation of businesses, in particular, SMEs; sustain Ireland's attractiveness as a location for leading digital enterprises; and maximise the benefits of the digital transition for the broader economic ecosystem
4.5	Support the development of a coherent innovation ecosystem aligned to research centres of excellence in SETU.

A7 LECP Draft Community Objectives

The LCDC are currently at the stage of finalising the LECP objectives. The table below references the community development objectives and is presented for information only. The detail may be subject to modification.

Summary Objectives

1. **Liveability and Quality of Life:** Inclusive, sustainable development will help to ensure that Waterford continues to develop as a great place to live with high quality physical, social, cultural, educational and employment opportunities for all.
2. **Health and Wellbeing:** The health, wellbeing, and the quality of life of individuals and communities will be improved through equitable access to resources and facilities that promote positive life choices, healthy habits, and active lifestyles.
3. **Inclusion and Accessibility:** Waterford's publicly funded agencies will strive to ensure access to a full range of supports and resources for all demographics, ages, and abilities.
4. **Resilience and Sustainability:** Effective communication, representation and networking will empower sustainable, resilient, inclusive, and engaged communities.

Table 30 – LECP Community Development Objectives

Goal 1: Liveability and Quality of Life: Inclusive, sustainable development will help to ensure that Waterford continues to develop as a great place to live with high quality physical, social, cultural, educational and employment opportunities for all.		
	Objective	Actions
1.1	Become a custodian and exemplar of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).	Formal adoption and implementation of each of the 17 SDGs. Develop a dedicated County-wide Action Plan and budget for SDG implementation. Embed and integrate SDGs within all programmes, local project development and initiatives. Identify and engage SDG champions and advocates to promote and inspire best practice. Align implementation and monitoring of SDGs with national implementation plan, reporting and data monitoring framework.
1.2	Enhance liveability, quality of life, and quality of place through sustainable and inclusive actions to manage demographic change.	Encourage and enable active citizenship and volunteering in social economic and environmental initiatives. Rural-proof social, economic and environmental development strategies to ensure proportionate, equitable development throughout urban and rural areas. Empower community ownership, care and stewardship of recreation facilities, amenities and open space. Identify the synergies and mutual dependencies between urban and rural areas. Identify opportunities for the reuse and repurpose of vacant and derelict properties and sites which can be matched and developed for inclusive community use and activity.
1.3	Foster social cohesion and mainstream integration for all demographics, abilities and ages.	Enable access to and participation in education and employment to facilitate social inclusion and economic integration. Evaluate the critical link and dependency between housing, employment and wellbeing. Develop Third Place initiatives that build social contact in order to reduce prejudice, isolation, segregation and racism. Document the significant social, economic and cultural benefits arising from the integration of native, migrant and ethnic communities. Collate and promote the availability of migrant networks, supports and resources through a newly resourced Migrant Integration Forum.

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	Objective	Actions
1.4	Align Waterford's further education and training, higher education, research and innovation sectors within a unified tertiary system to create a Learning Region.	Embed a culture and environment of education, life-long and life-wide learning, training and skills development. Achieve coherent and complementary formative and continuing further education and training to encompass undergraduate, post-graduate, doctoral and post-doctoral education, research, distributed and outreach learning. Formalise collaboration between Higher Education Institutes, research centres of excellence, government agencies, industry partners and the third sector in education, research, skills development and life-long learning. Provide an accessible, adaptive, diverse learning and development opportunities and pathways for the widest range of learners, researchers and innovators. Ensure an agile and responsive system that can anticipate and adapt to the changing needs of students and learners, researchers, of industry and of wider society.
1.5	Enhance social capital, wellbeing and resilience through Placemaking initiatives and public realm enhancements.	Enable end user co-design in the planning and development of the public realm, recreation and leisure facilities. Ensure that public spaces, facilities and amenities are safe, inclusive, and that the highest standards of accessible and universal design are used to ensure that the needs of the community (all demographics, all abilities ages) are met. Engage targeted demographic groups in Inclusive Placemaking by trialling new innovative, cost-effective, uses, activities, seasonal, one-off or pop-up events in underutilised locations, sites, buildings and amenities matched to specific demographic need. Map artistic, cultural, creative, facilities, activities and events (and the supporting eco-system) throughout the City and County. Enhance social capital and community wellbeing through a citizen-led, co-designed programme of artistic, cultural, heritage and environmental initiatives.
Goal 2: Health and Wellbeing: The health, wellbeing and the quality of life of individuals and communities will be improved through equitable access to resources and facilities that promote positive life choices, healthy habits and active lifestyles		
	Objective	Actions
2.1	Support good physical and mental health, enabling an improved standard of living and the development of skills across the life cycle.	Embed the National Wellbeing Framework and the Well Waterford initiative within local programme planning and implementation. Resource, implement and review the Vision for Community Wellbeing at County and Municipal District level. Provide a specific, evidence-based definition of collective wellbeing within specific geographical areas and articulate a set of outcomes that encompass the collective wellbeing of people, including current and future generations. Define and develop a Waterford Wellbeing Economy to enable inclusive and sustainable growth. Plan and implement a targeted programme of investment in free and accessible Third Place (indoor and outdoor locations, organisations, facilities and amenities) throughout the City and County which are specifically designed to foster connection, inclusiveness and social capital.
2.2	Ensure proximity to and ease of access to public recreation facilities, amenities, parks, trails and open space.	Audit, map and promote all open, free and, accessible green infrastructure and recreation facilities to promote health, wellbeing and active lifestyles for all ages and abilities. Ensure all communities and demographics have ready access to green infrastructure, recreation facilities and amenities. Make health and wellbeing, environmental quality and the active outdoors manifest and visible through a connected network of open spaces, parks, community gardens and walking trails. Prioritise modal shift and active travel through the improved quality of public space, accessibility, mobility, liveability and walkability. Develop an integrated wayfinding strategy in order to optimally manage and facilitate pedestrian, cyclist and vehicular movement throughout the city and county.

