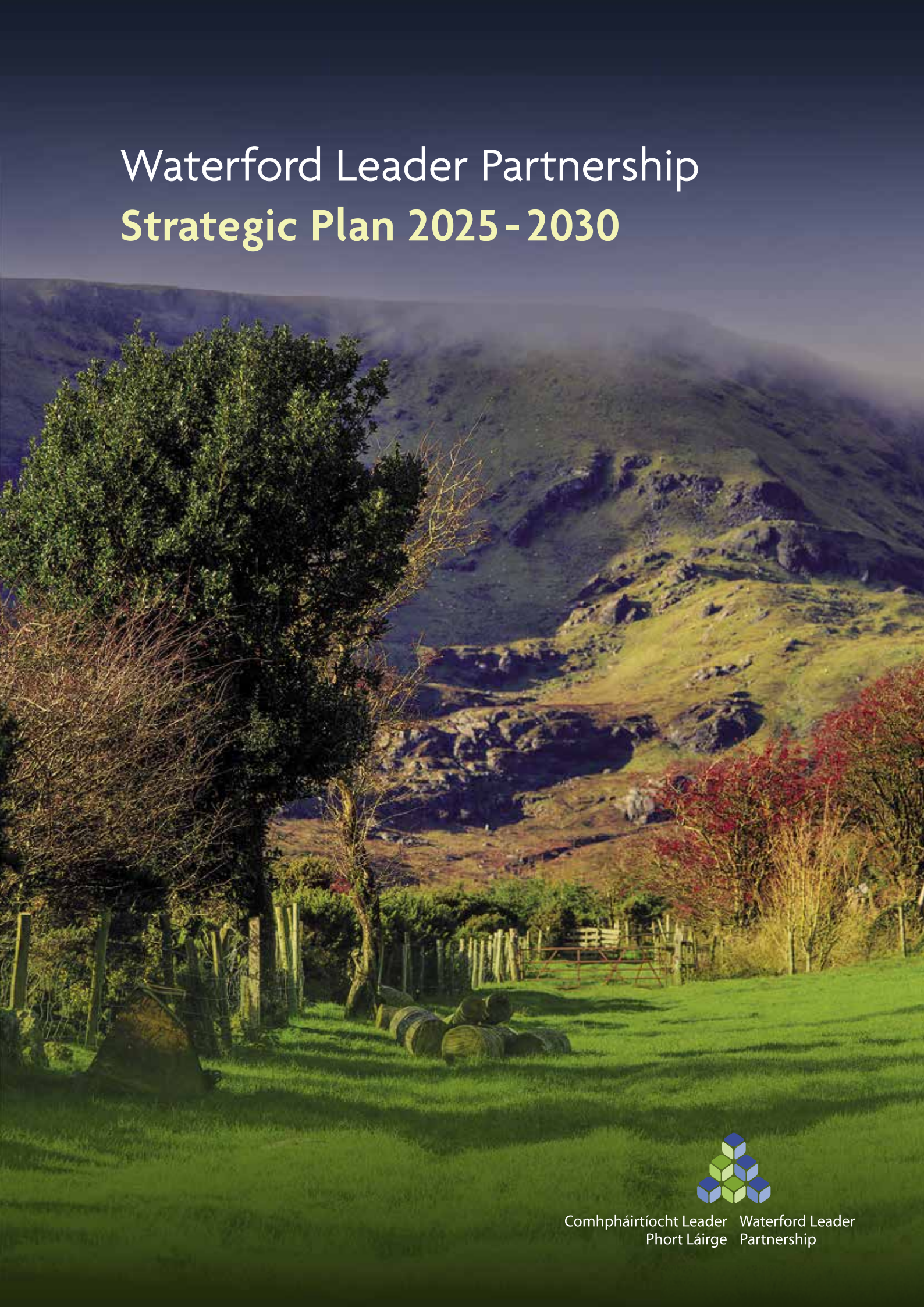
Waterford Leader Partnership
Strategic Plan 2025 - 2030



Comhpháirtíocht Leader Phort Láirge
Waterford Leader Partnership

...thriving, sustainable communities which have a strong sense of place.

