

WATERFORD CITY COUNCIL

**TO: HER WORSHIP THE MAYOR AND EACH
MEMBER OF WATERFORD CITY COUNCIL**

Annual Budget for the year 1st January 2008 to 31st December 2008

Introduction

In presenting the annual budget for 2008, it is worth noting that 2007 has seen very positive investment in both service delivery by this Council and in a propulsive capital programme. This programme has seen very significant progress on delivery of key infrastructure:-

- The Waterford City Bypass
- Waterford Main Drainage Scheme
- The Old Kilmeaden Road Realignment
- The Williamstown Road Realignment

It has also seen investment for the future of the city through the purchase of the freehold of a section of the South Quays and the location for the new headquarters for this Council. Many other improvements in our services and infrastructure have been delivered in 2007 and these are collated in the documentation hereafter in respect of each of the directorates.

The current financial position of the Council has improved in recent years with the accumulated deficit on the Revenue Account (€687,049 on 31st December 2006) being further improved in the current year through prudent financial management.

It is important that this situation continues to improve but equally that we ensure continued investment in our services and in the infrastructure of the city. In so doing we have to be mindful of future pressures on the financial front while ensuring that the economic potential of the city is realised through continuing investment, focused on the areas of best economic return.

In respect of the pressures which will come to bear over the next few years, the foremost of these is in the implementation of the National Water Pricing Policy. The cost burden deriving from the commissioning of the Waste Water Treatment Plant and from major improvements in our water supply systems will kick in from 2009 and will place a considerable strain on our resources. Equally it is important that we make appropriate provision for our new Civic Headquarters and for the Tall Ships event in 2011 and this budget takes account of all these through increases in revenue expenditure in the different areas.

In respect of income generation, I am very mindful of the need to maintain competitiveness in respect of our charges and in general we have retained increases to the least possible. The key income/charge increases can be summarised as follows:

- Commercial Water - €1.05 per cu. m. to €1.53 per cu. m.
- Rates (+ 4%)
- Parking - no change
- Refuse Collection - €20 increase on the annual household charge
- An increase of 5.6% in the Local Government Fund has been presumed.

With respect to the above there are a number of points which should be noted:-

1. The increase in the Commercial Water charge (and the inclusion of a wastewater charge as part of same) is reflective of the commencement of the cost burden arising from the wastewater and water supply infrastructure improvements.
2. Commercial rates are being increased by less than the anticipated inflation rate having regard to competitiveness and the increase in the burden on commercial water users.
3. Parking charges are not being increased to ensure the attractiveness of our city centre as a location for business and to allow the impact of the change to pay and display to be assessed.
4. The refuse collection income has not been increased despite an increase in charges consequent on entry of competition in the market from the private sector. It is worth noting that increases in this area are likely to be constrained in the future to ensure pricing competitiveness.

These are but a number of the main areas covered in this proposed annual budget for 2008 and a more detailed breakdown of the financial provisions and the work programmes intended follow hereafter. I would like to thank the Mayor, Cllr. Mary O' Halloran and the CPG for the assistance in the preparation of this budget. A special word of thanks goes to Mr. John Murphy, Head of Finance and his team, and to the other Directors of Service and their teams for their continued commitment to the financial well-being of this Council.

I have no hesitation in recommending this proposed budget to Council. I consider that it achieves a reasonable balance between ensuring financial stability and placing the city such that it can meet the ongoing investment and service delivery requirements into the future. Accordingly I would request the support of all members of the Council at the Statutory Budget Meeting.

Michael Walsh
City Manager

THE DIRECTORATE OF FINANCE

Finance

“The overall objective of the Finance section is to secure the economic sustainability of the organisation.” (Corporate Plan 2004-2009).

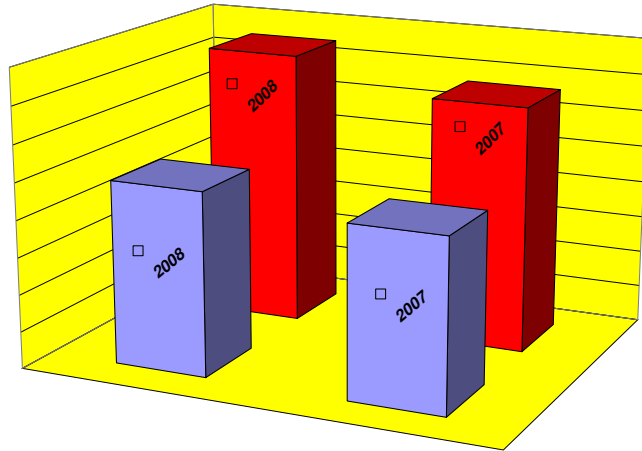
In finance we are continuing to develop our financial systems so as to ensure the maximum utilisation of our resources on an ongoing basis, including the provision of modern payment facilities and an effective internal audit function.

Expenditure 2008

In recognition of the commitment to promoting and developing a sustainable, vibrant and attractive city the budget for 2008 provides for expenditure of €62.3m. This represents an increase of €5.8m or 10.3% over the budget adopted for 2007. The following table sets out the expenditure by programme group.