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	Objective	Actions
2.3	Designate a network of open, accessible public facilities as Third Places and Wellbeing Hubs.	Define the Wellbeing Hub concept and identify its essential components, services and resources and align to public transport provision. Audit, map and promote open and accessible Third Place infrastructure, services and resources throughout the City and County. Align the objectives, services and resources of the Public Library Strategy with those of Community Development to create a Third Place for disadvantaged and marginalised communities. Promote the library network and its physical and online resources as a Wellbeing hub for social, cultural, educational and economic development Provide free public Wi-Fi in all Third Place facilities and amenities
2.4	Promote Wellbeing through Healthy Lifestyles, diet and nutrition.	Organise awareness-raising events/campaigns to educate the population about food choices, diet and healthy nutrition. Develop and resource a safe, secure and sustainable food system (encompassing consumption, distribution and consumption) to enhance social, economic and environmental well-being.
2.5	Employ Nature-based solutions as locally appropriate adaptive actions to protect, sustainably manage, and restore natural ecosystems in order to address targeted societal challenges.	Conduct a County-wide risk assessment of locations to identify and mitigate relevant societal challenges (climate change, human health, wellbeing, biodiversity loss, food and water security, and disaster risk reduction, etc). Evaluate site specific opportunities for Ecosystem Services and Nature-based Solutions and implement site appropriate actions to minimise greenhouse gas emissions and increase carbon sequestration and storage in forests, grassland, bogs and wetlands. Advocate and implement sustainable development, circular economy, low carbon, climate adaptation and mitigation practices in the management and development of local environmental assets and resources. Promote water conservation and drought mitigation measures through rainwater harvesting, rain gardens and vegetated landscaped retention.
Goal 3: Inclusion and Accessibility: Waterford's publicly funded agencies will strive to ensure access to a full range of supports and resources for all demographics, ages and abilities.		
	Objective	Actions
3.1	Make Waterford the most socially inclusive County in Ireland	Ensure compliance with the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty and the legal responsibility to promote equality, prevent discrimination and protect human rights. Build the capacity of communities to exert their rights and voice; enabling the co-design and implementation of policies and programs geared toward poverty reduction and social inclusion. Ensure that the Guide for Inclusive Community Engagement in Local Planning and Decision Making is used for local consultation and engagement processes with marginalised groups. Enumerate annually (by number and demographic) those in the County at risk of poverty or social exclusion and thereafter identify a programme of support. Devise innovative labour market access, activation and integration strategies to facilitate employment of minority demographic groups (migrants, travellers international protection applicants, etc).
3.2	Create an enabling environment for community empowerment and diversity through social inclusion, transparency and accountability.	Formally adopt and integrate the Social Inclusion Statement of Intent within strategy planning, implementation and review. Ensure implementation of the Traveller Accommodation Programme through the establishment of budget, milestones, targets, deliverables and review mechanisms annually. Resource, implement and review the Migrant Integration Strategy annually. Develop and promote Waterford as a Place of Sanctuary - welcoming, safe, secure, and respectful - for all who visit and live in the county regardless of colour, race, religious, or social status.

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	Objective	Actions
3.3	Make Waterford the national leader and exemplar in Social Economy.	Develop a Social Economy Forum to be comprised of cooperatives, mutual societies, non-profit associations, foundations and social enterprises. Identify scope, activities, market and network opportunities for sustainable and strategic social enterprise and social innovation to address social, societal, economic and environmental challenges. Devise a dedicated programme of operational and development finance and governance supports for social economy/enterprises. Align social economy with the economic and enterprise development ecosystem as well as corporate social responsibility and philanthropic initiatives. Enable the active participation, volunteering and employment by disadvantaged and marginalised groups in social, economic and environmental development.
3.4	Improve access to services through sustainable mobility and efficient, reliable and comprehensive public transport.	Improve public transport provision and frequency to enhance access to education, medical, social and economic services. Identify and develop transport nodes at key locations in the city and county to facilitate mode integration and ease of connectivity between public and private transport users. Evaluate the dependency of settlements in peripheral locations to those of important service centres in neighbouring Counties. Identify areas in the County which experience public transport 'poverty and disadvantage' and 'forced car ownership'. Ensure that Third Place locations, amenities and activities are accessible by public transport.
3.5	Ensure a Just Transition for all in the implementation of decarbonisation and Net Zero initiatives.	Identify areas and communities of localised fuel and energy poverty. Mitigate fuel and energy poverty through a targeted programme of retrofit works.
3.6	Augment the face to face delivery of and access to public services and information through digitisation.	Monitor and address social, educational and employment disadvantage arising from a lack of access to necessary digital infrastructure, information, training and skills development. Develop a single online resource for information and events accessible to all demographics, ages and abilities. Create seamless in-person and online channels for service and information delivery. Further develop the My Open Library strategy, actions and resources throughout the county-wide library network.
Goal 4: Resilience and Sustainability: Effective communication, representation and networking will empower sustainable, resilient, inclusive and engaged communities.		
	Objective	Actions
4.1	Ensure robust governance and implementation structures for community-led development which will represent and advocate a shared social, economic and environmental vision for all.	Promote active citizenship, community participation and engagement, collaboration and resource-sharing in social, economic and environmental project planning and development. Promote and facilitate organisational and governance models that collaborate and network to achieve scale and impact. Ensure that optimal usage, benefit and commercial return is achieved from prior publicly-funded investments in social and community infrastructure. Ensure that all settlements and their hinterlands benefit from integrated area-based strategies for social, economic and environmental development. Provide mentoring, facilitation and peer learning support to assist organisational development, networking, strategy, action plans and communications for community organisations.

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	Objective	Actions
4.2	Establish Waterford as a model of excellence for public participation and citizen engagement.	Public agencies to maintain and publish and promote on an annual basis up to date information on enabling development supports, resources and associated personnel. Ensure horizontal coordination and effective communication across all local authority departments and functions Develop an open public engagement portal to crowdsource to imagine, test and implement innovative ideas for social, economic and environmental development. Identify, on a cross-agency basis, all personnel assigned to geographic, localised or thematic/issue-based development programmes and initiatives. Commit to an agreed annual programme of communication to stakeholders providing feedback and updating on progress in policy and programme implementation.
4.3	Ensure inclusive growth through Community Wealth Building initiatives.	Identify scope, activities and governance/ownership models for Community Wealth Building appropriate to the City and County (services, retail, circular economy, tourism, food and horticulture, energy production, etc) Develop social enterprises with the capacity to generate community wealth and fair employment through the local ownership and stewardship of assets. Increase the social, ecological, financial and economic value that local communities gain from land, property and energy assets. Enable social enterprises and community organisations to provide training, volunteering, employment and educational opportunities for their wider communities. Actively engage with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and philanthropic initiatives to leverage socially responsible and ethical investments in local community initiatives through the provision of technical expertise, expert mentoring, staff volunteering, work placements, philanthropy and/or the donation of financial resources and assets.
4.4	Empower a culture of resilience and sustainability in social, economic and environmental development.	Provide development supports to enable communities to identify and establish social, economic and environmental objectives, supporting actions and enabling resources for SMART Town/Village strategies. Develop a County-wide Energy Masterplan to assess energy use (electricity, heat and transport) from spatial, technological and socio-economic perspectives and identify targeted sustainability initiatives and realistic, costed pathways and low-carbon technologies in order to achieve carbon emission reduction targets to 2030 and beyond to 2050. Assess the current GHG baseline and propose a County-wide mitigation strategy with targets for the progressive decarbonisation of transport, energy, residential, commercial and public services. Encourage more efficient use of resources and more sustainable consumption and production patterns by promoting circular economy and waste reduction strategies.
4.5	Ensure best practice in sustainability, landscape stewardship and environmental management.	Mainstream climate mitigation, adaptation and decarbonisation actions in 1) building design and maintenance; 2) in the management of assets, infrastructure and public realm; and 3) in the management and protection of environmental resources. Prioritise Climate Resilient Design for publically funded social and community facilities and amenities to achieve carbon neutral goals. Enable the strategic and sustainable development of the Blue and Green Economy to drive investment in tourism; amenity; conservation; climate change mitigation; renewable energy; food and fisheries. Identify site-specific initiatives and co-ordinate community-led Citizen Science initiatives in biodiversity and conservation for the enhancement of critical habitats including wetlands, bogs rivers and lakes, mountains and uplands, native woodlands and dune systems. Co-ordinate a biodiversity programme to encompass local capacity building, training and technical support to develop local awareness, responsibility, and action plans to combat threats to biodiversity from invasive species, habitat loss and pollution and to maximise the contribution of nature in supporting the quality of life for all.

