



Galway City Community Network
Líonra Pobail Chathair na Gaillimhe

POLICIES & POSITIONS





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Galway City Community Network supports initiatives to develop Galway city and the Galway region, including

Galway 2020

Agenda 21 for Culture Pilot Programme

Green Leaf 2017

The European Region of Gastronomy 2018

Galway City Community Network would like to thank GCCN members for participating in the development of this Policy and Position paper and Rachel Doyle for her work in facilitating and documenting the process.

Introduction

Galway City Community Network (GCCN) is the network of community, voluntary and environmental organisations and groups active in Galway City. As the Public Participation Network¹ for Galway City, GCCN is the main link through which the local authority, agencies and the state connects with the community, voluntary and environmental sectors in Galway City.

GCCN Vision

The GCCN vision for Galway City is 'Galway, a creative and inclusive city that respects and values its people and communities, their wellbeing and quality of life, that will develop a vibrant, sustainable, economy and environment and participative and transparent governance.'

GCCN Values

The shared values that motivate and guide the priorities that GCCN pursues are:

- Sustainability - including valuing, preserving and protecting the natural environment.
- Equality - including working in a non-discriminatory way, valuing and respecting diversity, empowering people, and securing people's access to social and economic resources.
- Culture - including valuing, empowering, and fostering the diversity of cultures in the city and enabling people to express their creativity.

- Community - involving the physical space, identity, and/or interests shared by a group, where people enjoy wellbeing and harmony, organise collectively, and engage in shared creativity.
- Empowerment - including representation and participation in decision-making and democracy in the city.
- Inclusion - involving fostering and ensuring a sense of belonging to and opportunities to engage with one's community and the city.

GCCN Purpose

The twin objectives that GCCN pursues are to:

- Advance the values of sustainability, equality, culture, community, empowerment and inclusivity and embed these in the policies, programmes and practice of local government, state organisations, national government and civil society.
- Develop and implement progressive models of and approaches to representation, participation and engagement for civil society in informing and shaping policy making and programme development.

GCCN Role

The role of Galway City Community Network is to:

- Act as a platform for the groups/organisations engaged in the community, voluntary and environmental sectors in Galway City to develop policy and positions on issues of common concern to the sectors and to communities and to advocate for these policies and positions to be implemented.
- Facilitate the representation of the community, voluntary and environmental sectors on the Local Community Development Committee, the Strategic Policy Committees, the Joint Policing Committee, other local government and local development bodies and any local, regional, national or international body deemed appropriate by Galway City Community Network.

¹ Public Participation Networks (PPNs) were established in each local authority area in Ireland as part of the process local government reform under the Local Government Reform Act 2014

- Contribute to the development and achievement of a vision for the well-being of this and future generations.

- Galway City & County Childcare Committee;
- Western Regional Drugs and Alcohol Task Force;
- The European Region of Gastronomy.

Membership & Representation

There are now considerably over 100 member organisations of GCCN. There are three Electoral Colleges in the PPN, social inclusion, environment and voluntary, and each member must opt for membership of one. Members represent GCCN on the following local committees;

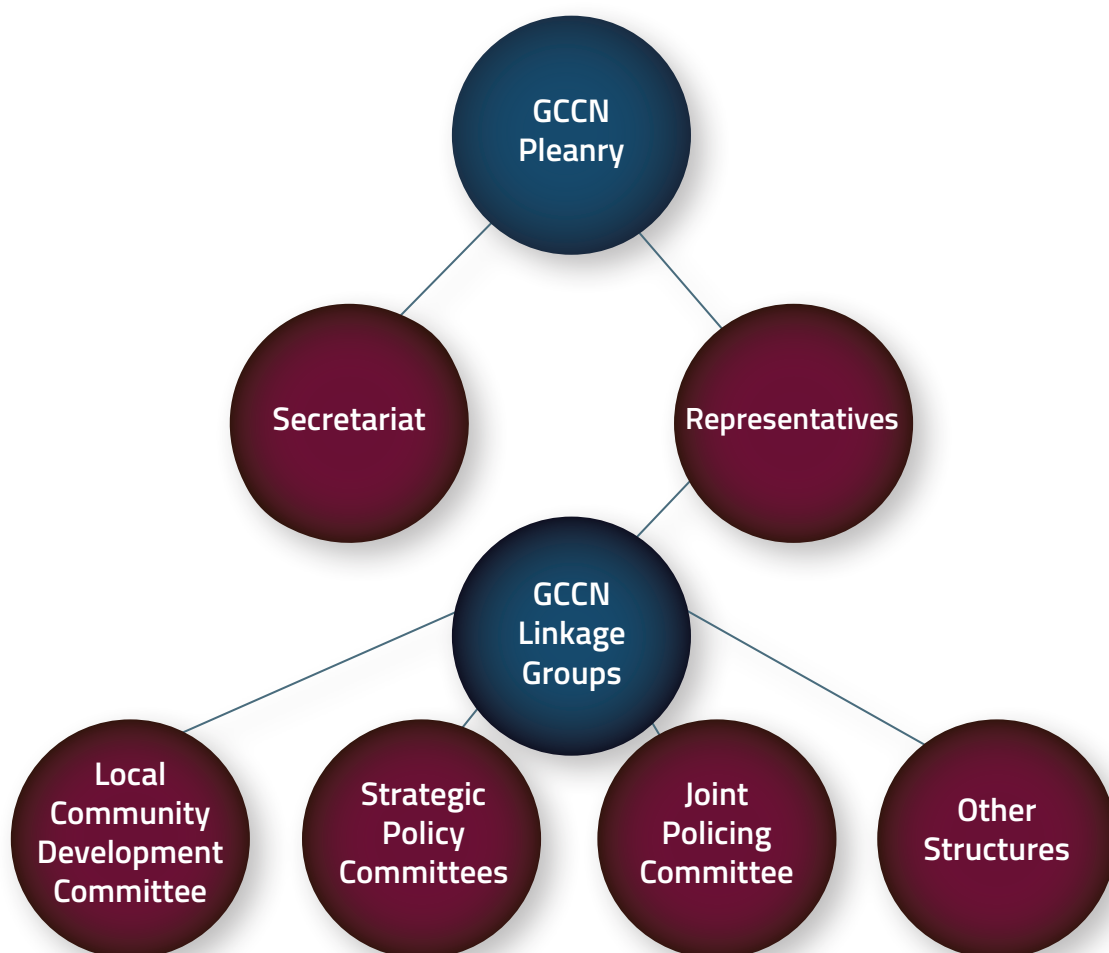
- Local Community Development Committee (LCDC);
- Strategic Policy Committees:
 - Economic Development, Enterprise Support and Culture SPC
 - Environment, Recreation & Amenity SPC
 - Housing SPC
 - Planning SPC
 - Transportation SPC
- Joint Policing Committee;

GCCN Plenary & Secretariat

GCCN holds four Plenary (membership) meetings a year, one of which is the Annual General Meeting. The Plenary meetings are critically important for GCCN. The membership retains responsibility for all decision-making and the plenary meetings provide the opportunity to discuss issues of importance and adopt policy and/or positions where appropriate. The GCCN Secretariat is elected at the GCCN Annual General Meeting and is responsible for the management of GCCN activities.