FOREWORD

Waterford LEADER Partnership CLG (WLP) is delighted to present our Strategic Plan for 2025-2030. This new strategic plan represents our unwavering commitment to enhancing the quality of life for our communities in County Waterford and the wider Southeast.

WLP has achieved a lot over the past 34 years providing invaluable support to individuals, enterprises and communities. We recognise that this was made possible by a committed Board and staff, funders, communities, voluntary groups and all our stakeholders. To continue our unwavering commitment to community-led local development the importance of this strategic plan cannot be overstated. It is a roadmap for our organisation, guiding our efforts to address the growing needs of our clients and stakeholders. Through comprehensive analysis and engagement, we have identified key areas of focus that will drive our initiatives over the next five years.

Our new strategic plan recognises the wider environment in which we operate and will assist WLP to grow as an organisation focusing on what is important and achievable, while being aspirational.

Our commitment to implement this plan is resolute. Our objective is to have tangible outcomes. We recognise that the success of our initiatives depends on our ability to adapt, innovate, and collaborate. By leveraging our collective expertise and resources, we aim to create meaningful and lasting impacts that benefit the individuals, enterprises and communities we support.

We wish to thank everybody that contributed to the development of this strategic plan. Your insights and support have made a real difference. Together, we will work tirelessly to achieve the goals set forth in this plan, ensuring a brighter and more prosperous future for all.

Austin Flavin **Chair**
Waterford LEADER Partnership CLG

Christine Rossi **CEO**
Waterford LEADER Partnership CLG

1. BACKGROUND

Waterford LEADER Partnership (WLP) CLG is a community led Local Development Company, which works with communities, families, individuals and businesses. It delivers programmes, projects and initiatives in partnership with local communities and statutory agencies to provide a range of training, mentoring, technical, funding and development supports, all aimed at helping to develop and deliver services and facilities which meet local needs.

The company was established in 1991 and is one of 49 Local Development Companies operating throughout Ireland.

In common with many development companies and as set out in its constitution the main object of the company is –

To promote, support, assist and engage in (a) social development, (b) enterprise development to facilitate rural and urban regeneration and (c) community development, designed to benefit and promote the welfare of local communities or to deal with the causes and consequences of social and economic disadvantage or poverty.

It is important to note that WLP is a Company Limited by Guarantee without a share capital and that, as such, any income or surplus it might generate is not shared with any member of the company or other party but is re-invested in the work of the company. WLP is also a Charity and is, therefore, bound by the requirements of the Charities legislation and by the Charities Governance Code with which it must be compliant.

While the overall objective of the company is quite specific, it operates across a broad range of activities and has multiple avenues through which it can work toward achieving that objective.

In the light of that, it is important that WLP consider what should be its priorities for the next number of years, what it should seek to achieve; and in what way it should go about achieving it. This will allow the organisation to pursue those activities and projects which are its priorities but will also give it a rationale when it decides not to undertake something which has potential but is not part of its particular focus at that point in time.

2. INTRODUCTION

A strategic plan serves as a vital roadmap, guiding organisations and stakeholders toward achieving long-term social, economic, and environmental objectives. It aligns resources, fosters collaboration, and helps to ensure that organisational efforts are both effective and sustainable.

Amongst the key Purposes of a Strategic Plan are:

1. Establishing a Shared Vision and Direction for Board, Management, Staff and other Stakeholders
2. Giving an Opportunity to Identify and Discuss the Organisations Key Values
3. Aligning Resources and Efforts
4. Enhancing Engagement and Ownership
5. Facilitating Adaptability and Responsiveness
6. Supporting Accountability and Continuous Improvement
7. Listening to the Views of Key Stakeholders

While the strategic plan is very much a document owned by the organisation itself and its members, the preparation of the strategic plan also gives an opportunity to listen to the views of key stakeholders and to respond to those views within the goals and objectives of the plan.

In summary, a strategic plan is indispensable for organisations such as Waterford LEADER Partnership CLG, in its goal to create lasting positive change. It provides a structured approach to decision-making, encourages collaboration, and contributes to ensuring that organisational efforts are both targeted and effective.

3. STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. Key Stages of the Strategic Planning Process

The Waterford LEADER Partnership CLG strategic planning process was carried out following a clear model, consisting of a series of inter-related steps. In general, each step was dependent on the completion of the previous step and informed by the output of that step.

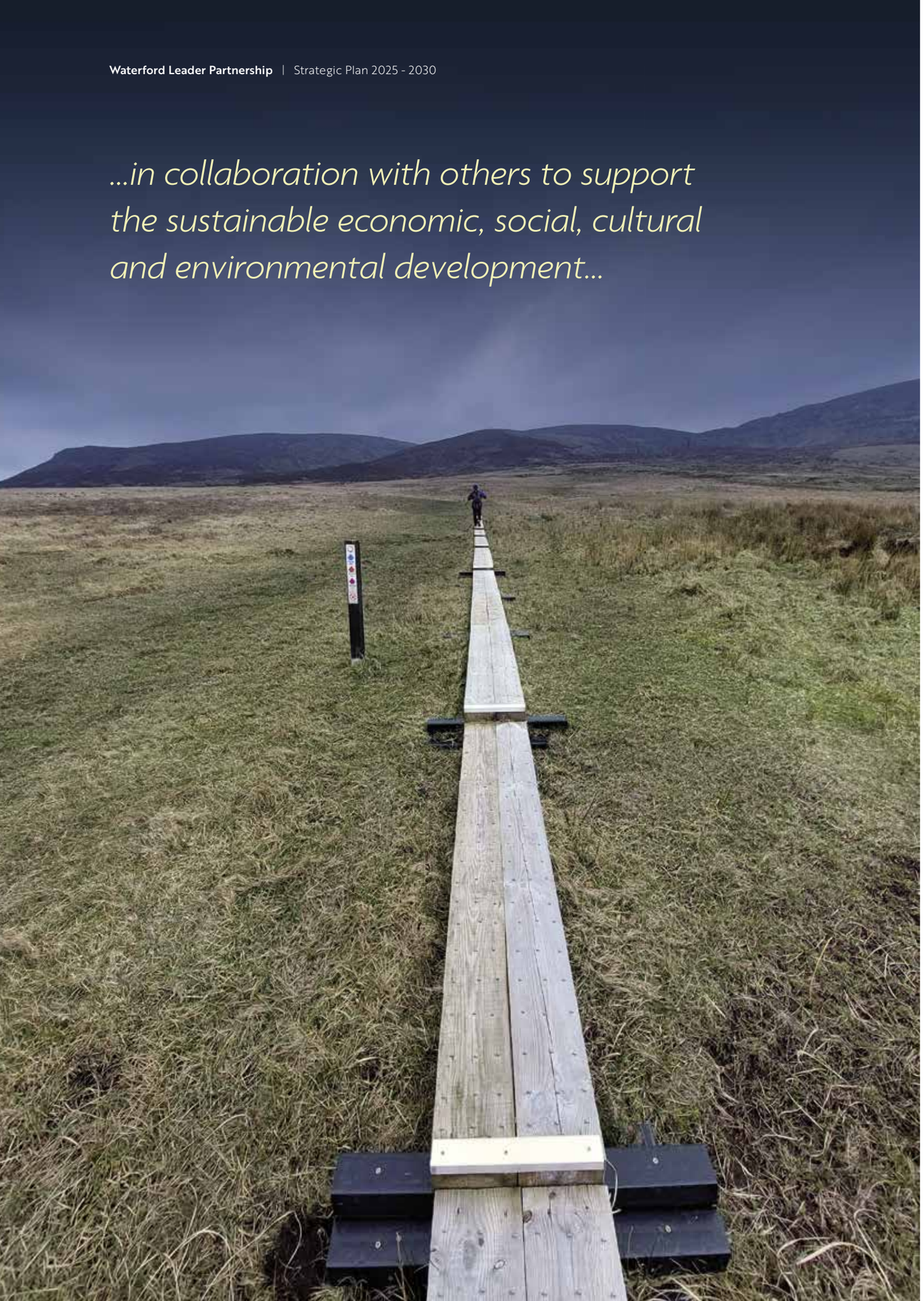
The process proposed was highly participative, with a central role for the Board and staff. Other key stakeholders were consulted at the Draft Stage but only with respect to Mission, Vision,

Values, Goals and Objectives. At each stage of the process, the way in which the intended outcomes might be achieved was taken into consideration, as well as the likelihood of success.