A8 LEADER Programme Performance

Three years after the commencement of the current LEADER Programme, the LAG engaged Dr Ciaran Lynch of *Community Engagement Partners* to undertake an interim review of the Programme implementation in mid-cycle. The evaluation was a high-level review focused on the range of projects funded, the projects which remained unfunded, and the Levels of EoI's issued and the level of appropriate responses to the calls.

A8.1 Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation focused on overall outputs and generated data and information, as follows: -

1. Through an analysis of data supplied on EoI, calls, projects approved, and drawdown of funding.
2. A review of sample successful and unsuccessful application files.
3. Interviews with the CEO of WLP CLG.
4. Discussions with the Chief Officer Waterford LCDC.
5. Presentation to and discussion with Waterford LCDC.
6. Interviews with a sample of project promoters.

A8.2 Context

The review was set in the context of the eighteen other schemes operating in the LEADER sphere, coupled with several other WC&CC schemes such as the Town and Village Renewal Scheme. It was noted that *'While LEADER should not be seen as a funding programme of last resort, it is, nevertheless appropriate that particular projects are directed towards other funding opportunities, and this has been done within the context of the Waterford Local Development Strategy.'*

A8.3 Geographic Distribution of Approved Projects

In considering the Geographic Distribution of Approved Projects, the evaluation report notes that 'the units of assessment used were the Municipal/Metropolitan District Areas. It is acknowledged that this is a somewhat arbitrary breakdown, but it does represent a legal administrative structure and, on that basis, has a degree of validity. From this it can be seen that there is considerable variation in the number and value of projects in the different areas. The number of projects in the Dungarvan/Lismore area is substantially greater than that in the other two areas, though many of these projects (50%) are small with a value of less than €25,000. On the other hand, virtually all the projects in the Comeragh area are of high value which is reflected in the value of projects by head of population.

Commentary

While there is no doubt that there is some variation in the distribution of projects across the county, several factors need to be considered: -

1. As noted previously, the use of the Municipal and Metropolitan Districts is somewhat arbitrary and use of a different set of boundaries could have given a somewhat different perspective.
2. Several of the projects in the Dungarvan/Lismore area are located close to the boundaries of other Districts.
3. Dungarvan has a significant impact on its MD, with a third of the projects in that area coming from Dungarvan and its immediate hinterland. Other Districts do not have such a dominant centre.
4. Waterford Metropolitan District Area received a considerable amount of funding under the last Programme, and this may have impacted on the projects at a developed stage for this Programme.

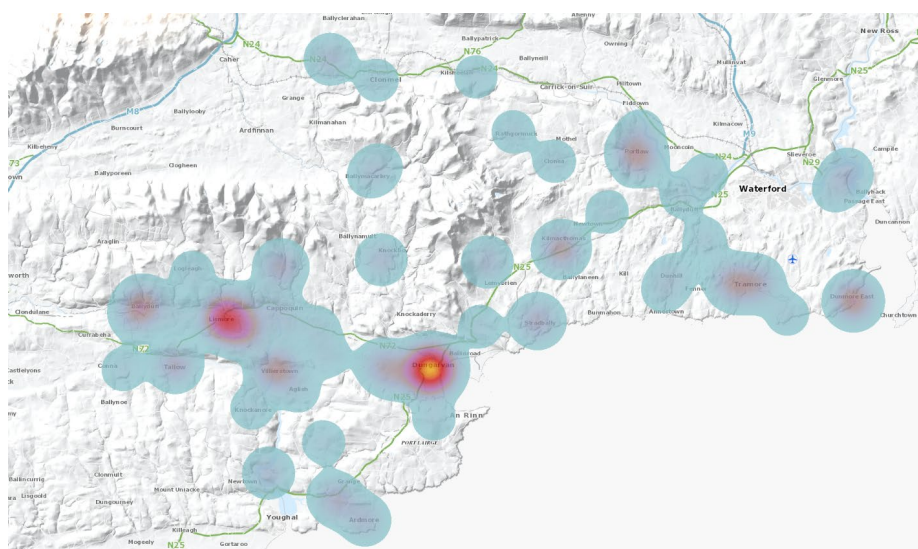
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- Account must be taken of the impact of the FLAG Programme in the different areas. While all of the Districts have areas which are eligible for FLAG funding, the Metropolitan District seems to have availed of the Programme to a greater extent with thirteen successful applications, in comparison with four and three such applications in the Dungarvan/Lismore and Comeragh areas respectively. It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that projects which might otherwise have sought LEADER funding sought FLAG funding instead.

