

**GET
WATERFORD
WALKING**

ACTION PLAN FOR **WATERFORD**

by **Waterford Stakeholders**

**GET IRELAND
WALKING** 

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BACKGROUND + CONTEXT

In an era where sedentary lifestyles and the pressures of modern life are prevalent, walking offers a simple yet effective solution, especially in Waterford. It is an activity that transcends age, fitness levels, and abilities, making it accessible to everyone. Whether strolling along the scenic paths of the city or exploring the natural beauty of County Waterford, walking allows us to enhance our physical fitness, boost mental well-being, and foster a stronger sense of community spirit.

Get Ireland Walking aims to act as the catalyst organisation to unify the efforts of organisations in Ireland, including those in Waterford, that play a role in the promotion and development of walking. In 2018, Get Ireland Walking undertook a four-year research project to better understand how agencies and organisations intersected within the walking system to deliver and plan for walking.

The research, a partnership project with South East Technological University (SETU, 2018-2023) set out to achieve two key objectives.

- 01 Get Ireland Walking sought to understand the nexus of policies, programmes, organisations, and data** embedded within local and national walking systems across Ireland, using Cork City and County to carry out this research.
- 02 Investigate how useful systems approaches could be in enhancing the work of local and national stakeholders,** who contribute to walking promotion and development throughout Ireland. Following this body of research, Get Ireland Walking developed a systems toolkit to help stakeholders plan effectively using an evidence base and applying the suggested steps and stages to engage, foster and support a local stakeholder group.

The Footsteps for Change Toolkit was made available to other counties who had expressed interest in systems model to support their work.

APPROACH

Waterford will take a significant step toward becoming a more walk-friendly region, with plans to introduce a systematic approach to encourage walking promotion and development across the county.

The implementation of key strategic plans locally, particularly the fields of sport and recreation, active travel and sustainable mobility; provide an opportunity for stakeholders to align their work, share resources and knowledge and deliver key programmes and initiatives that meet the needs of a broad range of target groups.

This approach offers the potential for long term benefits, including improved public health, reduced traffic congestion, and a greater sense of community.

As the city and county move forward with these plans, Waterford people can expect to see an increasing emphasis on making the region more accessible and walkable, creating a healthier, more connected place to live, work, and play. **With the right interventions, Waterford could soon be leading the way in promoting walking as a key part of daily life.**

OPPORTUNITIES

Get Waterford Walking presents a significant opportunity for professionals and practitioners committed to walking promotion and development to collaborate effectively in order to promote more walking, more often in the city and county. By collaborating with Get Waterford Walking stakeholders can align their efforts with key national policies, such as the National Physical Activity Action Plan, National Sports Policy, National Outdoor Recreation Plan, and National Sustainable Mobility Policy.

These frameworks provide a clear direction and set shared objectives that enhance the impact of local initiatives. Collaborative efforts can amplify resources, expertise, and perspectives, ultimately leading to more comprehensive and effective strategies for increasing walking opportunities in cities, townlands and communities throughout the county.

Moreover, the evidence-based systematic approach that underpins the Get Waterford Walking Stakeholder Network ensures that **decisions and interventions are grounded in research and best practices.**

By utilising research, data and evidence to guide our work, stakeholders can identify the most effective methods to encourage walking and active travel. This approach not only enhances the credibility of the initiatives but also fosters a culture of accountability and continuous improvement among all partners.

SHARING INSIGHTS

By sharing insights and learning from one another, professionals can refine their strategic objectives and better address the diverse needs of the communities where they work and the groups and people that they support. In addition to supporting national policies, the collaboration through the Get Waterford Walking network allows for the development of tailored local solutions that resonate with the specific context of Waterford.

Engaging local stakeholders—including health organisations, educational institutions, local government, and community groups – enables a more nuanced understanding of the barriers and facilitators to walking in the area.

Collaboration:

As these stakeholders work together, they can create a holistic plan that not only promotes more walking but also contributes to broader community goals, such as environmental sustainability and improved public health outcomes.

Overall, the stakeholder network represents a promising avenue for advancing walking-focused initiatives and builds on and fosters a culture of collaboration and innovation in Waterford.