The process as described above has four stages, each with defined inputs, activities and outputs, ultimately leading to the production of the final draft strategy.

Figure 1 Key stages of the strategic planning process

...in collaboration with others to support the sustainable economic, social, cultural and environmental development...



4. MISSION, VISION AND VALUES OF WATERFORD LEADER PARTNERSHIP CLG

4.1. Mission

The following is the mission statement for Waterford LEADER Partnership CLG. This mission statement is essentially a statement of purpose for the organisation and, at a strategic level, should underpin everything done by the organisation.

Waterford LEADER Partnership is a trusted, independent, not for profit development company that works in collaboration with others to support the sustainable economic, social, cultural and environmental development of the areas it serves. It seeks to improve quality of life through authentic engagement with, and the provision of financial and other supports to individuals, enterprises and community and voluntary groups, primarily through the delivery of publicly funded programmes.

4.2. Vision

The vision of an organisation sets out a future end state towards which the organisation is working. In this case the vision is one for the area within which it works and its population. The WLP vision is as follows.

Waterford LEADER Partnership's vision is that of a region with thriving, sustainable communities which have a strong sense of place. In this vision economic activity is progressive and dynamic, communities are united and empowered to have a major impact on their own futures, and where every individual has the opportunity to enjoy a better quality of life, with the support and leadership of Waterford LEADER Partnership.

4.3. Values – Our Promise to You

Values are judgements about what is right and wrong. When considering these in the context of an organisation, they can refer both to individual values and organisational values or principles.

Values are relevant only when they drive people's behaviour and how people interact with and treat each other. Organisational values refer to the ways in which an organisation undertakes to interact with its stakeholders.

VALUE	WE WILL
Respect	• Ensure that everyone, both internal and external to the organisation, is treated with dignity • Be conscious of the impact of words on another person • Nurture people and treating them with courtesy • Respond in a timely fashion • Really listen to what someone is saying - not make assumptions based on certain characteristics • Be non-judgemental and recognise our own limitations • Work with others where multiple needs are identified • Consider the impact on the individual of group decisions and seek to mitigate any negative individual impacts
Inclusiveness	• Actively consider the impact of decisions on marginalised and excluded groups and individuals • Take steps to combat unintentional exclusion and unconscious bias • Review accessibility and how any potential barriers might be addressed • Seek to unlock the empowering role of inclusion as well as its equity role
Accountability	• Be willing to take responsibility for decisions at both a personal and organisational levels and not assigning unwarranted blame to others • Have the systems and processes in place and being used by all, which are necessary for good control to be exercised and reported

VALUE	WE WILL
Accountability	• Try to make decision-making and reporting processes open and shared, equitable and impartial • Identify all factors which enter into decision-making • Be mindful of the importance of trust in the work of the organisation
Effectiveness	• Embed high quality is as an important metric for the organisation • Take work on only to the extent that the resources are available to produce a high-quality outcome • Carry out regular client evaluations and share overall results • Pursue staff development in the context of roles and responsibilities • Reflect on our own effectiveness • Put systems in place to allow a response to areas where effectiveness can be improved are identified • Put effectiveness KPIs in place and use them • Be willing to seek different approaches to doing things even if they are disruptive • Be willing to accept a higher level of risk in proposals where the approach is new and the returns potentially significant

5. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Following a series of strategic planning sessions which identified the mission, vision and values of Waterford LEADER Partnership CLG, further sessions were held with staff and Board to identify the areas of importance which should govern the work of the company.

This part of the Strategic Plan covers four main areas under which the goals and objectives are grouped:

- Organisation Impact
- Resourcing
- Organisation Capacity and
- Organisation Presence and Profile

5.1. UN Strategic Development Goals

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a global blueprint adopted in 2015 by all UN Member States to promote peace, prosperity, and environmental sustainability by 2030. They comprise 17 interconnected goals addressing critical global challenges such as poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace, and justice.