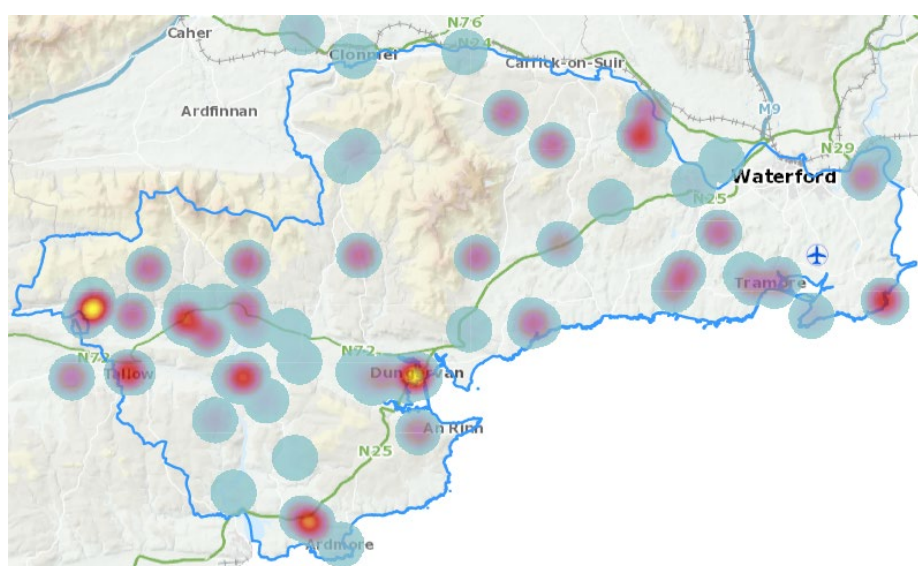
Notwithstanding these factors, it is worth considering whether additional promotional efforts should be made in the Waterford and Comeragh areas for the remaining calls for EoI.

Following this recommendation and notwithstanding the impact of FLAG and other programmes, LEADER has made additional efforts in the Comeragh's and the Estuary and this is evidenced by the two heat maps below.

Map 7 – LEADER 2014-2022 Project Heat Map



Map 8 - LEADER 2014-2022 Project Heat Map By Claims Paid



The heat maps show that at the close of the 2014-2022 Programme, the geographic spread of projects and payments is balanced across the LDS area. This was a key observation in the mid-term review, and it has been addressed. As of June 2023, the 2014-22 Programme is 90% paid

out and after a review of the project allocations and payments, only €41,000 of nearly €8m will be decommitted. It is anticipated that this will be recommitted by the end of July 2023.

Actions in Communities that Benefitted Least from LEADER

The two heat maps above are reference points in time and relate to LEADER only. As highlighted above, the Estuary benefitted widely in the 2007-2014 LEADER Programme. When looking at Community Action and support for same, no one programme has ownership over the fidelity of local groups, and one needs to bear in mind the following: -

- Voluntary Organisations who implement large capital projects usually take two programmes to wash the costs through their fund-raising endeavours before they can go again.
- Four additional positive funding sources came into play during the lifetime of LEADER 2014-2020, and they were the Fishery Local Action Programme (FLAG), the Town and Village Renewal Scheme (TVRS), the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS), and CLÁR. In effect these programmes were nearly 100 per cent funded (LEADER offers 75 per cent funding) and the villages in the Estuary and several villages in the Comeragh's benefitted from the above programmes during the lifetime of the 2014-2020 LEADER Programme, which is a positive outcome for cooperation and non-duplication between the funding entities.

As a result, the mid-term heat map shows reduced activity in the Estuary and the Comeragh's, but in fact this reduction in LEADER applications was in part taken up by the other programmes which were better funded. By the end of the 2014-2020 Programme, the second heat map demonstrates a rebalancing due to increased animation activity by the implementing partner in these two areas. One of the best tools available was the targeted call process.

Even though the LEADER allocation and project payments levelled up, it has become obvious from the consultation (low participation rate) process in the Estuary area that the availability of 100 per cent project funding has undermined structured groups in the community and may have created a resilience issue in preparing and planning.

The Comeragh's is slightly different in that the groups want to replicate the Blackwater Economic Development Zone in West Waterford, so their need is a realised need coupled with a willingness to work to better the area.

Table 31 - Village List

Village	Geographic Area	Action as Per Plan
Dunmore East	The Estuary	Local Objective 2, Strategic Action 2.1, Sub Theme 2b
Passage East	The Estuary	Local Objective 2, Strategic Action 2.1, Sub Theme 2b
Cheekpoint and Faithlegg	The Estuary	Local Objective 2, Strategic Action 2.1, Sub Theme 2b
Portlaw	The Comeragh's	Local Objective 2, Strategic Action 2.1, Sub Theme 2b
Clonea Power	The Comeragh's	Local Objective 2, Strategic Action 2.1, Sub Theme 2b
Rathgormack	The Comeragh's	Local Objective 2, Strategic Action 2.1, Sub Theme 2b
Ballymacarbry	The Comeragh's	Local Objective 2, Strategic Action 2.1, Sub Theme 2b
Lemybrien/Kilrossanty	The Comeragh's	Local Objective 2, Strategic Action 2.1, Sub Theme 2b

Note: All projects will have to adhere to the targeted call process.

A8.4 Overall Recommendations

1. The potential difficulties for project promoters, particularly those from the private sector, in providing evidence of co-funding in advance of approval should be highlighted and reported to the Department.
2. The next round of Eol calls should emphasise: -
 - a. That this is the last round of calls under this Programme.
 - b. That not all eligible applications may receive funding.
 - c. That the rate of funding may not be the maximum possible.
3. Attempts should be made to promote the programme and the next call in the Comeragh and Waterford Metropolitan Districts and emphasise that smaller as well as larger project proposals are welcome. (Subsequently, additional effort was made after the review and the heat maps show a more balanced geographic spread. The areas selected for Community Hall meetings during the consultation process were also driven by this recommendation).
4. Consideration should be given to providing some geographic weighting for projects arising from the Comeragh and Waterford Metropolitan Districts. (Subsequently, under the Open Targeted Call Process, and the terms of the programme, increased animation won out over favouring one area over another).
5. Consideration should be given to running specific workshops in procurement for applicants who have been deemed eligible under the Eol process to assist them in finalising their projects in a timely manner. (Subsequently, this was done during the Targeted Call process).
6. Consideration should be given locally and nationally as to how the application process can be made simpler and less challenging for community and voluntary organisations and small businesses while retaining its robustness and transparency, *and/or* Consideration should be given to ways in which additional supports can be given to organisations from these sectors to negotiate the application process. The latter was provided by a minimum of three one-to-one meetings to all applicants. (Subsequently, the latter was provided by a minimum of three one-to-one meetings to all applicants).
7. The fact that an independent architect will be appointed by the funder and paid for by the promoter to certify draw-down claims should be highlighted early in the implementation process. (This was subsequently done at the Open Targeted Call Presentations).
8. Applicants under SA 5.1. should be asked to indicate how their proposed development will contribute to social inclusion and the actions which they will take in that regard.
9. The likelihood of the take-up of all funding allocated to the Rural Tourism Local Objectives should be considered and re-allocations made if a significant lack of take-up is anticipated.
10. The proposed re-allocations of funding should be proceeded with as should the minor rewordings proposed and the new SA 7.2.
11. All project files should be checked and any required documentation which is missing from any file should be provided for the record.
12. In the light of the concerns expressed regarding the difficulties perceived by communities and smaller enterprises in completing the process and the possible barriers which this perception places in the way of applications being made by such bodies, consideration should be given to commissioning a piece of independent research to identify in more detail the nature of these perceptions, their sources and causes and ways in which the process might be modified to address the perceived difficulties while retaining its rigour and transparency.
13. Consideration should be given to ways in which additional supports can be given. (Subsequently, for community organisations, philanthropic assistance was obtained by WLP CLG).