	2008 €	2007 €
1. Housing and Building	13,695,810	11,390,556
2. Road Transportation and Safety	7,939,926	7,806,311
3. Water Supply and Sewerage	6,318,262	5,757,276
4. Development Incentives and Controls	3,764,229	3,177,273
5. Environmental Protection	15,920,774	15,510,171
6. Recreation and Amenity	6,446,499	6,037,566
7. Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare	5,893,704	4,703,956
8. Miscellaneous Services	2,296,245	2,076,380
 Total	 62,275,449	 56,459,489

Pay/Non Pay Divide



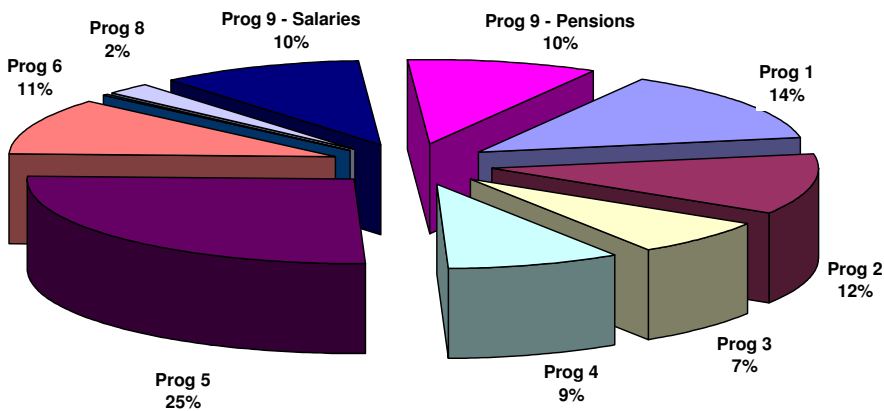
	2008	2007
Payroll & Pensions	24,814,157	23,067,811
Non Payroll	37,461,292	33,391,678

Payroll and Pensions

Payroll and pension costs are budgeted to increase by 7.6% in 2008. This is a result of a number of factors:

- The continued employment of the current levels of employees, including seasonal workers, where required.
- The payment of the national wage agreement in 2008.
- Provision has also been made for additional retirements in 2008.

Payroll Costs by Programme



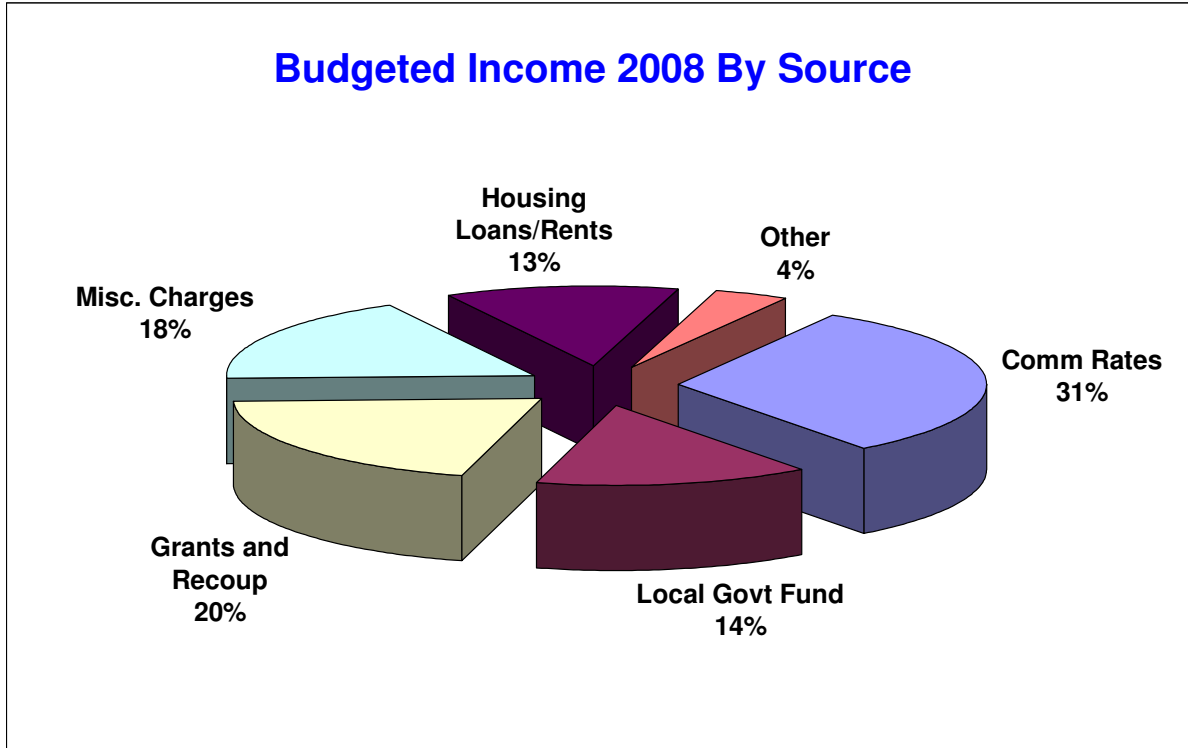
Non Payroll Costs

In framing the budget, every effort has been made to ensure that the quality of services provided is maintained, while at the same time ensuring that the critical issues facing Waterford City are resourced. In 2008 there will be a number of additional costs and unavoidable increases in current costs, mainly as follows:

- Maintenance/Planned Maintenance €226,000
- Road upkeep including Public Lighting €172,000
- Public Water Supply €246,000
- Public Sewerage Schemes €425,000
- Planning/Future Planning €356,000
- Fire Service €283,000
- Waivers €230,000
- Library Service €104,000

Income 2008

Below is a summary of our proposed income for 2008 by sources.



Budget Deficit

Council should be aware that the budget deficit at the end of 2006 was €687,049. A small but significant reduction is expected in 2007 to €582,919. This improvement is to be welcomed, however, the situation will continue to be monitored.

Information Systems

*“The overall objective of the Information Systems section is to support and enhance service delivery with a comprehensive IT infrastructure and appropriate information systems.”
(Corporate Plan 2004-2009).*

Information Systems

In line with most businesses our computer network infrastructure is now critical to our operations. We will continue to expand our network and develop systems and web applications, but our focus for 2008 will be on continuing the strengthening of our network, making it more resilient and secure, to guarantee no loss of data and ensure our ability to maintain IT services.