The SDGs were developed with a global focus. However, they are also relevant at a local level and are important in bringing attention to the key considerations which should inform more local level planning. Localising the SDGs involves adapting global objectives to the specific needs and contexts of communities, ensuring that sustainable development is meaningful and actionable at the grassroots level.

Waterford LEADER Partnership CLG has been very conscious of the SDGs in preparing this Strategic Plan. A case could be made that many goals and objectives address many of the SDGs although, of course, some are more relevant to the work of the organisation than others.

5.2. Strategic Goals

These are the key Goals for WLP over the next five years.

Organisational Impact

Goal 1
That WLP will continue to be a leading support for the social and economic development of rural communities including the stimulation of enterprise development and expansion, and the creation of new employment opportunities

Goal 2
That the WLP will be an organisation that supports communities in transitioning to a sustainable, low-carbon society in accordance with Government policy.

Resourcing

Goal 3
That WLP will have secured and be effectively managing the financial and other resources necessary for the maintenance and future growth of the organisation

Goal 4
That WLP will proactively engage with potential partner organisations in order to develop mutually beneficial business opportunities aligned with organisational objectives and the continuing delivery by WLP of its current major programmes

Organisational Capacity

Goal 5
That WLP will create a system of governance, management and staff development which will enhance the organisation's capacity and meet the requirements of all funders

Goal 6
That WLP will continue to attract and retain a highly skilled, motivated and committed staff

Organisational Presence and Profile

Goal 7
That WLP will raise the profile and enhance the recognition of the organisation as a leader in the area of local development

5.3. Objectives

Some of the important areas which Waterford LEADER Partnership CLG will address when pursuing those goals are as follows.

- To help to enable significant community projects, services, facilities and infrastructure and to support their management and operation
- To assist in the building of community capacity, including digital capacity, and that of their leaders
- To support increased services to persons with disabilities in rural areas
- To support people in rural areas to become job-ready and access employment through targeted programmes
- To support enterprises to establish, grow and diversify
- To develop and implement guidelines informed by the strategic plan which seeks to maximise potential funding and other resourcing opportunities
- To put in place systems and processes that enable funder requirements to be met so that existing funding is maintained
- To investigate potential new collaborative relationships and prioritise those which are likely to be most beneficial
- To continue to recruit Board members with the skill-sets necessary to support the mission and strategic goals of the company
- To create a management and staff structure which will be effective in the delivery of this strategic plan

- To actively support existing staff in developing the skills and knowledge necessary to their current and potential future roles
- To develop management systems and processes which will facilitate evidence-based decision-making within the organisation
- To enhance internal communication structures between all staff, management and Board so that a two-way flow of ideas and information is facilitated
- To continue to enhance good governance practices
- To adopt and implement a social inclusion protocol which is applied to all significant programmes, plans and actions of the WLP
- To increase staff resources and structures to deliver additional high-quality work for WLP
- To develop, resource and implement an integrated communication and promotion strategy for WLP with clear target audiences and with defined outcomes

6. IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

6.1. Annual Action Plan

A strategy is an overall framework for the future which identifies the goals and objectives of the organisation.

On an ongoing basis, annual action plans will need to be prepared to operationalise the strategic actions and achieve the goals and objectives as set out in the strategy. The action plans will be produced on a rolling basis. They will have a two to three-year time horizon and will contain targets and indicators which are related to the goals and objectives contained in the strategy. They will also identify the budgets and other resources required for each action, including a timeframe and named coordinator of the action.

A Draft Annual Action Plan will be prepared by the staff of WLP under the direction of the CEO for approval of the Board which will be the principal oversight body for the implementation of the strategy.