Linkage Groups

Linkage Groups are subgroups of Galway City Community Network that are convened on a thematic basis. The Linkage Groups discuss and develop GCCN policy, support the GCCN representatives in the thematic area and provide the platform for electing replacement representatives as appropriate.





Development of GCCN Policy Positions

The establishment of Galway City Community Network and the development of this policy paper present a wide range of opportunities for the diverse communities within Galway City to engage meaningfully and have their voices heard in local participatory democratic processes and structures. The Local Government Reform Act 2014¹ envisages the development of a 'coherent and integrated approach to local and community development'. Key mechanisms for providing such coherence are set out in the Act and include the establishment by all Local Authorities of a Local Community Development Committee and the development of Local Economic and Community Plans. The aim, according to Government, is to bring greater co-ordination on an area-basis to publicly-funded programmes and to oversee administration efficiencies across the local development landscape, while drawing on the capacity of local government and the experience, perspective and expertise of local and community actors in the relevant local authority area in programme delivery.

The above vision presents many challenges to the community, voluntary and environmental sectors in Galway City and throughout the country. The establishment of Public Participation Networks (PPNs) in each local authority area to facilitate participation and representation of the community, voluntary, social inclusion and environmental

sectors represents an important attempt by Government to ensure that local authorities consult with and promote effective participation of local communities in local government. As the key representative forum for communities in the city, GCCN is placed in a pivotal position to impact effectively on policies and programmes being developed that affect the lives of those living in the city, particularly those who are most marginalised from decision making processes. GCCN is committed to meeting the challenges of maintaining an autonomous voice representative and inclusive of the diverse communities in Galway City, of working to build consensus amongst member groups on key strategies and approaches, and of maintaining a constructive voice in relation to all developments in the city that are of particular interest or concern to GCCN members.

It is imperative therefore that GCCN not only develops clear policy positions in relation to core areas of importance, but that these policies are continually developed in a way that ensures maximum input and meaningful participation of communities in the city, thereby strengthening the mandate and capacity of GCCN to effectively represent the concerns of a wide range of interests. The process of developing this policy paper reflected this imperative.



Methodology

The process of developing this policy paper involved;

- Meetings of the GCCN Steering Group to discuss and agree process and approach;
- The appointment of an external facilitator to co-ordinate the process and produce drafts of the Policy Paper;
- Six consultative workshops, one with each of the Linkage Groups to secure agreement on core priorities and positions;

- Drafting and re-drafting of the paper based on comments invited from all GCCN members;
- Final review by the GCCN representatives;
- Presentation of, and agreement on all policy positions at a GCCN Plenary Meeting.

As with all policy development processes, these policies will be reviewed and amended as appropriate on an ongoing basis in line with changing contexts and new and emerging issues.

Community Development as a Strategic Approach

GCCN has adopted community development as an underpinning approach to all its work. Community development is widely recognised nationally and internationally as; *'A developmental activity comprised of both a task and a process. The task is social change to achieve equality, social justice and human rights, and the process is the application of principles of participation, empowerment and collective decision making in a structured and co-ordinated way'*²



GCCN recognises that community development is based on a number of core values including;

- **Collectivity** – Involving approaches to planning and decision making which focus on the potential benefits for communities from actions and policies rather than focusing only on benefits to individuals.
- **Community Empowerment** - Involving approaches to planning and decision making which lead people and communities to be resilient, organised, included and influential.

- **Social Justice and Sustainable Development** – Involving approaches to planning and decision making which include; promoting policies and practices that challenge injustice, poverty, inequality, discrimination and social exclusion, valuing diversity of identities and promoting environmentally, economically and socially sustainable policies and practices based on environmental justice principles.
- **Human Rights, Equality and Anti-discrimination** - Involving rights based approaches to planning and decision making and working towards a society where human rights and equality are recognised and realised and discrimination is addressed.
- **Participation** - Ensuring meaningful participation involves the self- identification of needs and interests by communities and the formulation of responses by those communities to ensure the realisation of their rights.

GCCN believes that these core values should underpin all community engagement and decision making structures and processes in Galway City. GCCN believes that in order for this vision to be realised, strong community development, voluntary and environmental sectors in the city are required, appropriately supported by the state and its agencies.

GCCN is particularly concerned with the promotion of meaningful and effective participation of communities in the decision-making processes that affect their lives. GCCN is deeply committed to the principles of participation, representation and consultation as we believe that:

- it is the right of people to participate in decisions and policies that affect them and their communities;
- the participation of people and communities benefit and improve decision-making and policy development.

GCCN opposes tokenistic forms of participation, representation and consultation.



Overarching Policy Principles

Eight overarching policy principles inform GCCNs work. These are;

1. Anti-Racism
2. Equality and Diversity
3. Social Inclusion
4. Sustainable Development
5. Accountability
6. Future Proofing
7. Universal Accessibility.

freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life³

GCCN understands that racism occurs on a number of levels, including individual, cultural and institutional. GCCN understands Institutional racism to be 'the network of institutional structures, policies and practices that create advantages and benefits for the majority ethnic group and creates discrimination, oppression and disadvantage for people from targeted racialised groups and minority ethnic groups'⁴.

GCCN recognises the dangers of increased racism linked to crises and conflicts throughout the world. GCCN calls on Government and state agencies locally to put in place a strategy for inclusion and Interculturalism⁵ including a focus on addressing racism, islamophobia, xenophobia and intolerance.

Anti-Racism

GCCN is committed to anti-racism and to anti-racist practices and policies. GCCN recognises racism to be, 'Any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental

GCCN recognises Irish Travellers as an indigenous minority ethnic group who have been a part of Irish society for centuries. GCCN recognises the specificity of racism against the Irish Traveller community and the historical and institutional discrimination experienced by them contributing to the high levels of poverty, poor living conditions, poor health status (including mental health), high levels of unemployment and extremely low levels of educational attainment experienced by Travellers in Ireland.



We are committed to combatting and challenging racism in all its forms while supporting initiatives that promote anti-racism, inter-culturalism and respect for diversity.

Equality and Diversity

GCCN believes in equality and the value of diversity. GCCN believes that all human beings have equal worth and importance and therefore are equally worthy of dignity, respect and human rights. GCCN is committed to challenging oppression, stereotyping and prejudice in all its forms; promoting the rights of marginalised groups including Travellers, Roma, minority ethnic groups, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, LGBTQI people, older people, children and young people and people with disability.

GCCN recognises the inequalities experienced by women in society and particularly the multiple forms of inequality and oppression experienced by specific groups of women for example women from minority ethnic communities including Travellers, women with disability and older women. GCCN is committed to promoting the rights of women in all their diversity, including addressing violence against

women as a violation of women's human rights and the under-representation of women in decision making. GCCN supports gender proofing of all policies and programmes as a means of assessing the potentially differential impact which they may have on women and on men.