We also plan to develop our disaster recovery site at Carrickphierish depot into a fully functional fail over site.

The internet continues to be an important means of communication, with ever-increasing public expectations for online information and applications, and we will continue the expansion of our web presence and on-line services in 2008. As part of this ongoing expansion, we are working with our Planning Department to make planning files available for online viewing in the New Year. In addition to external facing systems, we will continue to maintain and develop in-house applications using industry standard .NET/SQL architecture.

Our core data is critical to our operations and we plan to commence a process in 2008 to bring our security up to the industry standard ISO 27001.

We made our first connection to the Metropolitan Area Network (MAN) this year, connecting City Hall and the new Depot at Carrickphierish, and we plan to go to tender in 2008 to expand the number of links to the MAN, replacing wireless links with fibre optic cabling.

80% of the Council’s information can be mapped. Geographical Information Systems (GIS) enables the Council to visualise, maintain, analyse, and display its information in a graphical map based format. A number of departments are now using GIS on a daily basis and we are now seeking to expand the use of the system to Housing, Water Services, Roads and Community and Enterprise. An internal Map Viewer is set to launch in 2008, this system will enable departments to share and access map based information from around the Council. As part of the long-term aim of linking up data within the Council, 2008 will see work commence on implementing a Central Address Database.

We continue to work with the Local Government Computer Services Board (LGCSB) to progress the Information Society locally, improve service delivery to citizens and business, ensure best use of public resources, and improve participation by citizens in the democratic processes of Government to ensure their inclusion and empowerment

THE DIRECTORATE OF HOUSING COMMUNITY & ENTERPRISE & EMERGENCY SERVICES

Housing

“The overall objective of the Housing section is to facilitate the provision of quality accommodation for those with needs and to promote the development of sustainable communities.” (Corporate Plan 2004-2009).

Housing Programme

The objective to facilitate the provision of quality accommodation for those who need it, is being met very significantly through a diverse range of programmes being delivered by the Housing Department on an ongoing basis. In fact the activity level in the Housing area at the present time is unprecedented with delivery of completed quality units by year end 2007 as follows,

- Rental Accommodation Scheme 67 units
- Part V Social 26 units
- Voluntary Housing 34 units
- Vacancies from existing stock 110 units
- Ballygunner Scheme 75 units
- Carrickphierish 74 units
- Green St Newports Tce. 3 units
- Purchases 16 units
- Group Houses 7 units
- City Co. Affordable Housing 50 units
- Affordable Housing Pt V 40 units

Total 502 units

The above programmes have secured the completion and delivery of modern homes to resolve the long term Housing need of 502 families/households in this City in 2007, making this a very significant achievement.

In addition the following numbers of Households benefited directly from Housing services in 2007.

- Disabled Persons Grants 71 units
- Central Heating installation 200 units
- Pre Planned Maintenance 331 units
- Shared Ownership Loans 27 units
- Affordable Loans 38 units
- Annuity Loans 5 units
- Tenant Purchases 21 units

Total 693 units

- Maintenance requests completed in 2007 3,055

When taken with the current major Remedial Works Scheme / Regeneration Programme, which has ramped up significantly during 2007 addressing more than **1,000** houses across the City, demonstrates a massive emphasis on delivering quality housing services across the city. The Housing Department has responded to the enormous demands that this level of delivery has required at all levels.

It is intended to continue to deliver a high level of Housing solutions in 2008 under the various programmes and in that context a further **431** units are either in progress or in Planning for 2008 commencement as follows.

The following schemes are currently under construction:-

• Morrison's Road	11 units
• St Martins Ave.	7 units
• Carrickphierish Upper	105 units
Sub total	123 units

The planning/design process is in place for the following schemes, with a view to commencement in 2008.

• Kilcohan/ Ballytruckle	6 units
• Larchville/Lisduggan infill	4 units
• St John's Park	10 units
• Priory Lawn/Ardmore Park infill	8 units
• Slievekeale	55 units
• Pt V Social	50 units
Sub total	133 units

Affordable Housing commenced in 2007

• Carrickphierish Upper	43 units
• Carrickphierish Lower	54 units
• Pt V Affordable	78 units
Sub total	175 units
TOTAL	431 units

Remedial Works' Scheme/Regeneration Programme

It is intended with Department approval to have all the remaining phases of the Remedial works schemes on site by the 1st Quarter 2008. This overall programme will have addressed more than **1,000** units across the City and is by far the most extensive remedial works programme in the country. The extent of this work is stretching resources both financially and staff wise.

The following works have been ongoing in 2007:

Ardmore Park: Phase 1A Phase 1B Phase 2A . Phase 2B and Phase 3 will commence in 2008.

Lisduggan: Phase 1A Phase 1B Phase 2A . Phase 2B and Phase 3 will commence in 2008.

Clonard Park: The final Phase of Ardmore park Phase 3 will commence early in 2008.

Larchville: It is intended to commence Phase 1 in 2008

The works on these houses includes new windows, new doors, central heating, insulation, rewiring, smoke Alarms, and redecoration as required. In addition external works are carried out to create a unified and refreshing exterior to the various schemes.

Significant progress has been achieved on the pre 1960's schemes in 2007 and were substantially completed in the following areas:-

Keanes road, Tycor Avenue, Congress Place, Ard Na Greine, Upper Yellow Road, Leamy Street, Slievekeale, Ard Mhuire, Hennesseys Road, Mount Sion Avenue, St. Johns Park, Connolly Place, Barrack Street, Cannon Street, Marion Terrace, Lombard Street, Mount Sion Avenue, Roanmore Park, Morrissons Road, Newports Square, Pearse Park, Rockenham.