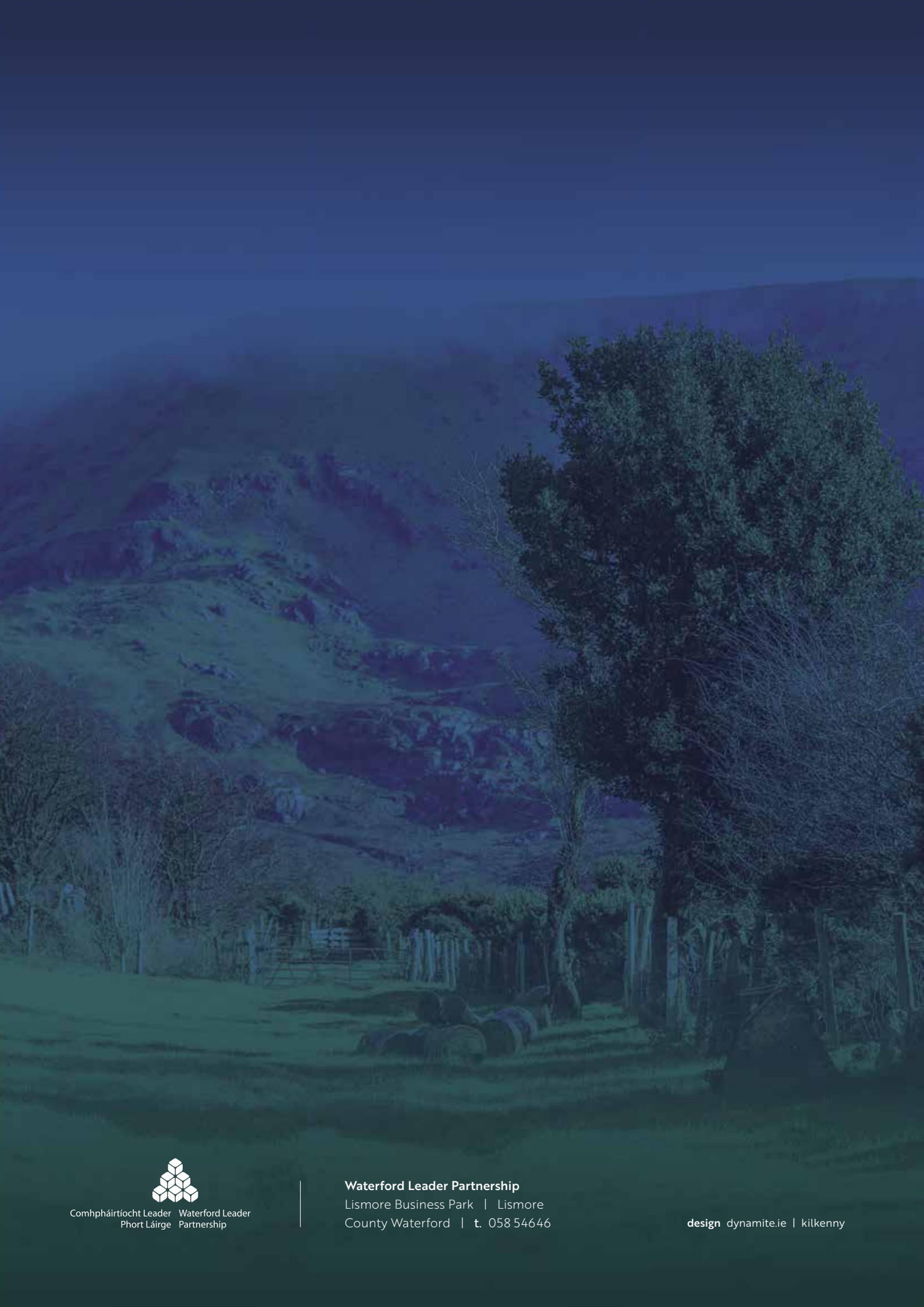
The actions identified in the approved Annual Action Plan will feed through to the Annual Performance Objectives for the relevant staff members.

6.2. Review of WLP and its Strategy

The achievements of WLP will be reviewed on a regular, though not unduly frequent basis. There will be a different timeframe for measuring inputs, outputs and outcomes. This is partly to do with the time that needs to be permitted to elapse between actions and outcomes, and partly to the availability of the different types of data for monitoring and evaluation.

The review process will help point towards matters that may need to be changed, although unduly quick responses in the context of long-term issues will need to be avoided.

The review processes will use both quantitative and qualitative data and narrative examples of achievement (and of challenges) will be used in this process as well as quantitative measures of achievement.



Comhpháirtíocht Leader Phort Láirge
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Waterford Leader Partnership
Lismore Business Park | Lismore
County Waterford | **t.** 058 54646

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