GCCN rejects the discrimination and oppression of the LGBTQI community and will seek in our work to stand in solidarity with and highlight issues and human rights violations of the LGBTQI community; GCCN also acknowledges the intersectional nature of discrimination and oppression and that certain groups in society experience multiple forms of oppression which require specific responses. GCCN believes that society is enriched and enhanced by diversity and that diversity should be celebrated, valued and supported.

Social Inclusion and Economic Equality

GCCN believes in the right of all people, to be included and to fully participate in social, economic, political and cultural life free from poverty and exploitation.

GCCN recognises that poverty⁶ and inequality are interconnected and that the unequal distribution of



wealth causes social and economic instability⁷ and a widening gap between rich and poor. GCCN supports the view that spending should be prioritised on adequate income and quality and affordable public services for all, particularly people on low income.

Reflecting the UN Declaration on Human Rights GCCN recognises that everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of him/herself and of his/her family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his/her control⁸.

Sustainable Development

GCCN is committed to working towards a sustainable environment and a society where consumption and production patterns and use of all natural resources are sustainable. A society where sustained and inclusive economic activity, social development, environmental protection, the eradication of poverty and promotion of food security are prioritised.

GCCN is committed to environmental justice. Environmental justice occurs when all people equally:

- Have access to a safe and clean environment and environmental protection (substantive justice)
- Share the burden of environmental hazards⁹ and the benefits of a good quality environment, including access to green spaces and healthy food (distributive justice)
- Are included in environmental policy decision-making processes (procedural justice)

Governance and Accountability

GCCN believes in the importance of good governance, accountability and transparency. GCCN believes that all policy, state and government structures at local, national and international levels should strive for the highest standards of governance and uphold the highest levels of accountability and transparency.

As a network GCCN acknowledges and balances its own accountability to the community, funders and the legal system.

Future Proofing

GCCN believes in the value and necessity of future proofing as an approach to planning and development. GCCN envisages a city where all planning looks to the future ensuring that the decisions we take today do not compromise but rather will have lasting benefit for future generations.

GCCN is of the view that although it is not easy, it is important that all those who live, work and invest in cities come together and shape solutions for their future¹⁰.

Universal Accessibility

GCCN believes that all projects, initiatives, policies, programmes and services in Galway City should be universally accessible enabling the full and equal participation of all people, regardless of disability, age, literacy or linguistic considerations. GCCN supports a social model of disability which focuses on the inadequacies of social, environmental, political and economic factors in society that restrict the full participation of people who have disabilities thereby failing to accommodate their needs.

1. Social Inclusion, Community Development and Equality

Goal

The GCCN goal is the development of Galway as a city that listens, where there is meaningful participation of all communities in the decisions that affect their lives that goes beyond consultation and is without tokenism. An anti-racist city that recognises, celebrates, promotes and values diversity. A safe city with 24/7 crisis intervention for those with mental health difficulties. A city that is universally accessible and user friendly where we plan by design and utilise the wealth of knowledge of all our people, particularly young people, children, and older people.

Policy Proposals

Human Rights, Equality, Migrants, Travellers and Roma

GCCN proposes that;

- All local state agencies and public bodies Implement the Public Sector Positive Duty across all services and provide training on the Positive Duty, equality and diversity for staff in line with their obligations under the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014¹¹;
- International Human Rights Treaties are recognised and endorsed locally such as CERD¹², CEDAW¹³, UNCRC¹⁴ and CRPD¹⁵;
- Equality proofing processes are developed and implemented in relation to all public services and local policy;
- Staff employed to promote social inclusion within state agencies and or public bodies have a background in and commitment to social inclusion and equality;
- A calendar of annual human rights days and events be produced and supported by Galway City Council;
- A Galway City Inter-Agency Group Against Racism be established and clear messages should emanate from public and community bodies that Galway City opposes racism. The inter-agency group should support the monitoring of racist incidents in Galway City through the promotion of the European Network Against Racism Ireland's racist incident reporting system *iReport*¹⁶;
- The system of direct provision¹⁷ for asylum seekers and enforced deportations be ended;
- A system of supports be established for those transitioning from direct provision to the community;¹⁸
- Supports and structures are established to ensure that migrants, refugees and those from minority ethnic communities have a real say in the development of responses to realise their rights.
- An autonomous Galway City refugee and migrant project is established and funded to advance the rights of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees in the city;
- The Galway Traveller Accommodation Plan is implemented and the Galway Traveller Interagency Group re-convened as a matter of priority;
- Full and adequate resources for frontline services for women experiencing violence are provided.



Children and Young People

GCCN proposes that;

- Community-based afterschools projects in the most disadvantaged and marginalised areas of the city are established. In Galway, a model was developed that focused on afterschools as a model for educational intervention and GCCN urges that support is made explicit for this model;
- Associated 'lunch-clubs' be established providing a key opportunity to use locally grown food produce from school / community gardens, as a healthy alternative to commercial imported over-processed / over-packaged foods;
- Galway's application for European Capital of Youth be in the context of a commitment to the creation of a strong youth infrastructure in the city and of fora and mechanisms to ensure youth participation in decision making processes, and in the development of the city;
- This application should also be in the context of a commitment to the creation of specific services for young people and youth groups including, youth group hostels and low cost accommodation for community and youth groups.

Disability

GCCN proposes that;

- Galway City Council build on its commitments to the Barcelona Declaration and mainstream policy that encompasses the National Disability Strategy Implementation Plan and the objectives of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities in recognition of Ireland's intention to ratify UNCRPD;
- Supported accommodation is provided to allow people to live inter-dependently in a safe and secure environment;
- The rights of people with intellectual disability to make decisions in accordance with the Assisted Decision-Making (Capacity) Act 2015¹⁹ are recognised and supported;
- Disability awareness training that acknowledges the existence of hidden disabilities be provided to staff in public services;

- Information on the duties to people with a disability is provided to new recruits in the public service including with regard to issues of respect, understanding and dignity;
- Simplification of language, listening skills, and a positive attitude to people with a disability, and other vulnerable people are prioritised within public services.

Older People

GCCN proposes that;

- The built and social environment in Galway is developed to enable people of all ages, but particularly the older members of our community, to be engaged and to feel and be safe both at home and out and about;
- Older people who own their own houses are given an opportunity to take up sheltered social housing or voluntary downsizing in exchange or part exchange for their property which could then be used for other forms of social housing;
- Services are put in place to ensure that, as far as possible, older people can get to where they need to go, when they need to do so;
- All members of the community are facilitated to live in their own homes and communities for as long as possible;
- Participation for all members of the community in social, economic, cultural and public life are promoted;
- A partnership is developed between the Age Friendly Alliance and NUI Galway, and particularly the University's two most relevant (to this strategy) centres, Project Lifecourse and the Community Knowledge Initiative. This partnership will help to promote the concept of an age-friendly society and an age-friendly University, and thereby make Galway a flagship for the integration of practice and research in the areas of ageing and the family;
- The concept and practice of inter-generational activities is promoted and nurtured throughout our community and across the generations;

- All statutory and relevant organisations establish relationships and work with the Older Persons Council, and other groups representing the older members of the community, by engaging in a two-way process of communication which will enhance progress in relation to the other strategic priorities. Through this process we will also ensure that older adults have the information they need to live full lives;
- Initiatives which will enable people to live healthier and active lives for longer are supported and promoted.