It is anticipated that the Final Evaluation Report will be completed in Q4 2023.

A9 Online Consultative Survey Outcomes

Prompt	Response
Q1 Municipal District you are based within	Dungarvan/Lismore (30) Metropolitan District (estuary) (17) Comeraghs (mid) (8)
Q2 Which category best describes your status	Private Individual (18) Community Group (26) Social Enterprise (4) Commerical Enterprise (8)
Q3 Name of your organisation (if applicable)	Lismore Heritage CLG Cappoquin Community Development Company CLG Park Rangers AFC Dunhill Rural Enterprises CLG Mt. Melleray Abbey Kill Community Group CLG KGK Community Development CLG Chew's Freedom Farm Dungarvan Tidy Towns Tramore GAA Blackwater Valley Opera Festival Dungarvan Utd AFC 31 st Waterford Scout Group Sliabh gCua Community Centre/Touraneena/playground Social Farming Tramore Eco Group TEG Newtown and Guillamene Swimming Club St. Declan's Way Steering Committee Tramore Development Trust East Waterford Bee Keepers Fiontar Pobail Páirc Uile-Aimsire
Q4 Have you applied for LEADER funding in the past	No (39) Yes (17)

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Please indicate what actions/types of projects should be prioritised under each of the three Themes of the new Programme

Prompt	Response
Q5 Theme 1 – Economic Development and Job Creation. Areas of focus might include –	Green Economy (19) Agricultural Diversification (12) Rural Tourism and Recreation (28) Enterprise Development (18) Rural Food Production (14) Social, Community and Cooperative Enterprises (32) Social Farming (1) Biodiversity (1) All the above (1)
Q6 Theme 2 -Rural Infrastructure and Social Inclusion. Area of focus might include –	Rural Infrastructure (33) Accessible Services (26) Optimising Digital (20) Connectivity Rural Youth (32) Maximise impact on people furthest from labour market and multi/intercultural education (1) Rural Housing (1) Social farming (1)
Q7 Theme 3 – Sustainable Development of Rural Environment and Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation. Areas of focus might include –	Sustainable Development and Rural Environment (35) Climate Change Capacity Building (12) Mitigation and Adaption (21) Green Energy (1) Make these objectives more understandable and practical examples for communities to implement (3)
Prompt	Response
Q8 What supports do you feel are required to encourage quality applications in a future programme	One-to-one Meetings (11) Specific training (13) Ideas and project generation initiatives and programmes (16) Information sharing on successful projects under previous programmes (9) All the above (3)
Q9 Are you planning to make an application	Yes (37) No (18)

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Prompt	Response
Q10 Please provide a brief description of your project proposal	Extension of services from community centre Develop outdoor community space adjacent to centre Hub for youth in the area Community biodiversity Enhancement of visitor facilities Re-purposing of heritage farm buildings as workshop/studios Improve access around the farm and offer wider range of activities Bee keeping as a micro enterprise Worm composting for local organic food production Community heritage/culture Community sports facilities (2) Purpose built maturing facility Dust extraction system Disability friendly community playground and garden Incubation space for artists Youth infrastructure Agri tourism development Outdoor recreational facility for Ring
Q11 Please indicate which Sub-Theme you believe your project might best fit under	Rural Tourism and Recreation (15) Social and Community Enterprise (9) Rural Youth (7) Farm Diversification (2) Enterprise Development (2) Climate change Rural Food Production (2)
Q12 Please provide an indicative cost of the proposed project	

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Prompt	Response
Q13 SWOT of County Waterford	Diverse geography with full range of natural resources (16) Promotion of entrepreneurs Located within easy reach of Cork and Dublin airports (8) Easy access to sea, forests and mountains – outdoor quality of life (11) National routes N25 and N72 pass through the county (3) Unique selection of houses and gardens – Lismore Castle Qualify fishing locations (2) Equine industry (1) River sports and outdoor adventure (6) High quality agricultural area (5) Food destination/artisan food (6) Cultural and heritage tourism (8) Greenway and Sean Kelly routes (5) The Copper Coast (2) 12 Golf courses (2) Cliff House Hotel, Faithlegg Hotel and Waterford Castle Young and vibrant community (3) Community Spirit/good groups (4) Local university SETU (1) Very strong LEADER programme (3) Well educated workforce More Tourism PR (2) The Gaeltacht area
Q14 What are the weaknesses of the County	Transport links within the county (9) Digital connectivity (3) Gap between urban and rural widening (5) Self promotion (3) Waterford Airports location only serving the city (1) Industry clustered in Waterford city and Dungarvan No quality accommodation in West Waterford outside of Dungarvan and Ardmore (4) Opportunities for graduate employment limited Ministerial representation for West Waterford has been absent for years Lack of involvement of IDA or EI Lack of investment in youth services and facilities (9) Lack of coordination between agencies and volunteers, among social enterprises and with SETU (4) Villages have lost their identities Delays in planning (4) Lack of ambition/innovation Confusing funding streams/more flexibility (2) Lack of communication/guidance (2) Lack of development of River Suir Tourism industry standards dropping Same funding application process for smaller/larger grants

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	Parking/toilets limited at scenic/greenway Lack of moorings/pontoons for recreational boat use
Q15 What are the opportunities	Link communities to optimise efforts (3) via bike lanes etc Waterford airport could be further developed as a pilot training school or air corp base Growing population Affordable housing Good education and sporting facilities (2) Linking Greenway to West Wfd (5) Social Enterprise Sector Climate action on the ground Amenities for youth needed (6) Food Tourism Green energy Sustainable farming Forestry and aquaculture Outdoor pursuits (4) Copper Coast (1) Services for the elderly Parking at scenic areas Improved public transport (4) Harbour development to accommodate more boats Planting of trees for more extinct birds
Q16 What are the threats	Continued geographic isolation Cost of housing and lack of it Lack of employment for graduates in the county/apprenticeship opp's (2) Decline of local economies (2) Recruiting suitable staff for the hospitality sector (2) Diversion of national funding (3) Another pandemic, BREXIT and Ukraine War Sub par health service (2) More development in rural areas (6) particularly youth Industrial type agriculture Difficulty of planning process (2) Pollution Bureaucracy More funding for quicker project delivery (2) Fostering volunteerism (3) Lack of hotels outside city(3) Poor broadband connectivity Poor city visibility Streamline funding process (3) Joined up thinking (4) Rising cost of living – energy/interest rates