Further schemes covering post 1960's houses in the following areas are in planning and tenders have been received, Subject to final DOE approval work will commence in 2008 on balance of St. Johns Park, Rice Park, Hennesseys Road, Ashe Road, McDonagh Road, Plunkett Road, Cannon Street, Blakes Lane, St. Killians Place, Connolly Terrace.

Planning and Development Act 2000 - Part V Social and Affordable Housing Units

Further provision of Social and Affordable Housing has been delivered under Part V Planning and Development Act 2000 with 26 social units, together with 43 affordable units having already been provided to date in 2007. A total of 128 units will be delivered in 2008, 50 Social and 78 Affordable. The City Council insists on achieving units on site as the preferred option and intends to maintain this policy in any future negotiations with developers. Significant reductions in House costs are being achieved as against market prices for the same units and this full saving is being passed on to eligible purchasers of affordable houses.

Central Heating Programme

Waterford City Council has continued to actively deliver this scheme to our tenants which commenced in 2005 and is now substantially completed. The remaining units requiring Central Heating will be completed in early 2008 when the remaining phases of the remedial works schemes commence. The scheme has provided a modern efficient heating system for our houses as well as attic insulation and smoke alarms.

Housing Maintenance and Management

The work of the Anti-social Behaviour unit continued in 2007 and in this regard emphasis will be placed on achieving further results in as many cases as possible during 2008.

Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS)

The RAS Scheme is a housing support which provides for additional, good quality rented accommodation for people receiving rent supplement and it will help the City Council to provide for the long-term housing needs for people who opt for this scheme. Sub standard dwelling units will not be considered under the scheme.

To date 173 applicants in voluntary housing schemes have been transferred to RAS. In the private sector 63 agreements have been completed to date with landlords following inspection of properties, interview with clients and landlords. A further 4 agreements will be completed before year end. The scheme will progress in 2008.

Traveller Accommodation

The Group Housing Scheme (3 units) at Carrickphierish has been completed and is occupied. The Scheme at Airport Road, is nearing completion and is being tenanted. Work on the refurbishment of the House at the third site at Green Road will commence in the New Year. Also in 2007 the City Council completed the Part 8 Planning process for the entire redevelopment of the site at Kilbarry and final departmental approval is awaited. It is intended to commence work on the redevelopment as early as possible in 2008 following tendering process. Considerable resources in terms of time and financial were directed towards improving conditions at the halting site at Kilbarry during 2007. In that context all illegal occupiers have been required to leave the site and the management of the site has been strengthened.

Homelessness

Waterford City Council continues to assist the voluntary sector in the management and maintenance of facilities for the homeless. 102 emergency beds funded under this programme are available in Waterford City. Emphasis now is being placed in line with national policy on supporting people who are at risk of becoming homeless and also to provide support to enable people to move on from hostels and other emergency accommodation. The amount provided in the budget will also facilitate the provision of a high support service on an outreach basis whereby intensive one to one support will be offered to provide for the needs of the individual as identified by the Homeless action team. The service will be 90% funded by the Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government. Our Homeless Services unit will continue to work closely with all the service providers to develop best practice in the operation of facilities and services for the homeless in Waterford City.

Community & Enterprise

“The overall objective of the Community & Enterprise section is to lead and co-ordinate the City Council’s work and interaction with communities.” (Corporate Plan 2004-2009).

City Development Board

2008 will see the Community and Enterprise section continue to support the development of the City Development Board and to ensure the ongoing strengthening of the newly formed Executive Committee which is guiding the future direction of the Board.

The Executive is implementing the actions of the Strategy for Social, Economic and Cultural Development of Waterford City 2002 -2012 and is guiding by the following themes:

- Waterford as a Gateway City
- Co-ordination of Public Services

The work of Waterford City Development Board will concentrate on the development of Sustainable Neighbourhoods in seven distinct neighbourhood areas; Ballybeg/Kilbarry, Lisduggan/Larchville, Dunmore Road, Inner City, Ferrybank, North West Suburbs and the Sacred Heart area. The development of sustainable neighbourhoods is in keeping with the Neighbourhood Strategy outlined in the Waterford City Development Plan 2007 – 2013.

Co-ordination of Youth Services

Funding has been secured to develop a City Wide Youth Strategy, under the auspices of the Waterford CDB, which will be completed in mid 2008. This Strategy will be an overarching Strategy for the City and will guide the development of other agencies youth plans. The Strategy will be developed in partnership with the Waterford Youth Committee. In addition, funding has been made available by the Dept of Environment Heritage & Local Government and the Dept of Education & Science to conduct a more in-depth analysis of youth service provision in a number of neighbourhoods in Waterford City.

Improved Cohesion

Funding drawn down in 2006 has resulted in significant investment and development within Ferrybank, Sacred Heart and the Inner City neighbourhoods. The Improved Cohesion funding has enabled increased community infrastructure in each of the areas with childcare services, youth services and community development activity being delivered by community based organisations. 2008 will see the opening of a new Ferrybank Child, Family and Community Centre, a community childcare centre and Family Resource Centre in the Sacred Heart area and additional community development activity in the Inner City.

A review of the impact of the Improved Cohesion process will also be undertaken in 2008.

BACK Plan

The regeneration of the Ballybeg/Kilbarry neighbourhood will continue to advance in 2008 with further progress on the remedial schemes in Clonard Park and Ardmore Park envisaged. The remedial schemes are being implemented in collaboration with other area enhancement initiatives including open space enhancements and CCTV systems. A landscaping masterplan for the estates is also to be progressed in 2008 in association with the remedial works schemes. 2008 will see Waterford City Council continue to expand its estate management/neighbourhood development initiatives in the area working with local residents to assist in the regeneration of the neighbourhood. Continued assistance is being provided to local clubs and organisations with the completion of the St Saviours GAA complex and findings from the Ballybeg CDP led area needs analysis also expected in the coming year.