Health & Well-Being

GCCN proposes that;

- A health and well-being statement is incorporated into the strategies of all local public bodies and state agencies;
- A Health in All Policies (HiAP) approach to public policies is taken across sectors in Galway city that systematically takes into account the health and health systems implications of decisions, seeks synergies and avoids harmful health impacts, in order to improve population health and health equity²⁰;
- Support be provided for a Mental Health Consumer Panel and a peer support programme for those with mental health difficulties;
- An early intervention programme be established in primary schools;
- Community based services are provided including adequate provision of mental health counsellors and nurses;
- An Advancing Recovery in Ireland²¹ centre be established in the city with 24-hour crisis intervention and a drop in centre for on-going support;
- Mental health be given parity with physical health involving parity of support, awareness and resourcing;
- Awareness and sensitivity training for officials in the Department of Social Protection is provided;

- A Services Coordination Strategy be developed between the HSE, Department of Social Protection and Galway City Council, including a particular focus on housing for those with mental health concerns.

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

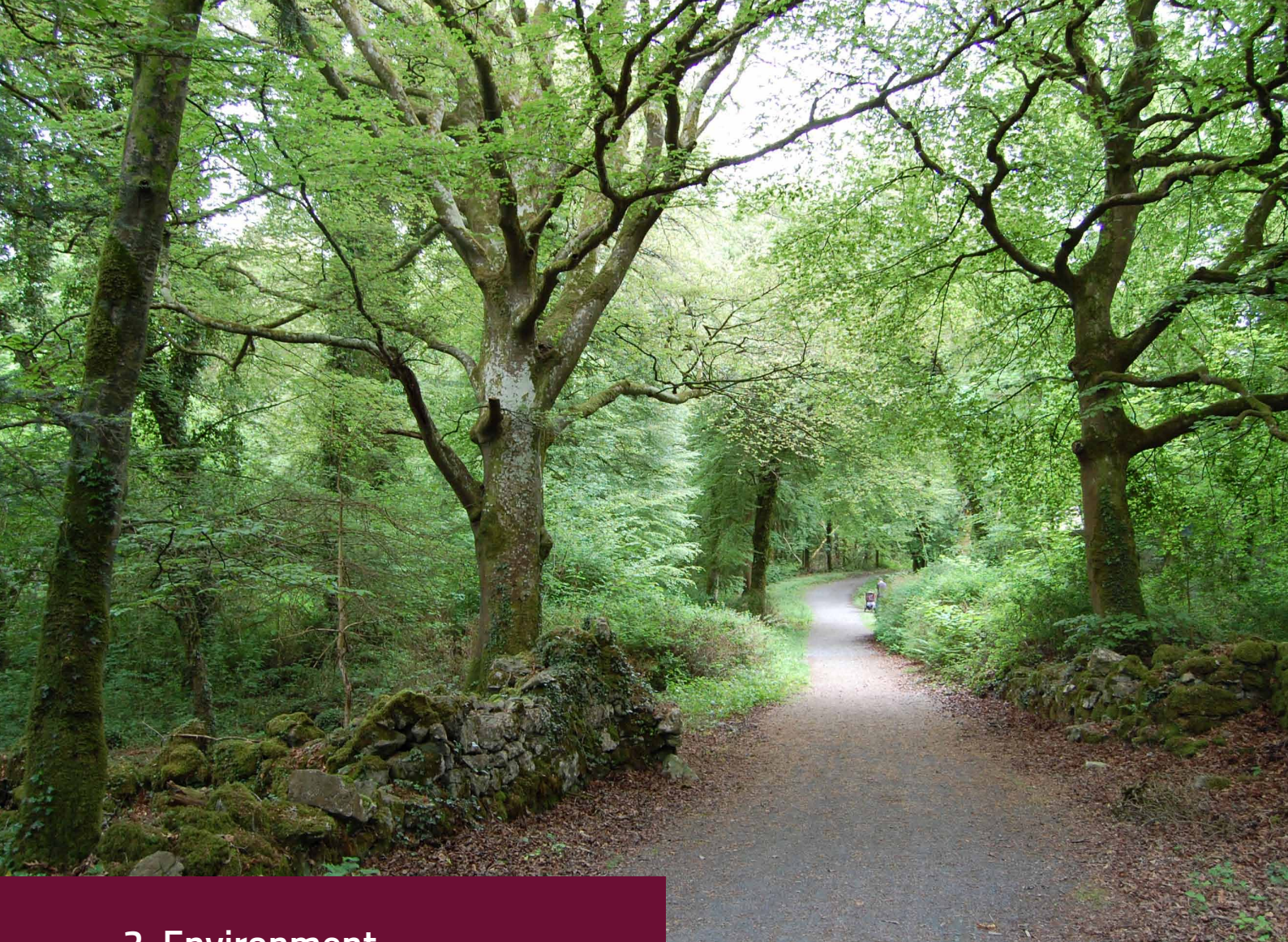
GCCN proposes that;

- The LGBTQI resource centre is fully resourced and supported;
- Additional supports are provided to the LGBTQI community in Galway city particularly for young people.

Inclusive Community Planning

GCCN Proposes that;

- Participatory methods in architecture and planning processes that meaningfully engage communities should be established particularly in relation to infrastructure that facilitates cultural diversity;
- The built environment should have a focus on community facilities including for example, fully accessible gyms and community pools;
- All public documents should be user friendly, accessible and contain glossaries of terms.



2. Environment

Goal

The GCCN goal is the development of Galway as a clean, pollution free, post carbon city, with preserved, enhanced and protected biodiversity, where our waterways are protected, there is wise sustainable use of resources with a well implemented Zero Waste Policy and widespread public and schools based environmental education.

Policy Proposals

Sustainable use of resources, post carbon Galway and climate proofing

GCCN endorses the Transition 2030 Galway vision that seeks, a radical transformation of Ireland's energy system to meet climate policy objectives.

Our vision of a low carbon energy system means that greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the energy sector will be reduced by between 80% and 95%, compared to 1990 levels, by 2050, and will fall to zero or below by 2100²².