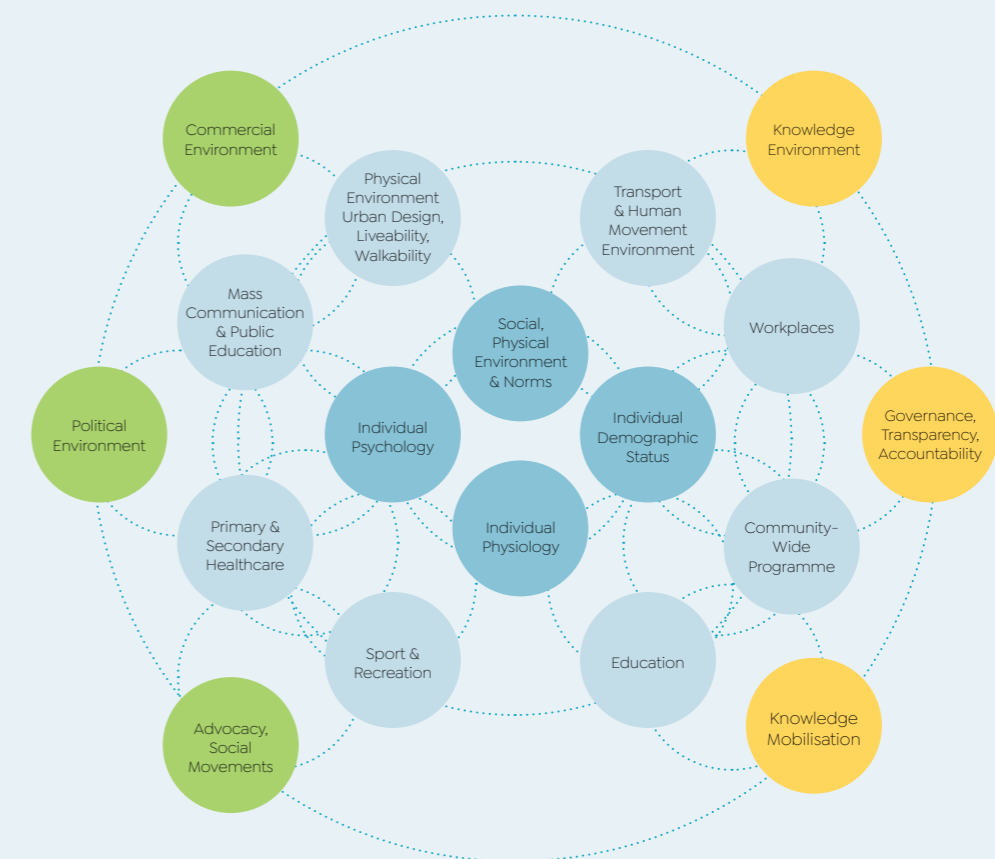
A SYSTEMS MODEL

The Australian Systems Map for Physical Activity (ASAPa) was developed by leading researchers to illustrate the complexity of factors influencing physical activity levels. The map includes individual demographic factors and national policies as key influences on physical activity. It also highlights “Systems Intervention Points,” which are areas where interventions can improve physical activity/walking behaviours. By identifying intervention points and considering local factors that influence walking habits, the system can support stakeholders to co-deliver walking objectives effectively, collaboratively and support the network to deliver national policy at a local level.

According to the ASAPa, there are 8 areas to intervene within the physical activity system:

- 01 Primary and secondary healthcare
- 02 Mass communication and public education
- 03 Physical Environment, Urban Design, Liveability, and Walkability
- 04 Transport and Human Movement Environment
- 05 Workplaces
- 06 Community-wide programmes
- 07 Education
- 08 Sport and Recreation

The Australian Systems Map for Physical Activity (ASAPa)



Legend

- Systems intervention points
- PA Core Influences
- Governance and Knowledge Mobilisation
- Politics, Commercial Lobbying, Social Advocacy

Bellew W, Smith BJ, Nau T, Lee K, Reece L, Bauman A. Whole of Systems Approaches to Physical Activity Policy and Practice in Australia: The ASAPa Project Overview and Initial Systems Map. J Phys Act Health. 2020 Jan 1;17(1):68-73. doi: 10.1123/jpah.2019-0121. PMID: 31756721.