LLAP

The mobilisation of community projects and sports clubs back onto the community campus at the Manor St John Complex will be a major indicator of success for the Larchville Lisduggan Area Plan. In 2008, the Manor St John building will be once again occupied for community use with HSE, Larchville Lisduggan CDP and the Manor St John Youth Service providing essential services for the neighbourhood. The playing fields and dressing room facilities for the St Pauls clubs will be delivered and the refurbishment of the community hall will be a priority. Waterford City Council will continue to expand its estate management/neighbourhood development initiatives in the area working with local residents to assist in the regeneration of the neighbourhood. Waterford City Council, subject to satisfactory consultation with local residents and planning will continue to progress infill and area upgrade proposals as part of its regeneration plan in association with the remedial programmes.

RAPID

Waterford City Council's leading role in the delivery of the Waterford City RAPID Programme will continue in 2008 with priorities already identified under the RAPID leverage schemes and will, subject to successful bids secure funding to undertake traffic improvements, estate enhancements and delivery of playgrounds in the Inner City. Waterford City Council in association with Waterford Sports Partnership will also avail of a specific budget to RAPID under Dormant Accounts to provide support to the sports clubs in St Pauls and St Saviours Parishes. Waterford City Council in 2008 will expand its estate management/neighbourhood development initiatives within the RAPID designated areas working closely with local residents and thereby assisting the delivery of the Waterford RAPID Plan.

Community Safety

Waterford City Council as a key player in the Waterford Joint Policing Committee (JPC) will assist in the development of a community safety strategy for the City. The strategy will be completed in early 2008 providing a focus on the issue of community safety. The collection of relevant data from Waterford City Council and from other agencies will continue to inform the strategy and the JPC in its operations. An Action Plan will emanate from the Strategy and will have a balance between preventative and enforcement approaches to community safety. 2008 will see the full

implementation of CCTV within the City with the Community and City schemes becoming operational. A Shared service approach to monitoring of the Waterford CCTV schemes will see real time monitoring coming into effect in 2008.

Social Inclusion Unit

The Social Inclusion Unit will return to full strength in 2008, with the appointment of a Social Inclusion Analyst who will be heavily involved in disseminating the results of the most recent Census.

The SIU will continue its role in supporting the Traveller Inter Agency Group and the implementation of the Integrated Traveller Plan. Funding has been secured from Pobal to progress the action on the training and education of young Traveller men. A review of the actions in the Plan will take place early in 2008.

Funding received from the Office of the Minister for Children will help ensure that Voice of the Young strengthens their role as the consultative mechanism for young people in Waterford City. Waterford Voluntary Youth Council have been appointed to support Voice of the Young for 2008.

Development of Neighbourhood Community Facilities

Waterford City Council has traditionally supported communities to deliver community based facilities in a planned and sustainable manner. 2008 will see Waterford City Council continue to work on the development of both childcare and youth and community facilities in the city.

Childcare

Waterford City Council and Waterford City Childcare Committee will continue to work together in 2008 towards the delivery of affordable community childcare in the North West suburbs. Waterford City Council will also provide ongoing support to the community providers in the Sacred Heart area, Ferrybank and Lisduggan/Larchville areas of the City.

Youth

The ongoing delivery of community and youth facilities across the city will continue throughout 2008 and will build on facilities delivered in 2007. Waterford City Council will continue to ensure community facilities are available and accessible to community organisations with a view to encouraging community cohesion.

Disability Act 2005

Waterford City Council will continue to work with key Disability organisations to meet its requirements under the Disability Act 2005. 2008 will see Waterford City Council build on the expertise it gained in 2007 from the involvement of Central Library in the National Disability Authority, Excellence through Accessibility award scheme. The cross departmental Access Team will continue to implement the 2006 – 2015 Action Plan.

The Social Inclusion Unit will continue to deliver the Disability Awareness Schools Programme which has received positive feedback since its inception in 2005.

Waterford City Fire Service and Waterford City Civil Defence

“The overall objective for the Waterford City Fire Service and Waterford City Civil Defence is to maintain a high quality fire and civil defence service.” (Corporate Plan 2004-2009).

FIRE SERVICES

City Fire Service

Waterford City Fire Service responds to a wide variety of emergencies (Operations) as well as monitoring and advising on fire safety in the built environment (Fire Safety)

A total of 52 persons are employed in the Service, comprising Officers and wholtime and part-time firefighters and administration support operating under the control of the Chief Fire Officer. .

Operations

So far in 2007 the brigade has attended 966 incidents. The following is a schedule of incidents

Fire Calls	576
Special Services	222
False Alarms	115
Bogus Calls	53
TOTAL	966

2007 has seen the continued implementation of the 4 shift system providing a faster response to incidents day and night.

The MRCC (CAMP) call out system is now in operation since July 2006.

The Fire Service has expanded its river rescue capabilities during the year. It now has a rescue boat on the River Suir in conjunction with Civil Defence.

Fire Safety

To date 96 Fire Safety Certificates have been received and are being processed. The application process is now administered entirely in the fire station providing a more efficient process for applicants and their agents.

107 licence applications for pubs, dance halls/ night clubs, clubs, gaming and lottery premises and restaurants were referred to the Fire Authority and the Courts advised accordingly.

Inspections of existing buildings are carried out where necessary. Advice is given to building owners where upgraded fire precautions are required and if necessary use of the building prohibited under the provisions of the Fire Services Act, 1981.

In addition the Fire Authority issues licences for petrol filling stations and advises the Dept of Justice, Equality and Law Reform on fireworks displays.

Fire Safety Promotion

The fire service participated in talks, seminars, demonstrations and other initiatives to highlight the dangers of fire, preventative measures and procedures in the event of fire outbreak. These include City Council pre-tenancy courses, school talks, community group talks, ad campaigns and fire safety management training to voluntary organisations. Demonstrations on the Brigades work at Road Traffic Accidents were given to students at WIT as part of a road safety awareness campaign.