GCCN proposes that;

- The circular economy²³ is embedded in all climate strategies and policies;
- A Reduce, Reuse, Recycle & Compost waste management system that will lead to a Zero Waste programme for Galway city is developed and implemented;
- KEEP IT LOCAL the localisation movement be supported as a matter of public policy, including in relation to food security, (supporting Grow Your Own and Grow It Yourself initiatives) with ethical sourcing principles including in relation to procurement processes;

- A Resource Recovery Park for Galway is established;
- Production of compost for public use from the waste of the municipal brown bins is supported and resourced;
- A refundable levy on all beverage cans and bottles be introduced;
- A strategy to make Galway a fossil fuel free city by 2025 is developed and implemented;
- Initiatives for local, sustainable generation of electricity are supported;
- Local Authority housing is developed as passive housing, using district heating and the highest standards of insulation;
- Use of solar energy is supported leading to reduced capital costs;
- Water quality is prioritised ensuring that it is of the highest international standard and that an effective monitoring process exists for such a purpose;
- Air quality is of the highest international standard and an effective monitoring process established for such a purpose;
- Information and education on fuel sources and their impact on air and environmental quality is provided;
- A commitment to ensuring Galway is an Oil Free City by 2030 is established and an action plan developed to ensure the achievement of this goal;
- Galway Energy Agency is reconstituted to promote and monitor an increase in renewable and clean energies;
- Public information is provided via Galway Energy Agency on the agency's work and on energy data relating to Galway City. Information could include any reports, improvements, audit information and challenges to improving Galway's energy efficiency;
- Acknowledging the urgency of the situation, all facilities, programmes, grants and residencies, funded by Galway City Council, should be sustainability proofed, addressing climate change, to meet national and international targets for local and national emissions reductions.

Ecology, Waterways and protected biodiversity

GCCN proposes that;

- Existing bóithríns and greenways in the city and its environs are protected and connected where possible and further routes developed with the twin aims of promoting ecological corridors for wildlife and active travel routes for humans - recent attempts by GMIT to annex laneway and seashore at Murrough (behind Galway Crystal) illustrates the need for this;
- Galway is established as a Biocide Free Zone ceasing the spraying, for example, of verges, roundabouts and trees;
- A project to monitor and protect the health of key sites such as Lough Corrib, Merlin Woods and Barna Woods is established as part of the sustainable management of all designated and sensitive ecological sites in and surrounding the city;
- Local communities and educational institutions are involved as key stakeholders in the management of green spaces;
- Ecological or wildlife corridors are developed recognising the importance of hedgerows as part of this ecological network;
- Forests and woodlands are promoted and developed as carbon sinks;
- The vital importance of maintaining the integrity of and restoring forests, woodlands, wetlands, bogs and the floodplains of lakes and rivers as sustainable natural flood defences be recognised and a map of the floodplains of Galway city and its environs for public viewing compiled;
- A policy of hydro-power units along the Corrib and canals giving due cognisance to protecting biodiversity and areas of natural heritage importance is developed;
- The old Waterworks building on the Dyke Road is restored as a public complex with toilets, café, crafts shops, bike hire, waterways and forestry and an interpretative centre for the benefit of the Terryland Forest Park, River Corrib and neighbouring canals;

- A greenway from the Plots/wetlands on the Dyke Road into the lands of the Terryland Forest Park leading towards the Quincentenary Bridge entrance is developed;
- Sensor technologies as part of a Smart City strategy are introduced, in order to improve the environment and the quality of life of people of Galway city;
- Merlin River is restored to its former natural state;
- Forests and woodlands are promoted and developed as Outdoor Classrooms;
- A system for ecological foot-printing for all state institutions and business in the city is established. Recent indiscriminate dredging of the sandy river by the OPW illustrates the need for this;
- An annual community native tree planting programme be established;
- Recreational use of canals incorporating a strong wildlife protection element are promoted;
- An ecological policy on festivals, incorporated as a condition of funding is established and implemented;
- A 'Cleanest Festival Award' is developed;
- A strategy is developed that recognises the crucial role of public green spaces such as parks, forests, meadows, seashores, rivers and wetlands in the area of personal and community health;
- An inventory database of habitats, fauna and flora using the Galway City Habitats Inventory 2006 as a baseline is established monitored and regularly updated with the addition of a status/risk assessment element.



3. Planning, Transport and Infrastructure

Goal

The GCCN goal is the development of Galway as a city where all policies, plans and processes are future proofed, inclusive and participatory with good urban land use planning and well-connected regional development which balances priorities between those who live here and those who commute in and out of the city. A city of universal accessibility where all people can access services and facilities. A city with a pedestrian-friendly, cycling friendly, disability friendly and child friendly infrastructure. A city where healthy choices are easy to make.

GCCN policy on transport is based on a Hierarchy of Road Users in the following order; 1. pedestrians and people with disabilities, 2. cyclists, 3. public transport and 4. private motor transport. GCCN endorses the European Charter of Pedestrian Rights and the Road Danger Reduction Charter. GCCN recognises that following a car-centred approach

based on prioritising 'flow' for motor vehicles results in roads designs and roads management practices that are hostile for vulnerable roads users and have the net effect of increasing motor traffic.

GCCN notes that documents such as the National Cycle Policy Framework, the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets and the NTA Permeability Best Practice Guide seek to address inappropriate and unsuitable roads management and town planning practices. The network endorses the overall approach advocated in these documents.

Policy Proposals

Transport, sustainable regional development and future proofing

GCCN proposes that;

- Regarding the N6 Galway City Transport Project, other, more sustainable, options must

be considered particularly in the context of the obligations under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015. GCCN is concerned that the N6 Galway City Transport Project will be an ineffective strategy and have concerns for the communities and habitats that will be affected. There is well-founded concern that the proposed strategy will undermine efforts to promote alternative modes of transport and, if successful, will reinforce unsustainable travel patterns. GCCN consider that in building this road, government will be in danger of contravening this legislation and may contribute to increased levels of harmful emissions. GCCN urges additional research be undertaken on the need to decarbonise and provide more energy efficient public transport as an option;

- An exploration of the development of a Light Rail Network be undertaken, including mini bus feeders and park and ride facilities, that will serve the people of Galway now and into the future;
- Speed limits of 30km/h or lower are the default option for all non-arterial roads in the city;
- Road Traffic legislation be amended to allow local councils to operate their own traffic enforcement and speed cameras;
- A Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) Management Strategy is developed with a view to restricting HGV movement to designated roads at designated times;
- Roundabouts be replaced with signalised crossings and in the short term raised table zebra crossings be established on all entries and exits recognising that the challenges and risks that current roundabout designs impose on vulnerable users are a barrier to pedestrian and cyclist mobility;
- Data collection and analysis are improved to highlight the car-dominated state of Galway transport and to identify key areas for the promotion of sustainable alternatives;
- The potential for induced traffic in the construction of new highways through and around the city is recognised;

- Green belts to prevent further urban sprawl is developed;
- The Galway-to-Dublin Cycle Greenway and the Galway City-to-Clifden Greenway are developed;
- The presently informal Seven Galway Castles Heritage Cycle routes are developed with an extension to provide a safe route to Annaghdown as a safe cycling and walking trail.