/continued

Waterford Local Development Strategy 2023-2027

/continued

Prompt	Response
Q17 Is there anything else you would like considered in preparation of the new LDS for the County	Additional supports to communities supporting migrant populations Great love of sport but poor community facilities Comparative analysis nationally/internationally for best practice learning Development of tourism industry (2) Complexity of application process Communicate delivery/accountability of this plan Planting of trees and rewilding of poor land

A10 Summary Policy Review

A10.1 Alignment with International Policy

UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The LDS in Waterford can support direct actions that will impact positively at a local level on seven of the ten objectives in the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Three of the objectives, while totally in line with LEADER thinking are either global actions, or are the direct responsibility of a State body such as Teagasc.

Common Agricultural Policy 2023 -2027

LEADER is 5% of the total CAP Budget. LEADER can action at a local level seven of the ten objectives under CAP. Three of the objectives will be actioned by Teagasc and DAFM.

EU Rural Pact and EU Rural Action

The LEADER Strategy and implementation in Waterford can and will touch on all the objectives outlined in the EU Rural Pact and EU Rural Action, Building Blocks One and Two.

The European Green Deal

The overriding ambition of the Green Deal which aims “*To Transform the Union into a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy,*” is central to the actions which will be outlined below in the Action Plan.

A Long-Term Vision for the EU’s Rural Areas

LEADER in the next programme will address nine of the ten action areas outlined in the Long-Term Vision for the EU’s Rural Areas. Transport and mobilities will come under the DTCAGSM, the DECC, and the NTA.

EU Charter for Fundamental Rights

LEADER will operate in an open and transparent matter, using mechanisms such as the open targeted call process for projects to ensure that all citizens are aware and able to apply for assistance to the LEADER programme subject to meeting the E.U. and National eligibility guidelines.

A10.2 Alignment with National Policy

Project Ireland 2040

LEADER will compliment both the National Planning Framework and the National Development Plan 2021 – 2030. LEADER cannot assist in areas such as mainstream health and housing, it will assist Towns Centre First through the development of Tier 1 Community Groups, through complimentary supports to both community and private promoters alike, and not competing with other statutory programmes for promoters or projects.

Programme for Government – *Our Shared Future*

The LEADER strategy will action at a local level the assistance to indigenous rural businesses, scaling and enterprise sustainability and will work in tandem with the LEO to ensure professional assistance and avoid duplication of both effort and funding.

Climate Action Plan 2023

The LEADER strategy will support practical actions and will work in unison with the WC&CC and their Climate Action Team, the Southeast Energy Agency and local SEC's, indigenous business interests and local landowners who do not have a herd number.

Our Rural Future: Rural Development Policy 2021-2025

The key deliverables of revitalising rural town centres and villages, rural jobs, rural tourism and culture and a holistic placed based development approach will be key components on the Objectives and Actions detailed in the Action Plan below.

A10.3 Alignment with Regional Policy

Regional Spatial and Economic Policy

The LDS in Waterford aligns with the six components of the Southern Regional Assembly's vision for the Southern Region. While these are high level principles, LDS alignment with them strengthens regional coherence in terms of actions and potential outcomes.

A10.4 Alignment with Local Policy

Waterford City and County LECP

The LDS has been designed to align with and reinforce the eight high-level goals of the Local Economic and Community Plan: -

1. Liveability and Quality of Life.
2. Health and Wellbeing.
3. Inclusion and Accessibility.
4. Resilience and Sustainability.
5. Low Carbon and Sustainable Economy.
6. Economic Diversity and Sustainable Growth.
7. Sustainable Placemaking and Destination Management.
8. Innovation and Digital Transition.

Waterford Regional Metropolitan Area Strategy Plan

While the LDS does not cover much of the Metropolitan area, the development of the Metropolitan Area is very important for the rural areas in the Mid, East and the Northern peri-urban areas of the County, as increased population with increased earning potential will provide opportunity for the development of these areas, with the LDS providing the necessary stimulation in Rural Communities.

Waterford City and County Development Plan 2022-2028

This is the key statutory document for the County. The actions outlined below for the LDS are aligned with the vision of the CCDP and will compliment several of the goals set out in the strategy.

Waterford Economic Strategy 2040 and LECP 2023-2029

The four LECP High Level Economic goals as outlined the Waterford Economic Strategy 2040 provides a further policy basis for the actions to be implemented through the LDS. The Community High Level Goals provides a sound policy foundation for the proposed actions under Theme 2, Social Inclusion.

County Tourism Strategy

The WC&CC Tourism Strategy was compiled in 2016/17, i.e., the pre-pandemic period. This is in the process of being updated.

Draft Fáilte Ireland Strategy for Waterford

The LDS is fully in line with the draft Fáilte Ireland strategy where the key takeaways are:

- The need for alternative forms of rural accommodation
- Sustainable Community Experiences
- Activity Tourism
- Slow Tourism
- Cultural Tourism and Bilingualism
- Five Rural Clusters – REDZ and SMART Villages
- Water-based Tourism.
- Iconic Attraction
- Quality Festivals

LCDC Social Inclusion Policy

The LCDC developed a *Social Inclusion Statement of Intent* to underpin the LECP. The objective of the LCDC was to ensure that social inclusion was embedded as a core principle in the LECP 20023-2029.

Strategic Alignment Contribution of the LDS to the LCDC Policy Document

The outcome of the consultation process with the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) Subcommittee of the LCDC, WAP CLG and a meeting with the secretariat of the PPN identified a hierarchy of potential community organisations ranked according to their capacity: -

- *Tier 1 Groups*: comprising approximately fourteen community and voluntary organisations that can demonstrate board-level capacity to apply for many of the DRCD Programmes, including LEADER.
- *Tier 2 Groups*: approximately twenty community and voluntary organisations that, with significant assistance, could apply for DRCD Programmes, including LEADER. These organisations have members with good skill sets and some appropriate group training.
- *Tier 3 Groups*: representing the balance of community and voluntary organisations. These excellent local actors do not have the skillsets to take advantage of many funding calls.

Capacity Building for Voluntary Groups

Many groups in Tier 3 identified above are local activists, as distinct from local action groups. Tier 2 and Tier 3 groups should be allowed to acquire the necessary skills to rise to Tier 1 standards.