Other Matters in 2007

- Full introduction of Critical Incident Stress Management system in association with other Authorities.
- Participation in national Fire Services Change Programme.
- Commencement of development work on Framework for Major Emergency Management Proposals 2007
- Introduction of new brigade structure at senior officer level
- Advancement of New Fire Service Headquarters
- Develop and complete Waterford City Council aspect of Framework for Major Emergency Management.
- Advance brigade development in line with Fire Services Change Programme.
- Introduction of Incident Command System.
- Review and enhance Health and Safety in conjunction with Fire Services Ancillary safety Statement.
- Initiate risk based programme for existing building inspections.

CIVIL DEFENCE

Waterford City Civil Defence

Waterford City Civil Defence Mission Statement:

“To promote, develop and maintain Civil Defence as an effective volunteer based professional organisation providing emergency response and community support services.”

During 2007 over 70 members of the Civil Defence attended training exercises including First Aid, Rescue, Communications, Power Boating, Welfare, Auxiliary Fire Service and Warden Services. In addition members also took part in local, regional and national competitions and exercises and achieved high standards of performance.

The Waterford City Civil Defence is equipped with a fleet of vehicles including one ambulance, 3 minibuses, 2 4X4 Jeeps, one fire appliance and two rescue boats which the Fire Brigade have full access to in the event of an emergency.

The Civil Defence also assisted at a number of community support activities during the year including the O2 concert.

Objectives during 2007

- Launch of new rescue boat and upgrading the training for same.
- Develop a strategic plan for 2009.
- Present the strategic plan to the members.

Objectives for 2008

- Set up committees to implement the strategic plan.
- To ensure best practice in the development and implementation of training programmes and to provide the necessary infrastructures for that purpose.
- To establish a working relationship with other relevant agencies.
- That the organisation is seen as the premier voluntary organisation.

THE DIRECTORATE OF CORPORATE AFFAIRS AND TRANSPORTATION

Transportation

*“The overall objective of the Transportation section is to provide a safe, efficient and integrated transportation system which encourages walking, cycling and use of public transport.”
(Corporate Plan 2004–2009).*

N25 Waterford Bypass

Work commenced in the second quarter of 2006 on the Public Private Partnership which consists of over 23km of dual carriageway, incorporating the 475m cable-stay bridge across the Suir, together with some 14km of road improvements and links to create this major piece of infrastructure.

At December 2007, the project is running on schedule with completion of the contract due for early 2010. To date all major earth works have been completed including the alternate route to the south of the Woodstown archaeological site.

Significant progress is evident on both the northern and southern sides of the site with many of the link roads and underpasses under construction.

Waterford Outer Ring Road

The footpath, cycle way and provision of public lighting along the full length of this dual carriageway was completed during 2007.

Old Kilmeaden Road – Cleaboy Road: Phase 1

Construction on this project which includes the realignment of the road, provision of footpaths and cycle lanes and potential bus lanes commenced early in 2007 and work will be substantially complete by year-end.

It is anticipated that work on Phase 2 of the scheme will commence in the 2nd quarter of 2008.

Williamstown Road

Following a number of delays including an objection, subsequent oral hearing on the CPO and a difficult tendering process, work on the scheme commenced later than anticipated in August 2007. Good progress on the scheme is now being made and the contract is due for completion by August 2008.

A Phase 2 of the scheme involving a junction re-alignment at Knockboy will commence following the completion of Phase 1. The land necessary for Phase 2 was acquired during 2007.

Kilbarry Road/Old Tramore Road/Ballycashin Hill

The completion of the Outer Ring Road focused attention on the radial routes to the city centre and major centres of population in the suburbs. These particular access routes were identified as requiring upgrading to include the provision of realignment as appropriate, footpaths and cycleways together with provision for public transport again as appropriate. The Part 8 for the scheme was advertised in November 2007 and it is intended, subject to funding availability, to progress the scheme during 2008.

Other Roads

Following the decision not to proceed with a double roundabout at the “Summerland Junction”, work on improving the geometry of the junction to allow turning lanes and to increase lane capacity was undertaken during 2007.

At an operational level, work on road pavement and footpath renewal continued during 2007 with over 6km of footpath, 5kms of non-national roads and 4000 sq. meters of national primary roads being replaced or resurfaced.

Green Routes

The provision of an Integrated Transport System was one of the long term objectives of the Planning Land Use and Transportation Strategy adopted by the City Council in 2004. A Green Route is defined as a high speed, high volume public transport corridor; generally linking the city suburbs, park and ride sites, city centre and bus/rail stations. It also incorporates improved pedestrian spaces and dedicated cycle lanes

Detailed design of the Green Routes was completed during 2007 and the Part 8 Planning Process commenced in December 2007.

Car Parking

A City Centre Parking Policy was submitted by the Strategic Policy Committee and adopted by City Council in April 2007.

Following this, work on implementing some of the main recommendations of the policy was progressed.

A new City Centre Pay & Display system incorporating 70 networked on street machines and new Parking Bye-laws were introduced in October 2007 to replace the existing Disc Parking system. The Pay & Display system has been very successful to date and has attracted much favorable comment.

Proposals for the introduction of accurate public information on car parking through a Variable Message Signing system are under consideration and it is intended to progress this to implementation during 2008.

Corporate Affairs

“The overall objective of the Corporate Affairs section is to support, promote and enhance the civic and democratic role of Waterford City Council, and manage the organisation’s property resources.” (Corporate Plan 2004–2009).

Property Management

The day to day business of the Property Management section is dominated by the acquisition and disposal of property for the provision of the various services offered by the Council. Major property transactions during the year included the disposal of a major commercial site at Carrickphierish and the acquisition of the freehold interest in the Keverflow car parks on the Quay.