Universal accessibility and land use planning

GCCN proposes that;

- All land use planning is accessibility and equality proofed;
- Future development is mixed-use and orientated to public transport and other key facilities especially schools and workplaces;
- Mechanisms and approaches for incentivising people to live in the city are established;
- Higher density residential development is concentrated in the city and surrounding towns, rather than in the form of one-off housing and urban sprawl;
- Heritage in the city is protected and promoted;
- All new streets and buildings are designed at the human scale and allow for safe and comfortable access for all people, including those with visual, mobility and other impairments;
- Existing streets and buildings are adequately maintained and retrofitted where necessary to ensure safe and comfortable access for all people;

GCCN also proposes that all public participation structures and processes designed to facilitate and enable community participation and the outcomes from such structures and processes are reviewed and evaluated

4. Sports Recreation and Amenity

Goal

The GCCN goal is the development of Galway as a city where everyone has access to local, accessible and inclusive recreational facilities and amenities, enhancing the lives of those who use them and contributing to the physical and mental health of all in the community. A city where facilities are developed in full consultation with all in the local area, especially those who are often excluded.

Policy Proposals

Inclusion

GCCN proposes that

- Recreation grounds, community centres and amenities are accessible, affordable and available for use by all members of the community particularly those who are socio-economically, culturally and otherwise marginalised.
- Community facilities are not privatised but supported as sustainable social enterprises²⁴.

Developing Sports Amenities

GCCN proposes that;

- Galway City Council undertake and publish an audit of City Council owned land in the City and a policy for the development of sports facilities with targets and strategies set out;
- Green areas for sport be developed;
- Galway City Council outlines its plans for areas such as land in Renmore (near Dawn Dairies), the Swamp and Woodquay;
- Galway City Council develops a comprehensive plan for green spaces in the city with

widespread consultation and participation of all communities throughout;

- A fully accessible municipal community owned sports area catering for different sports including minority/non-mainstream sports is developed;
- Galway City Council explores the possibility of accessing a Community Support Project for the operation of sports facilities.

Minority Sports

GCCN proposes that;

- A special programme of supports for minority/non-mainstream sports including archery, judo, martial arts, cricket, gymnastics and hockey is established and that Galway City Council facilitate a process of bringing together non-mainstream sports groups and clubs led by Galway City Sports Partnership.

Horse Projects

GCCN proposes that;

- A Galway Horse Project similar to those developed by Traveller organisations and community groups in other parts of the country is established, enabling Travellers and urban horse owners to continue to engage with horses in a safe area. A Galway Horse Project could also develop an innovative approach to inter-cultural education in schools as part of the Galway Capital of Culture 2020 programme.

Playgrounds

GCCN proposes that;

- Fully accessible playgrounds for all children are provided throughout the city;
- Playground facilities are provided for older children (10-18 years) that would include;
 - playground equipment - swings, multi-play, aerial runways
 - skateboarding and roller-blading parks
 - full size tennis and basketball courts in local areas.



Safe Travel and Home Zones

GCCN proposes that;

- Safe travelling routes to amenities and recreational grounds are provided including for example, bike routes away from traffic, pedestrian crossings, traffic calming systems, lowering of speed limits and addressing 'rat-runs';
- Safe areas are established in residential areas which; favour pedestrians and children's play areas over traffic, have speed limits of walking speed and separate roads with access for bicycles, buses and pedestrians from those open to motor vehicles.

Maintenance

GCCN proposes that;

- Recreational facilities and amenities are well-maintained involving, regular grass -cutting by City Council, regular inspection and maintenance of playgrounds, provision of bins in public areas, exploring the potential for possible partnerships between City Council and local groups to support and enhance maintenance.

Easier Access to Facilities for Groups

GCCN proposes that;

- To promote easy access to facilities, groups are provided with information on, who to contact to book a facility, reasonable rates of insurance, where to access training, sources of funding.

Libraries

GCCN proposes that;

- Library services be extended to reach those unable to access library buildings including isolated older people and people with disabilities, possibly through the use of mobile libraries.

Consultation

GCCN proposes that;

- Full consultation take place, especially with users, including children, in the development of all sports and recreation amenities in the city.



5. Arts, Culture and Heritage

Goal

The GCCN goal is the development of Galway as a vibrant, inclusive, dynamic, intercultural, international, colourful city which nourishes creative communities and participation by all in the cultural and artistic life of the city. A city that promotes a rights-based approach to arts and culture and meaningful participation of communities in artistic and cultural planning with strong public investment in community artistic spaces. A city that values artistic freedom and promotes transparency, accountability, affordability and excellence. A city where Traveller culture and that of other minority ethnic groups in the city are promoted and valued. A city where the arts and cultural life are seen as vital for the well-being and quality of life of those who live here.

Policy Proposals

Spaces and Facilities

GCCN proposes that;

An audit of empty spaces in the city is undertaken to ascertain where spaces may be available for artistic projects, events and initiatives including, community/socially engaged art, visual arts, music and dance;

- An Arts Space Masterplan be developed addressing the needs of all art forms;
- Incentives and supports are provided to arts groups to assist in accessing spaces;
- Open public outside spaces are created and developed for people to gather and events to take place;
- A community space is available immediately as a priority to house the many arts and cultural groups currently active in the city who have no facilities or spaces;
- The above initiatives be supported in the context of Galway 2020 and implementation of the annual arts development and work programmes.

Planning and Development

GCCN proposes that;

- Galway City Council recognise the rights of all those with an interest in arts and culture in Galway City to be represented on governance structures and participate in policy development and implementation in the area of arts and culture;
- There is greater meaningful participation of communities and representatives of the arts and culture sector in the city, in planning for cultural and artistic development including Galway 2020 and the proposed Cultural Council with greater transparency and accountability;
- A review and evaluation of existing plans and strategies is undertaken and used as a basis for future planning;
- The Galway City Arts Plan includes a focus on culture;
- All arts and culture infrastructure is community proofed so that accessibility for all sectors of the community, particularly those that are socially excluded, marginalised and disadvantaged, is proactively encouraged. Outreach work will be key to this approach;
- Urban design and integrated arts and culture infrastructure is extended to local communities. GCCN would, for example, encourage the development of Creative Hubs in each of the suburbs, prioritising the most disadvantaged communities;
- Further supports are provided for the Cultural Rights Charter and associated activities.

Support for existing and new projects

GCCN proposes that;

- The vibrant and active arts and cultural sector in Galway City is supported and resourced on an ongoing basis;
- Other models of good practice are resourced, developed and piloted especially artist and Community led models and social, collaborative and participatory arts practices;

- Opportunities for progression in the arts are developed using a life-long learning model;
- The Per Cent for Art Scheme is maximised and all investment ensures physical, social and economic accessibility with community engagement in the commissioning processes.

Promotion and Support for Community Arts

GCCN proposes that;

- A focussed and coordinated strategy for community arts including voluntary, amateur and collaborative arts is developed as a powerful tool in tackling social exclusion, supporting personal and social development and achieving greater access to and participation in the arts for the wider community. Special emphasis should be given to celebration of the diversity of cultures now present in Galway and to support integration, cross cultural events and synergies;
- The Community Arts Strategy should; facilitate partnership building, sharing of skills and resources and access to new sources of funding; include a plan for specific communities including youth groups, education and health organisations, people with disabilities, older people and minorities. GCCN calls for the appointment of a dedicated fully resourced Community Arts Officer, to support community arts, socially engaged and long term residency programmes;
- All facilities, programmes, grants and residencies, funded by Galway City Council, are community-proofed' to promote access and participation including education and outreach and promote shared use of resources for meetings, administration and performance.