Implementing global objectives at a local level

MORE PEOPLE WALKING MORE OFTEN

CREATE ACTIVE SOCIETIES

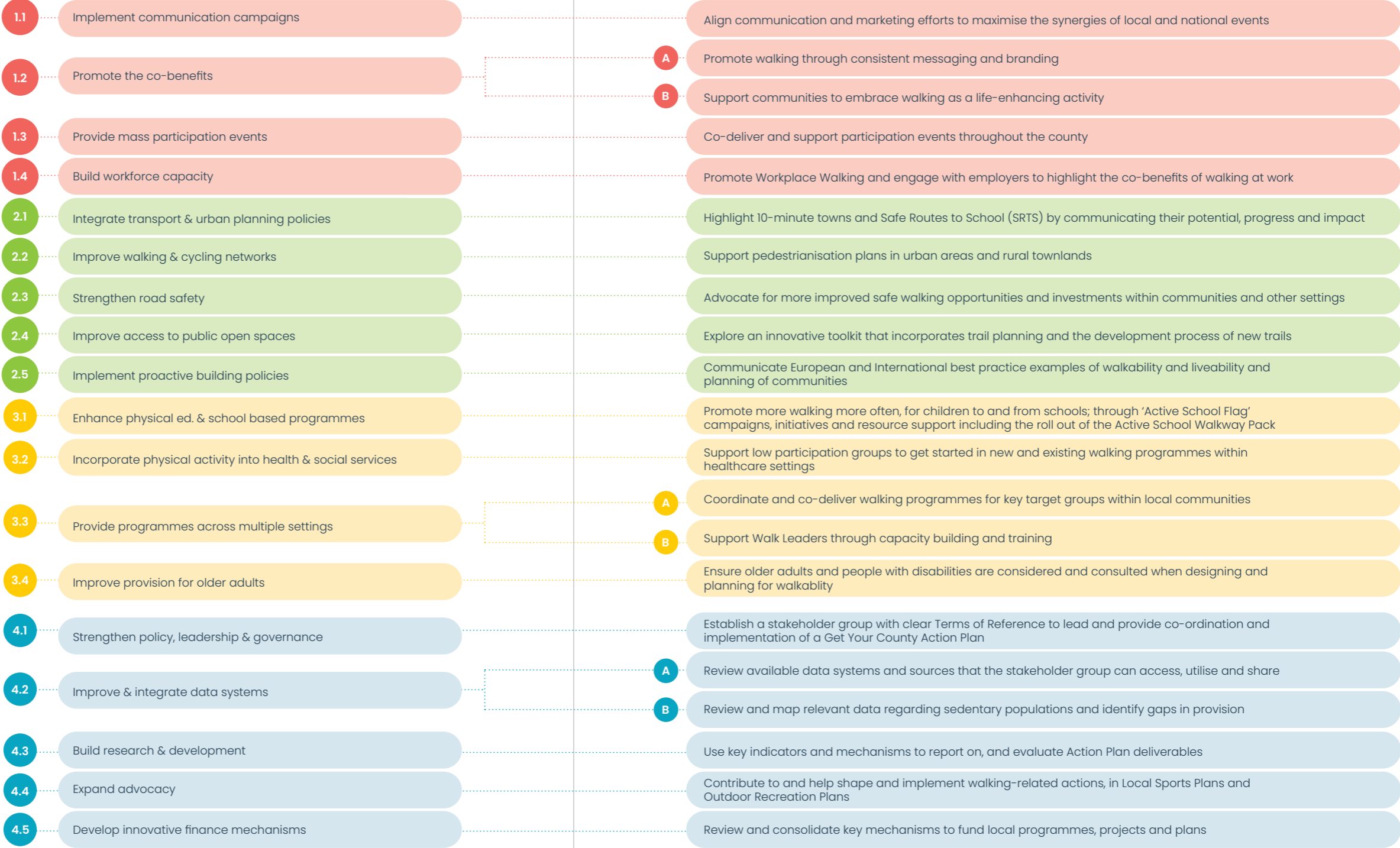
CREATE ACTIVE ENVIRONMENTS

CREATE ACTIVE PEOPLE

CREATE ACTIVE SYSTEMS

GLOBAL OBJECTIVES

LOCAL OBJECTIVES



COLLABORATORS

If you'd like to be added to our current list of collaborators, please get in touch with Get Ireland Walking: jason@getirelandwalking.ie

- | | |
|---|---|
| Active Cities | Active Travel |
| Active Disability Ireland | Chamber of Commerce |
| Age Friendly Ireland | Coillte |
| Academic Institutions | County Outdoor Recreation Committee |
| Active School Flag | Faiite Ireland |

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| Green-Schools | Local Authority | Rural Recreation Officers |
| Get Ireland Walking | Local Sports Partnership | Safe Routes to School |
| Healthy Ireland | Mountaineering Ireland | Sport Ireland |
| Health Service Executive | National Governing Bodies | Social Prescribing |
| Irish Wheelchair Association | Outdoor Recreation Officers | Walk21 |