A number of Compulsory Purchase Orders were dealt with during the year to facilitate land acquisitions and wayleaves for Main Drainage, Housing Services and Transportation.

Workplace Partnership

The use of Workplace Partnership is being maximised to promote positive industrial relations and to improve communications. Employee involvement is encouraged at all levels in the organisation. Working Groups are fully operational in the housing department, the garage, traffic management, roads, water, and open spaces promoting the themes of improved services, communications, team working, safety at work and customer focus.

THE DIRECTORATE OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

“The overall objective of the Environmental Services Directorate is to protect and improve the quality of the environment and to provide economic public water and sewerage services to meet the present and future needs of the city and its environs.” (Corporate Plan 2004-2009).

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

The restructuring of the organisation in July brought together in one Directorate all environment related services, Water Services, Parks and Open Spaces and the traditional Environment Department, which covers street cleaning, refuse collection, awareness/education and enforcement.

Environment

Refuse Collection Service

This budget provides for a necessary increase in the charge for City Councils domestic refuse service, increasing the fixed charge from €140 to €160. This increase is essential, however households who make the effort to recycle can save money with the “pay by use” tag system. The average cost per household for 2008 of 285 remains well below that charged by the private sector. However, allowing for the impact of competition from the private sector in 2008 it is prudent not to anticipate an increase in income from this service. The City has achieved approx 50% diversion from landfill and City Council will work to ensure that any waste collection service in the City provides a service that will help maintain and improve on this achievement. City Council will continue its waiver scheme in 2008, approx 4,500 households obtained a waiver in 2007.

Compost Centre

I hope to bring forward plans early in the New Year for the expansion and upgrading of the existing facility at the Six Cross Roads. The proposal is to increase the capacity of the plant whilst improving environmental standards by housing the operation indoors. Subject to planning and financing this project should commence by early summer.

Street Cleaning

Conscious of Councils wish to improve our street cleaning service this budget provides additional financial resources for this area. However an efficient street cleaning service requires a change in work practices to allow our service respond to changing needs and demands outside of the “standard” day, be that early morning mechanical road sweeping, late evening sweeping in the core of our City Centre or more frequent emptying of bins. Negotiations to bring about this change will commence early in 2008.

WATER SERVICES

Water Pricing Policy

2008 sees Waterford City Council commence the implementation of national policy on water pricing which requires the implementation of a consolidated charge for water (drinking water and waste water) for all non-domestic users of water. It is the intention to fully implement the Water Pricing Policy in 2009 when the Waste Water Treatment Plant is fully operational. 2008 will see a significant increase in the operation costs of our water and drainage service including the financing of borrowings to fund City Councils portion of costs to deliver the City's overall Water Services Investment Programme. The increased costs necessitate an increase in water charges from 1.05 to 1.53 per cubic metre in 2008.

Securing our Water supply

2007 saw significant capital investment of €20 million in the water treatment plant at Adamstown, the capacity of the plant has doubled. This work will also help ensure that Waterford City's water supply remains at its current high quality.

Waste Water Treatment Plant and Main Drainage:

The Waterford Main Drainage Scheme (Phase 2) represents an investment of approx €55 million in the provision of modern waste water collection and treatment system for the City and Environs. The scheme will put in place a new sewage treatment plant at Gorteen, Belview and an extensive collection system that will eliminate all untreated wastewater discharges to the River Suir Estuary. Work on the pipe laying is complete with work on the pump houses underway. The Waste Water Treatment Plant is a design build operate contract and it is expected that commissioning of the plant will commence by August 2008 with the plant fully operational in January 2009.

Mains Rehabilitation Programme

Council was recently briefed on Phase 2 of the above scheme which will commence early in the New Year. The scheme will see the rehabilitation of 22 kilometers of old water main with a target to reduce unaccounted for water from 41% to 34%.

Water Conservation

Our water conservation programme continued in 2007 with a focus on common/backyard services. This work will continue in 2008 and will be used to maximise the beneficial impact of the Mains Rehabilitation programme.

Johns River

Plans for the remediation of Johns River progressed in 2007 with the purchase of machinery and the training of staff. Work on the actual project will commence early in the New Year.

Flood Relief Scheme

The detailed design of Phase 1 progressed during 2007 and will go to tender early in the New Year, with work expected on site by early summer. The OPW has recently approved Phase 2 to proceed to design and procurement of a design team is in hand.

Serviced Land initiatives

The Kilbarry Serviced Land Initiative was completed in 2007 and work on Killure commenced and is due for completion early in 2008.

Servicing of North West Suburbs

Work on the pump house was completed in 2007 and tenders for the water scheme are currently being assessed with a start date of Spring 2008. Work on the sewerage scheme should commence by the end of 2008.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

Parks and Playgrounds

2007 saw the completion of a playground and MUGA at Manor St John, a new playground at Railway Square, the addition of a playground for young children in the Peoples Park, the upgrading of an existing playground in Gracedieu and the completion of Ballybeg Park.

The Peoples Park celebrated its 150th birthday fittingly with the completion of Phase 3 of the redevelopment. The Peoples Park has been regenerated and is now undoubtedly one of the best used amenities in the City. 2007 saw the addition of the playground for very young children which means that the play needs of all children are now catered for in a safe environment, the new skateboard park and basketball area is being well used by teenagers, the upgrading of the paths and provision of a work-out area facilitates greater usage by keep fit enthusiasts and the provision of services to the Goff track area will allow for outdoor performances from 2008. This year also saw the restoration of the Gate Lodge to a high standard and the opening of a coffee shop by the private sector.