6. Economic Development and Enterprise

Goal

The GCCN goal is the development of Galway as the leading city for social enterprise in Ireland with implementation and mainstreaming of good models of social enterprise. A city where there is planning by design to protect the city, with Integrated, sustainable and universally accessible social and economic development. A city that recognises and builds existing potential in a broad range of sectors and prioritises indigenous, local enterprise that builds local resilience.

Policy Proposals

Social Enterprise

GCCN proposes that;

- Proactive support for investment in social enterprise from all relevant public agencies be prioritised with a strong focus on social enterprise in the implementation of the Galway City Local, Economic and Community Plan;
- A national plan for social enterprise²⁵ is developed;

- The LECP include specific provision for support mechanisms for social enterprises that are developed by Travellers and Traveller organisations, and existing social enterprises in the city should continue to be supported.

Integration and Rights

GCCN proposes that;

- There is sustainable inclusive and integrated socio economic development and employment in the city incorporating the Public Sector Duty. This involves ensuring that the local population benefits from economic development through education, training and upskilling, employment opportunities, social benefit, public duty compliance and positive action measures including equality proofing and gender proofing;
- Entrepreneurship potential amongst ethnic minorities is stimulated and supported as recommended by the small-business forum (2006), setting of targets to improve the rate of business start-up activity, and routine collection of information by enterprise agencies on the take-up of their services by members of minority ethnic communities including Travellers.

Young People

GCCN proposes that;

- Concrete plans for mitigating youth unemployment are developed emphasizing the need for institutional collaboration and coordination among government, educational institutions and employers with the aim of bridging the experience gap. In order to address the education-employment nexus, the potential for internships and apprenticeship with local private business and voluntary and statutory agencies should be explored. The following goals could be used for targeted output-based youth employment schemes:
 - Skills – increase the number of apprenticeship niches for young people
 - Education – increase opportunities for young people not in full time education or employment by expanding non-formal education, and vocational skill training with the aim of promoting the technical and professional knowledge of young people as this enhances their career mobility and quality of life.

Planning

GCCN proposes that;

- All planning, especially Master Planning, protect and promote the life of the city centre and its environs by design. This should involve Integration of physical, economic and social planning;
- Galway is developed as a city of innovation with spaces for innovation and ideas generation, and cross sectoral intergenerational co-operation and mentoring;

- Galway City Council plans and leads support for small businesses in the city especially in the context of the Docks regeneration and plans for the Headford Road.

Support for Local Enterprise and Employment

GCCN proposes that;

- Support for local enterprise in a broad range of sectors is provided;
- Public bodies and agencies in the city explore the potential for Public Private Partnerships in developing initiatives to respond to social need while providing opportunities for small indigenous businesses;
- Local employment and social clauses are introduced in all Public Private Partnerships;
- Action is taken to protect and support the traditional structural characteristics of the Traveller economy and Travellers' participation in specific activities including market trading, recycling and the horse trade.

Participation and engagement

GCCN proposes that;

- A new model of positive engagement with the community be considered by Galway City Council, reviewing Local Authority culture with a view to enhanced participation, inclusion and transparency.





7. Housing and Accommodation

Goal

The GCCN goal is the development of Galway as a city without poverty without homelessness and with an adequate, affordable, sustainable supply of universally accessible, quality housing and appropriate accommodation for Travellers. A city where older people, young people and those most vulnerable to homelessness are supported and empowered. A city where there is mixed use transport oriented developments with planning based on the current and future needs of the population and where all housing is used to its full potential.

Policy Proposals

Supply

GCCN proposes that;

- Proofing of supply is undertaken including in relation to poverty/social inclusion/wellbeing/ access and culturally appropriate provision;
- Other models of supply be explored and piloted in close collaboration with the networks and groups in the city with an interest in housing and accommodation issues;
- Social housing is fast tracked as a matter of urgency;
- A more proactive approach is taken to dealing with and utilising local voids;
- The possibilities afforded by large scale mixed use developments comprised of social housing, affordable rental and affordable private housing are explored;
- Where private rented tenancies are being terminated, more proactive coordinated

response is taken by the local authority to prevent families and individuals from falling into homelessness;

- The local authority assumes greater responsibility for protecting the rights of those on the housing list who are in private rented accommodation;
- There is greater use of Compulsory Purchase Orders for the acquisition of land for integrated development;
- A role for the local authority in the provision of affordable student accommodation provision be explored and university expansion should be future-proofed in line with student accommodation requirements;
- The new National Housing strategy, *Rebuilding Ireland*, is used as a mechanism for ensuring investment in housing in Galway City, particularly in the area of social housing;
- The local authority require that social and private rented housing meet the minimum standard regulations²⁶.

Traveller accommodation

GCCN proposes that;

- Plans and targets in the Traveller Accommodation Plan are met as a matter of urgency;
- Traveller ethnicity is recognised in the development of culturally appropriate Traveller accommodation allowing and planning for the cultural needs of the Traveller community;
- Meaningful consultation with Travellers be undertaken, giving Travellers greater say and power in decision making;
- Greater cooperation between the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee and the Housing SPC is required. A commitment is needed to realising equality outcomes for the Traveller community in relation to their accommodation needs;
- An independent National Traveller Accommodation Agency be established.

Partnership

GCCN proposes that;

- Galway City Council develop a more proactive approach towards building partnership and engagement with private landlords. Such partnership should at all stages include community representation and participation with inbuilt monitoring and proofing elements;
- Investment in voluntary housing bodies be continued as a means to increase the local social housing supply;
- Sustainable citizen initiatives such as Housing Cooperatives, Community Land Trusts, Co-Housing, and off-grid developments are supported;
- Local Authority coordination of fora and structures for community and voluntary participation be improved;
- A stronger sense of urgency in relation to housing is needed;
- Greater coordination between city and county council housing lists is required.

Needs based planning

GCCN proposes that;

- A Public Architectural Database concerning all aspects of Galway City Development and its urban structure: history, archaeology, morphology and housing typology be established;
- All housing and accommodation provision and planning be future proofed;
- Life cycle planning is placed at the core of housing planning recognising different accommodation needs and requirements of the population at different stages of their lives;
- Two-bed houses for single person households be permitted and developed;
- Greater supply of 4-5 bed accommodation for larger families be provided;

- Galway City Council look to restructuring the mortgage to rent scheme to increase accessibility;
- Galway City Council should develop tenant participation/estate management strategies. A model of good practice should be developed in consultation with GCCN and groups with a specific interest in housing and accommodation rights.

Independence and accessibility for all

GCCN proposes that;

- Greater supports for older people to remain at home and in their communities be provided;
- All local authority/social housing are universally accessible in their design;
- All social housing developments are planned and built with the aim of building supportive age and disability appropriate accommodation;
- Sheltered schemes be considered within larger developments, facilitating integration.