Get Ireland Walking's Ten Local Objectives

- **Promote a systems-mapping model** to support the planning and implementation of walking-specific actions for recreation, transport and health
- **Lead and promote cross-collaboration and partnership** working between all stakeholders leading to new collaboration opportunities
- **Support stakeholder plans** with the implementation of their organisations walking specific goals through cross-collaboration
- **Collaborate, contribute and help** build a datahub and resource space for stakeholders to utilise
- **Activate and promote** existing and new programmes that meet the needs of broad range of under-represented and minority groups
- **Increase the visibility and profile** of the "Get Your County Walking" Project
- **Continue to support** the development of stakeholders locally. Promote and communicate their work
- **Support and advance advocacy work** through the formation of key working groups and/or representation on existing groups
- **Support community walk leaders and service providers** to access training and education modules
- **Support pedestrian enhancement plans** in urban and rural areas in addition to local sports and recreation plans

Get Waterford Walking

Stakeholders Actions 2025 – 27

CREATE ACTIVE SOCIETIES	
1.1	Align communication and marketing efforts to maximise the synergies of local and national events
Action	Develop a communications plan to support the stakeholder group and the implementation of the Action Plan Promote Get Waterford Walking (GWW) as part of walking and movement campaigns annually (WALKING MONTH) Establish a Walking Week of celebrations aligned with National Walking Week as part of European Week of Sport
1.2	Promote walking through consistent messaging and branding Support communities to embrace walking as a life-enhancing activity
Action	Utilise the GWW Brand Guidelines and Assets to achieve maximum visibility Develop a Community Walking Champion Awards Scheme Create a calendar of walking activities and events in Waterford
1.3	Co-deliver and support participation events throughout Waterford
Action	Support existing and new walking participatory events in Waterford
1.4	Promote Workplace Walking and engage with employers to highlight the co-benefits of walking at work
Action	Co-create a culture of walking in the workplace + promote the GWW charter in the workplace

CREATE ACTIVE ENVIRONMENTS	
2.1	Highlight 10-minute towns by communicating their potential, progress and impact
Action	Share examples and best practices of 10-minute towns (roadshow) Share the content on suitable platforms
2.2	Support pedestrianisation plans in urban areas and rural townlands
Action	Create an information hub for LA's to share and update on the National Sustainable Mobility Policy Implementation Plan Collaborate to implement walkability audits in Waterford
2.3	Advocate for more improved safe walking opportunities and investments within communities and other settings
Action	Support the implementation of the Waterford Community Safety Plan Inc. safe walking routes, prioritisation of footpaths, pedestrian access, lighting etc. Develop and/or identify a suitable walkability tool/app that supports safer walking opportunities and for future developments and investments
2.4	Explore an innovative toolkit that incorporates trail planning and the development process of new trails
Action	Develop an Infographic sheet for trail development and maintenance and share and communicate with community groups/leaders Signpost community and trail management groups to key information and support regarding trail development and maintenance
2.5	Communicate European and International best practice examples of walkability and liveability and planning of communities
Action	Create a space for regular communication and updates of exemplar projects in Ireland, across Europe and Internationally

Get Waterford Walking

Stakeholders Actions 2025 – 27

CREATE ACTIVE PEOPLE

3.1	Promote more walking more often, for children on their journey to and from school; through supported 'Active School Flag' campaigns and including the roll-out of the Walking School Bus in addition to the Active School Walkway resource.
Action	<p>Promote the Walking School Bus Programme with Primary Schools in Waterford</p> <p>Support and advocate for safer routes to school through clear signage and improved infrastructure</p> <p>Reach more schools in Waterford with the Active School Walkway Pack and resources</p>
3.2	Support low participation groups to get started in new and existing walking programmes within healthcare settings
Action	<p>Promote walking programmes and campaigns for staff within the HSE to be more active through the activity of walking</p> <p>Promote National Walking Week within and across healthcare settings</p>
3.3	<p>Coordinate and co-deliver walking programmes for key target groups within local communities</p> <p>Support Walk Leaders through capacity building and training</p>
Action	<p>Grow the Walk for Life Series to reach more older adults in Waterford</p> <p>Provide new walking opportunities for ethnic minority groups in the county</p>
3.4	Ensure older adults and people with disabilities are considered and consulted when designing and planning for walkability
Action	Support a walkability audit at a county level that supports more walking opportunities for older adults and persons with a disability