To further empower Tier 2 and 3 groups, LEADER will work with SICAP to develop a process where action-orientated groups (distinct from activist-orientated groups) will be referred to as LEADER for skilling. Given that the training provision available through LEADER is onerous and costly, a maximum of twelve groups over 2024, 2025 and 2026 will be facilitated (4 per annum). The outcome will be the addition of three additional Tier 1 and three additional Tier 2 groups operating within the LDS area. Due to the delivery cost and the work involved, the agreement with SICAP is that only genuinely capable tier three groups would be nominated.

A 50% fallout from this type of developmental training is expected due to the demands on individuals.

For Groups more focused on small projects and activism, two community-based training sessions, autumn, and winter, over three evenings will be provided in the municipal areas to give them the basics in application completion and the necessary ancillary evidence to accompany such applications. These courses will run in 2024, 2025 and 2026. They will be short, informative and to the point. A maximum of two individuals per group, with ten groups per municipal area, will be facilitated.

Back-to-Work Enterprise Area Allowance

Regarding start-up businesses or businesses initiated under the Back-to-Work Enterprise Allowance (BTWEA), transitioning from SICAP/DSP support to LEADER funding is challenging. Enterprises are prone to fail due to eligibility, displacement, and sustainability issues.

Where an eligible, well-structured business emerges from BTWEA, it will be given equal access to project evaluation through the LEADER Targeted Call and Review process.

Women's Shed

There is an opportunity to support the Women's Shed using the approach already trialled through the Lismore Men's Shed. This support involved commissioning a professional facilitator and trainer to assist the Group in structuring itself and its activities.

Societal Care

Social Prescribing is the practice of assisting people in addressing many aspects of their health without using unnecessary medication. An opportunity has been identified to provide training for women and young people working with their Social Prescribing Officer. The approach will involve the Officer trialling training interventions designed to assist individuals that do not require unnecessary medical intervention. If these training interventions work, the intention is to encourage WWETB to mainstream the concepts.

Farm Women

Engagement with Farm Women will be positively encouraged through the Enterprise and Tourism elements of LEADER or the mainstream agriculture initiatives such as the *Targeted Agriculture Modernisation Scheme* (TAMS).

Rural Women

The Implementer will support and not duplicate with the ***Accelerating the Creation of Rural Nascent Start-ups (ACORNS)*** Programme operated by the Department of Agriculture, Food, and the Marine. The ACORNS programme has been designed to support early-stage female entrepreneurs living in rural Ireland and runs over six months part-time. The Programme provides excellent support for new business start-ups owned by women.

Young People

Young people involved in mainstream sports are well-catered for in the LDS area. In the future, LEADER will work with community and voluntary organisations to promote activities in the arts to provide a broader range of opportunities for young people.

In locations where a significant population increase is likely, other facilities, such as multipurpose facilities led and promoted by unaligned community and voluntary organisations will be supported, subject to the standard requirements.

Regarding young people within the Justice System, *Green Care* or *Social Farming* and *Care Farming* can provide an essential intervention for individuals. Therefore, LEADER will be supporting *Green Care* through a suite of actions.

Older People

Over recent years LEADER has invested in digital equipment and digital training for older people. This was particularly necessary during the Covid-19 pandemic. It is envisioned that assisting Day-Care Centres to invest in digital technology and linking the centres to the WWETB will provide the ability to provide continuous training to older citizens who attend the centres.

People with Disabilities

LEADER, through support for Social Farming or Care Farming, provides non-medical care for people with intellectual disabilities and mental health issues. By supporting and promoting *Green Care*, LEADER will support the provision of assistance to people with intellectual disabilities and those with specific mental health issues.

New Communities

The LEADER Programme, in consultation with the Migrant's Rights Centre in Waterford, has committed to including migrant groups in structured training outlined above for local community and voluntary organisations.

Under the current LEADER Programme, the Social Farming initiative has made provision for International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS) residents within a ten-week Social Farming participation initiative.

SMART Village Concept

The EU CAP Network (formerly European Network for Rural Development) defines SMART Villages as communities⁷ in rural areas that use innovative solutions to improve their resilience, building on local strengths and opportunities. They rely on a participatory approach to develop and implement their strategy to improve their economic, social and/or environmental conditions by mobilising solutions offered by digital technologies. SMART Villages benefit from cooperation and alliances with other communities and actors in rural and urban areas.

A participatory approach means an active participation of the local community in the drawing up and decision-making regarding the SMART Village strategy.

Digital technologies include, for example, information and communication technologies, the exploitation of big data or innovations related to the Internet of Things (IoT). They act as a lever to enable SMART Villages to become more agile, make better use of their resources and improve the attractiveness of rural areas and the quality of life of rural residents.

SMART Village strategies respond to the challenges and needs by building on their local strengths and assets. Strategies may aim, for example, to: -

- Improve access to services (in various fields such as health, training, or transport).
- Enhance business opportunities and create jobs.
- The development of short food supply chains and farming practices.
- The development of renewable energies.
- Development of a circular economy.
- Better exploitation of natural resources.
- Adapt to climate change.
- Preserve the environment and biodiversity.
- Development of cultural heritage for greater visitor attractiveness.

⁷ *Communities in rural areas can include one or several settlements, without any restrictions regarding the administrative boundaries or the number of inhabitants.*

SMART Villages and LEADER 2023-2027

The close alignment of the objectives of SMART Villages with the LEADER Programme 2023-2027 Themes is apparent.

The LDS will implement the SMART Village Methodology in a suite of villages over the programme's life. In conjunction with the SMART Village process, a layered REDZ process will be put in place in several municipal areas where villages within a functional area will be facilitated to develop Rural Economic Development Zones encompassing 3-4 villages working together to act as a functional unit providing jobs, childcare, healthcare, etc. The importance of a functional area created by combining 3-4 villages ensures that all locals have access to services and jobs, if not in their village, then in the village next to them.

The SMART Village Methodology will underpin the REDZ methodology, which will provide the Third Space, thus giving the services that rural dwellers require in a local geographic area.

REDZ – Rural Economic Development Zones

Through their implementing Partner, Waterford LEADER Partnership CLG, Waterford LAG has previously utilised the Rural Economic Development Zone (REDZ) methodology promoted by the DRCD and Teagasc. The REDZ approach focuses on the importance of place. Place is important for Local Action Groups.

Importance of Place

Place impacts on economic and social outcomes: Life chances are strongly influenced by where one is born / lives. Places with key attributes are more likely than others to attract certain types of investment. Policies come together in particular ways in particular places.