Supporting 18-25 Year Olds

GCCN proposes that;

- The specific difficulties of this age cohort are recognised in housing planning and provision and their particular vulnerabilities to homelessness addressed;
- A national policy to address poverty and homelessness amongst this age cohort be developed;
- The needs of young people coming out of care are assessed and catered for in a holistic way.

Homelessness Prevention & Avenues out of Homelessness

GCCN proposes that;

- Security of tenure in the private rented sector is improved as a critical homelessness intervention and prevention strategy;
- The local authority should support and develop initiatives that help prevent the occurrence of homelessness;
- Greater supports for those who move out of homelessness to stay out of homelessness be provided;
- The *housing first* model²⁷ of addressing homelessness is required moving away from the staircase model²⁸.

Use of schemes

GCCN proposes that;

- Capital assistance funding is restructured as a rolling scheme;
- As HAP is a social housing support all local authorities should be responsible for recruiting landlords to the scheme and be responsible for providing alternative accommodation for a tenant in the event that a HAP tenancy is terminated.
- A scheme to incentivise those in local authority housing to downsize while remaining in their communities be explored following a scoping exercise.





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References

- 1 <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2014/act/1/enacted/en/html>
- 2 All Ireland Standards for Community Work 2016 – produced by Community Work Ireland for the All Ireland Endorsement Body for Community Work Education and Training <http://communityworkireland.ie/product/all-ireland-standards-for-community-work/>
- 3 International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CERD.aspx>
- 4 European Network against Racism Ireland <http://enarireland.org/racism/>
- 5 Interculturalism suggests the acceptance not only of the principles of equality of rights, values and abilities but also the development of policies to promote interaction, collaboration and exchange with people of different cultures, ethnicity or religion living in the same territory. Furthermore, interculturalism is an approach that sees difference as something positive that can enrich a society and recognises racism as an issue that needs to be tackled in order to create a more inclusive society. The concept of interculturalism has replaced earlier concepts of assimilation and multiculturalism. National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism Guidelines on Anti-Racism and Intercultural Training- 2001 [http://www.integration.ie/website/omi/omiwebv6.nsf/page/AXBN-7STKX61616578-en/\\$File/Guidelines%20on%20Anti-Racism%20and%20Intercultural%20Training.pdf](http://www.integration.ie/website/omi/omiwebv6.nsf/page/AXBN-7STKX61616578-en/$File/Guidelines%20on%20Anti-Racism%20and%20Intercultural%20Training.pdf)
- 6 People are living in poverty if their income and resources (material, cultural and social) are so inadequate as to preclude them from having a standard of living which is regarded as acceptable by Irish society generally. As a result of inadequate income and resources people may be excluded and marginalised from participating in activities which are considered the norm for other people in society – National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016. <https://www.welfare.ie/en/downloads/National-Action-Plan-for-Social-Inclusion-2007-2016.pdf>
- 7 <http://www.eapn.ie/eapn/training/poverty-and-inequality>
- 8 UN Declaration of Universal Human Rights, 1948 Article 25
- 9 Environmental hazards refer to the presence of toxins or pollutants, natural disasters, lack of access to water and healthy foods, and other situations or activities that create an unsafe natural environment. Climate change is a global environmental hazard, but its effects are felt more acutely by the Global South and by marginalised and disadvantaged groups (Adapted from Nesmith and Smyth, 2015)
- 10 David Tonkin – CEO UK, Atkins http://www.futureproofingcities.com/about_future_proofing_cities.html
- 11 <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2014/act/25/enacted/en/html>
- 12 International Convention on the Elimination of all Form of Racial Discrimination <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cerd/>
- 13 UN Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>
- 14 Convention on the Rights of the Child <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx>
- 15 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities <http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml>
- 16 <https://www.ireport.ie/>
- 17 <http://www.nascireland.org/campaigns-for-change/direct-provision/>

- 18 These supports should include; a) *information provision* (upon receipt of status, people should be provided with clear written information on what is needed to make the transition out of the direct provision system), b) *Assistance with accommodation and proof of address* (Once granted refugee status, subsidiary protection or leave to remain, people should be provided with a realistic timeframe of at least 3 months for exiting DP hostels, especially given the current housing shortages. DP hostels addresses should be accepted, for those with refugee status, subsidiary protection or leave to remain, so that they can obtain social welfare payments and rent supplement and so that they can open bank accounts) c) *Financial Support* (including Timely Payment of rent supplement. entitlement to normal social welfare allowances on receipt of papers instead of the DP payment and an adequate resettlement grant support for people in acquiring acceptable forms of identification);
- 19 <http://www.inclusionireland.ie/capacity>
- 20 <http://www.healthpromotion2013.org/health-promotion/health-in-all-policies>
- 21 http://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/Mental_Health_Services/advancingrecoveryireland/
- 22 White Paper - Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future 2015-2030 <http://www.dcenr.gov.ie/energy/en-ie/Energy-Initiatives/Pages/White-Paper-on-Energy-Policy-in-Ireland-.aspx>
- 23 'The transition to a more circular economy, where the value of products, materials and resources is maintained in the economy for as long as possible, and the generation of waste minimised, is an essential contribution to the EU's efforts to develop a sustainable, low carbon, resource efficient and competitive economy. Such transition is the opportunity to transform our economy and generate new and sustainable competitive advantages for Europe' - Closing the loop - An EU action plan for the Circular Economy European Commission Feb 2015 <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52015DC0614>
- 24 A social enterprise is an operator in the social economy whose main objective is to have a social impact rather than make a profit for their owners or shareholders. It operates by providing goods and services for the market in an entrepreneurial and innovative fashion and uses its profits primarily to achieve social objectives. It is managed in an open and responsible manner and, particularly, involves employees, consumers and stakeholders affected by its commercial activities. <http://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/social-economy/enterprises/>
- 25 see http://www.housing.gov.ie/sites/default/files/attachments/forfas_social_enterprise_in_ireland_sectoral_opportunities_and_policy_issues_publication.pdf
- 26 Housing (Standards for Rented Houses) Regulations 2008; Housing (Standards for Rented Houses)(Amendment) Regulations 2009
- 27 Housing first is a model for tackling homelessness that originates with Dr Sam Tsemberis and the Pathways to Housing organisation in New York. The model has been widely used in the USA and has, in more recent years, been adopted by homeless agencies in Australia, Canada, EU and Japan. The housing first model focuses on the immediate provision of long term/permanent accommodation for the homeless with supports and services subsequently built around the needs of each individual. <https://www.pmvtrust.ie/our-services/housing-with-support-service/housing-first/>
- 28 The housing first model differs significantly from the treatment first or staircase model. The staircase model works on the basis that a homeless person must deal with issues that gave rise to their homelessness, or have arisen as a result of homelessness, (e.g. drug and alcohol misuse, mental health issues, etc) before they are ready for long term accommodation. <https://www.pmvtrust.ie/our-services/housing-with-support-service/housing-first/>



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