CREATE ACTIVE SYSTEMS

4.1	Establish a stakeholder group to lead and coordinate the implementation of the 'Get Your County Walking' Action Plan
Action	<p>Develop a 'Terms of Reference' for the stakeholder group</p> <p>Establish a working group(s) to monitor the implementation of the plan</p>
4.2	<p>Review available data systems and sources that the stakeholder group can access, utilise and share</p> <p>Review and map relevant data regarding sedentary populations and identify gaps in provision</p>
Action	<p>Map data solutions that supports more walking more often for recreation, transport and health in Waterford</p> <p>Create an accessible hub to store and access the data</p>
4.3	Use key indicators and mechanisms to report on, and evaluate Action Plan deliverables
Action	Integrate a logic model with performance indicators to help collate robust, qualitative and quantitative data
4.4	Contribute to and help shape and implement walking-related actions, in Local Sports Plans and Outdoor Recreation Plans
Action	Ensure that sport and recreation plans and actions that are relevant to walking in Waterford are supported through the GWW Action Plan through: mentoring, branding, assets, communications and funding
4.5	Review and consolidate key mechanisms to fund local programmes, projects and plans
Action	Explore opportunities to fund a Walking Promotion Officer for Waterford

Working Group Model

Working Groups (WG1, WG2, WG3, WG4)
Support Action Delivery
Update Stakeholder Group Quarterly



Supports the Working Group/s (WG1, WG2, WG3, WG4)

Advocates for more walking opportunities within local communities + throughout the county

Reports on strategic work across the network + highlights exemplar cross-sector collaboration projects



GET WATERFORD WALKING

Charter

The Get Waterford Walking Project Stakeholders are determined to lead by example and work together taking a systems approach to walking promotion across the City and County.

Walking and wheeling are integral parts of our daily lives, whether it be from the house to the car, from shop to shop in our urban centres or climbing mountains to enjoy our spectacular scenery. Given that walking is used for such diverse purposes, our stakeholder network needs to be just as diverse and dynamic. Therefore, we are committed to bringing together multiple sectors and service providers to work in collaboration to make Waterford a leader in terms of walkable design, walkability and walking promotion.

Our Vision

We visualise Waterford City and County as a place where utilitarian walking, active travel and recreational walking is **prioritised and made possible through effective advocacy, planning and design.**

We hope that Waterford will become a place of pedestrians and walkers, living in sustainable and healthy communities and attractive environments. Here, walking and wheeling will be the norm. This vision being aligned with local, national and international policy concerning both population and planetary health.

Our Commitments

- 1 We commit to advocate for pedestrians,** pedestrian prioritisation and all urban and rural environments being walkable.
- 2 We commit to promoting walking** for its health benefits and as a method of active travel.
- 3 We commit to promoting a culture of walking as a daily activity** for both recreation and as a mode of transport in the interest of our environment.
- 4 We commit to working in collaboration** to achieve the mission and vision of the Get Waterford Walking Stakeholder Group and continue to progress and advance our shared actions and objectives.
- 5 We commit to being equal, diverse and inclusive** in all our walking related activities from programming to promotion and advocacy efforts.

How to promote Charter

These strategies can help effectively promote a walking charter and encourage community engagement in walking initiatives.



Engagement + Collaboration: Ensure the charter is acknowledged and/or referenced in local strategies and action plans within transport, business, health, education and sport and recreational sectors.



Accessible Information: Ensure the walking charter is easily accessible online through your website and in community centres, with clear information on its purpose and how to engage with it.



Awareness Campaigns: Create informative campaigns through social media, flyers, and local events to raise awareness about the walking charter and its objectives.



Highlight Success Stories: Share successful walking initiatives or testimonials from community members benefiting from walking to inspire others.



Advocacy: Advocate for policies that support walking infrastructure, such as safer pathways, permeability, pedestrian crossings, and green spaces.



Community Events: Host walking events or challenges that encourage community participation while promoting the goals of the walking charter.



Feedback Loops: Establish channels for community feedback to continuously improve the walking charter and adapt it to the community's needs.



Partnerships: Collaborate with local businesses, active travel and climate action teams, academic institutions, schools, and healthcare providers to support the walking charter and integrate it into their programs and activities.



Incentives: Develop incentive programs for businesses and community members that encourage walking and support the charter.

Getirelandwalking.ie

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