Work on the implementation of the Play Policy will continue in 2008 with plans advancing for the delivery of playgrounds and MUGAs (Multi Use Games Areas) at Ferrybank, Hennessey's Road, and playgrounds at the Sacred Heart area and Carrickphierish. These facilities will be sited along side other community buildings to maximise usage.

Presentation of the City

The employment of a Horticulturist early in 2008 will provide expertise to support our efforts to present all of our open spaces and amenities to a high standard. The presentation of our approach roads and roundabouts will be prioritised for 2008. The work of the Parks dept will be supplemented with the establishment of a small crew dedicated to the maintenance of our hard landscaped amenity areas, street furniture and the removal of graffiti from public property.

City Market

Work on Blackfriars to accommodate the City Market progressed in 2007 and will be complete in January at which stage the market will be relocated.

Tramore Road Walk way

Work on Phase 1 of the walkway, from the roundabout at Superquinn to the pedestrian entrance to Cherrymount commenced in the last week and should be complete by spring. This will provide for a much-improved path for use by pedestrians and cyclists and will include appropriate lighting, supplementary planting and a new foot bridge. Plans for the remainder of the walkway will be considered when the Management Plan for the area is complete.

Dunmore Road Riverside Walk

The focus of work on the Dunmore Road Walkway over the next couple of years will be on the stretch of walkway from Island Lane back to Glenville with particular emphasis on the opportunities presented with the decommissioning of septic tanks when the WWTP is operational to provide amenity areas. Consultation has commenced with residents and the Irish Wildlife Trust and will continue, as more detailed plans are prepared.

Harbour Masters Hut

Work is just complete on the Harbour Masters Hut to provide showers and other services to Marina users. 2008 will see this area further enhanced by the provision of a hard landscaped area adjacent to the hut. Subject to the necessary approval of the Harbour Master/Dept of Marine work on this project will commence early in New Year.

Dog Pound

National media coverage on the issue of restricted breeds of dogs resulted in a significant increase in the number of restricted breeds presented at the pound. This budget makes provision for essential works to be carried out to the Pound to accommodate this increase and the undertaking of other essential works to improve the service currently provided.

THE DIRECTORATE OF PLANNING, CULTURE AND HUMAN RESOURCES

Planning

“The overall objective of the Planning section is to provide a framework for growth to facilitate the proper planning and sustainable development of the city.” (Corporate Plan 2004-2009).

Planning, Culture and Human Resources priorities for 2008

Planning

- Address the challenges raised by the adoption of the Waterford City Development Plan 2007 including the following:-
 - Development briefs for key opportunity sites.
 - Urban design frameworks.
 - Progressing the Local Area Plans.
 - Preparation of the Heritage Plan.
 - Preparation of the Local Biodiversity Plan.
 - Conservation of monuments.
 - Urban Renewal.

- Provide for the establishment of a forward planning unit to deliver on these.
- Progress the objectives and emphasis of the Gateway Innovation Fund, focusing on the consolidation of the city centre incorporating the Heritage Quarter, Pedestrian/Cycle Bridge and the promotion and development of the economic spine of the gateway in conjunction with Kilkenny and Waterford County Councils.
- Provide sustainable development management in the context of progressing the role of the Gateway.
- Commence web enabling of planning files.
- Complete projects, including Manor St John Community Complex, Killure Sports Complex, undergrounding of H.T. cables in the North West Suburbs.
- Open and support the Waterford Regional Sports Centre to provide the region with a state of the art facility through the PPP process.
- Improve facilities at Williamstown Golf Course.

Culture

“The overall objective of the Culture section is to provide an appropriate range of high quality accessible recreational, cultural amenities and services for the city.” (Corporate Plan 2004-2009).

Library

- Avail of the new Library headquarters and storage facility in Carrickphierish to improve efficiency of delivery of books and other items to the branch libraries in the City.
- Exploit the new electronic library management system to open up new opportunities. in terms of electronic access to the library catalogue and online services.
- Progress the new branch library in Carrickphierish.
- Continue to develop partnerships with culturally diverse communities and target appropriate services to meet their needs.
- Build on the National Disability Authority Quality Award through ongoing improvements in accessibility.
- Apply the new Collection Development Policy for the Library Service which was adopted by the SPC on Community, Culture, Sport and Recreation.
- Conduct a Non User Survey to be considered together with the National Library User Survey to form part of the consultation process planned for the production of a Library Development Plan.

Arts

- Continue to provide significant funding towards the Arts Development Programme in order to promote artistic excellence at all levels within the City.
- Assist new, young bands and established bands.
- Provide artist in residence projects.
- Operate the “percent for art” scheme.
- Prepare new Arts Plan.
- Consult with the City Arts Forum and provide all interested parties with the opportunity to contribute.
- Provide financial support for necessary improvements to lighting in the Gallery.
- Increase access to works from the collection through a schools’ access programme.

Archives

- Avail of the new storage facilities for the archives in Carrickphierish to provide a streamlined record management system for the City Council and additional space within the Archives building to allow for developments in the service.
- Organise further exhibitions from the Annie Brophy collection.
- Organise an exhibition of maps and drawings of the City.
- Continue ongoing education programme.

Human Resources

“The overall objective of the Human Resources section is to manage the organisations human resources.” (Corporate Plan 2004-2009).

- Launch HR Strategy to provide a modern integrated HR system for improved efficiencies in payroll, recruitment, superannuation and record keeping.
- Review and implement recommendations of the Partnership Committee to improve the quality of the PMDS process.
- Develop an eLearning Induction Programme to provide an interactive online educational resource for new and existing employees.
- Continue to work collectively with unions and employees in an open and participative approach, to improve Industrial Relations.
- Meet the challenges of the current embargo on recruitment by maximising resources.

Workplace Partnership

- Operate return to learning scheme.
- Avail of apprenticeship/upskilling scheme.
- Provide customer service focus.
- Acknowledge long service appropriately.

