

Council's €85 million plan is 'ambitious but achievable'



City and County Manager Michael Walsh.

A €10 million Greenway route linking Waterford, Dungarvan and Tramore, an €8 million 'public realm' project in the city centre to facilitate retail development in John Street/ Michael Street and the City Square environs are central to a new €85 million capital development programme outlined to Waterford City and County Council last week.

The Capital Programme sets out a number of key projects which the new Council will – subject to funding – pursue over the next five years.

Investment of €19.5 million would have to come from the Council's own coffers in order for the entire plan to come to fruition, Chairman Michael Walsh said.

The plan includes a number of works already underway, such as the new Fire Station at Ballybeg and Carrickphierish Library.

He described the plan as an ambitious one, which can be achieved if the Council manages its budget prudently. "The argument for the development of this plan could stand up in a national forum, but this is just the first point in setting up a template for that discussion", he told Councillors.

Cllr Joe Conway praised the inclusion of Tramore on the proposed Greenway project, as well as the fact that the 'well-assembled application by the town for 'Smarter Travel' funding will be used in the Tramore area and will not be subsumed into the general Council coffers.

“These two initiatives – if they are brought to fruition – would make a seismic difference to the town’s appearance, accessibility and prosperity in the decades ahead”, Cllr Conway added.

Mr Walsh said Tramore would have to be regenerated in the coming years to meet its primary function, as a family holiday destination.

Cllr Michael J O’Ryan said villages across the county, such as Bonmahon, Kill and Portlaw were “dying a death”, while Cllr Blaise Hannigan pointed out that Waterford Airport needed to be prioritised.

Cllr Eddie Mulligan proposed examining the possibility of a Greenway route linked to Rosslare in Wexford, while also stressing the importance of New Street shopping centre being advanced.

Cllr Joe Kelly pointed out that city businesses outside the Viking Triangle area – especially those on Ballybricken – were being “left behind in the drive to bring tourists into the town”.