Drivers of productivity come together in places. Places reflect a specific combination of natural, physical, human, and cultural assets that affect the potential for development and the productivity of firms within that place. These characteristics produce or attract the type of investment/workers they need. However, there are limits to people's ability to move and commute. The financial and social costs of mobility act as a barrier to mobility. For some, commuting is not economically or socially viable, e.g., the low-skilled or those who own geographically fixed assets.

Greater integration into global economies means growing numbers of people are increasingly embedded within extended production spaces. Most people live their lives and function within "*a locally specific, place-orientated logic and often in defence of locally specific interests or local identity.*" (Cummins and Keane, 1995, p.188). People view change through the lens of what it means for themselves, their families, and their immediate locality. The wider context is generally downplayed. For development strategies to be effective, they need to reflect the local context.

REDZs are functional economic areas, i.e., they are functional rather than administrative, i.e., the boundaries reflect patterns of economic activity (travel-to-work) rather than administrative areas.

Community Enterprise Modules and Belbin

Since the mid-1990's the development of structured place-based groups has been a key component of LEADER and Social Inclusion in Waterford. In partnership with FÁS in the 1990s, the Community Enhancement Programme Modules developed by Niall Greene were used to facilitate local Groups such as Cappoquin Development CLG, Dunhill Rural Enterprises, Tallow Enterprise, and Ballymacarbry, all of whom now have very significant service delivery operations in their own areas. The Community Enhancement Programme methodology and the SMART Village methodology are separated by 35 years in terms of time but are practically identical in approach.

A11 RDP Salary Scales

WATERFORD LEADER PARTNERSHIP CLG

SALARY SCALES FOR CORE STAFF & RDP STAFF EMPLOYED PRE 31.12.2017

Point on Scale	CEO	€
1		69,658
2		72,267
3		74,870
4		77,483
5		80,090
6		81,592
7		84,225
8		86,864
9	1st LSI after 3yrs on pt 8	90,701
10	2nd LSI after 3yrs on pt 9	94,550

Point on Scale	Clerical Officer	€
1		24,397
2		25,534
3		26,672
4		27,811
5		28,950
6		30,091
7		31,228
8		32,364
9		33,505
10		34,645
11		35,773
12		37,534
13	1st LSI after 3yrs on pt 12	38,922
14	2nd LSI after 3yrs on pt 13	39,557

Point on Scale	Project Officer/Administrator/Financial Controller-Assistant CEO	€
1		32,182
2		34,527
3		36,335
4		38,083
5		39,825
6		41,531
7		43,254
8		44,931
9		46,658
10		47,802
11		49,007
12		50,495
13		51,980
14		53,464
15		54,952
16		56,438
17		57,923
18	1st LSI after 3yrs on pt 17	60,069
19	2nd LSI after 3yrs on pt 18	62,210

Notes

The above staff are eligible for an increment on an annual basis or after a 3 year period for a LSI if the following happens;

- Their coordinator/CEO decide that their performance during the previous year merits an increase, i.e. they have achieved any goals/objectives set for the year, have adhered to the company & programme policies and have always put the interests of the company first.

And

- The budget for the programme allows sufficient scope to award an increment for that year & maintain the payment of that salary on an ongoing basis.

(The Chair & Vice Chair/Secretary) will decide if the CEO's performance warrants an increment or not.)

The FC also acts as Assistant CEO & fills in for the CEO during any absences, the PO/Admin scale is applicable to them but once they have reached point 19 on that scale & remained on point 19 for 2 years then they move to point 1 on the Manager scale. They can only move to the next point on the Manager scale after a further 2 years. This is applicable to each point on the scale, with the maximum point for Assistant CEO being point 5.

Once the CEO, PO & Admin reach the last point on the scales above there will be no further increment, unless their role changes significantly & the Board decide that additional responsibility has warranted an increase.

All RDP staff employed pre 31.12.2017 are part of the company pension scheme.

Waterford Local Development Strategy 2023-2027

WATERFORD LEADER PARTNERSHIP CLG

SALARY SCALES FOR CORE STAFF & RDP STAFF EMPLOYED POST 31.12.2017

Point on Scale	CEO	€	Point on Scale	Project Officer/Administrator	€
1		69,658	1		32,182
2		72,267	2		34,527
3		74,870	3		36,335
4		77,483	4		38,083
5		80,090	5		39,825
6		81,592	6		41,531
7		84,225	7		43,254
8		86,864	8		44,931
9	1st LSI after 3yrs on pt 8	90,701	9	1st LSI after 3yrs on pt 8	46,658
10	2nd LSI after 3yrs on pt 9	94,550	10	2nd LSI after 3yrs on pt 9	47,802

Point on Scale	Clerical Officer	€	Point on Scale	Financial Controller- Assistant CEO	€
1		24,397	1		32,182
2		25,534	2		34,527
3		26,672	3		36,335
4		27,811	4		38,083
5		28,950	5		39,825
6		30,091	6		41,531
7		31,228	7		43,254
8		32,364	8		44,931
9	1st LSI after 3yrs on pt 8	33,505	9		46,658
10	2nd LSI after 3yrs on pt 9	34,645	10		47,802
			11		49,007
			12		50,495
			13		51,980
			14		53,464
			15		54,952
			16		56,438
			17		57,923
			18	1st LSI after 3yrs on pt 17	60,069
			19	2nd LSI after 3yrs on pt 18	62,210

Notes

- The above staff are eligible for an increment on an annual basis or after a 3 year period for a LSI if the following happens;
 - Their coordinator/CEO decide that their performance during the previous year merits an increase, i.e. they have achieved any goals/objectives set for the year, have adhered to the company & programme policies and have always put the interests of the company first.

And

 - The budget for the programme allows sufficient scope to award an increment for that year & maintain the payment of that salary on an ongoing basis.

(The Chair & Vice Chair/Secretary) will decide if the CEO's performance warrants an increment or not.)
- The FC also acts as Assistant CEO & fills in for the CEO during any absences, the PO/Admin scale is applicable to them but once they have reached point 19 on that scale & remained on point 19 for 2 years then they move to point 1 on the Manager scale. They can only move to the next point on the Manager scale after a further 2 years. This is applicable to each point on the scale, with the maximum point for Assistant CEO being point 5.
- Once the CEO, PO & Admin reach the last point on the scales above there will be no further increment, unless their role changes significantly & the Board decide that additional responsibility has warranted an increase.
- For any RDP/Core staff hired after 31.12.2017 the minimum starting salary will be point 1 & the maximum starting salary will be point 4 of the relevant scale. New employees will only start above point 1 where they are deemed to have a number of years experience in a relevant role.
- Staff employed after 31.08.2022 will be eligible to join the company pension scheme after they successfully complete their six month probation period.