



Comhairle Cathrach na Gaillimhe
Galway City Council

Halla na Cathrach
Bóthar an Choláiste
Gaillimh
H91 X4K8

City Hall
College Road
Galway
H91 X4K8

27th November 2018

To: The Chairman and Each Member of the Planning Strategic Policy Committee

A Chara,

I wish to advise that a Strategic Policy Committee meeting will take place on **Tuesday, 4th December 2018 at 9.30am** in the Council Chamber, City Hall, College Road, Galway.

The agenda for the meeting is set out below and I am to request your attendance.

Please find enclosed documentation for your information:

- Minutes of Meeting 4th September 2018
- URDF project list
- Submission to Dept. on Draft Building Height Guidelines
- Flyer on the pop-up event which will inform the preparation of the Galway City Council Public Realm Strategy.

Is mise le meas,

Ruth McNally,
Director of Services,
Transportation, Planning & Physical Development.

Agenda

1. Adoption of Minutes of Meeting held 4th September 2018
2. Confirmation of Application details & update on URDF
3. Headford Road - Update
4. RSES - Draft for Consultation until 8th February 2019 (copy will be made available at meeting).
5. Vacant Site Register - Update
6. Information on proposed Variation of the CDP
7. Public Realm Strategy - Project Program and Update
8. AOB

Fáiltítear roimh chomhfhreagras i nGaeilge / Correspondence in Irish is welcomed

**Minutes of Meeting of Planning Strategic Policy Committee
held on 4th September 2018 in Galway City Council, City Hall, College Road, Galway.**

Presiding: Cllr. Ollie Crowe

Present: Cllr Donal Lyons
Cllr. Terry O'Flaherty
Mr. Derrick Hambleton (Community Representative)
Mr. Shane Foran (Community Representative)
Ms Nuala Nolan (Community Representative)

In Attendance: Ms. Caroline Phelan, A/Director of Services
Ms. Helen Coleman, Senior Executive Planner
Mr. Liam Blake, Senior Executive Planner
Ms. Diane Egan, Executive Planner
Mr. Peter Staunton, Executive Planner
Ms. Elaine Coffey, Clerical Officer

Apologises: Mayor Niall McNelis
Cllr. Peter Keane
Cllr. Cathal O'Conchuír
Cllr. Billy Cameron
Ms. Norann Keane, Senior Staff Officer

Absent: Cllr Pearce Flannery
Mr. John Mannion (Community Representative)

1. Minutes

The adoption of the minutes of the 1st May 2018 was proposed by Cllr Donal Lyons and seconded by Nuala Nolan and adopted.

2. Matters Arising

Cllr. Ollie Crowe apologised on behalf of Cllr Peter Keane, Cllr. Niall McNelis & Norann Keane who were absent from the meeting.

Members requested that reports and supporting documents for the SPC meetings be issued to members prior to meetings. Caroline Phelan informed member's reports would be circulated prior to meetings. However the supporting documents were for information purposes only and were available on line for members to view prior to meetings when the agenda for the SPC meetings was circulated.

Members looked for clarification on the Planning and Development Amendment Regulations 2018 published, which outlined the exemptions for changing the use of an existing commercial unit to a residential unit. A number of key points were clarified for members such as:

- The structure must have been completed prior to the adoption of the Regulations.
- The relevant commercial uses that can be changed to residential are the uses listed in Classes 1, 2, 3 and 6 of the Planning Regulations. These include a shop, financial service, and professional service, a service that is principally provided to visiting members of the public, office, guest house and hostel.
- The structure must have previously used for one of the uses outlined in Classes 1, 2, 3 and 6.

- The structure concerned must have been vacant for a period of 2 years or more immediately prior to the commencement of development.
- Any related works shall affect only the interior of the structure and shall not materially affect the external appearance of the structure so as to render its appearance inconsistent with the character of the structure or of neighbouring structures.
- Any related works for the alteration of existing ground floor shop fronts shall be consistent with fenestration details and architectural and streetscape character of the remainder of the structure of neighbouring structures.
- The development cannot conflict with an objective of the Development Plan.
- The exemption only applies to structures with 9 No. units or less.
- The residential units shall comply with the Apartment Guidelines.
- A Declaration is required for works relating to a Protected Structure before the exemption can be enacted.
- The development shall not contravene a condition of a permission.

3. Planning & Development (Amendment) Act 2018

Caroline Phelan (A/DOS) circulated to members an information paper outlining the main points of the amended Planning & Developments Act, 2018, for consultation with members.

Donal Lyons & Members requested clarification on a number of areas of the Act. Changes to extension of duration on planning applications were discussed and clarified by Caroline Phelan. It was agreed by members the new time frame of 8 weeks for condition compliance issues would be welcomed as this was an issue for residents when works are being carried out.

Clarification on the amendment to section 13 of 2000 Act was also requested, this related to $\frac{3}{4}$ of 18 members. It was a general consensus of the members that the amended act was flawed and is taking away the power of the Local Authority.

4. Urban Development & building Heights – Public Consultation Document

Diane Egan, Executive Planner gave an overview of the handout circulated, the objective of this project is to support the compact growth and sustainable development of Ireland's five cities and other large urban centres generally greater than 1,000 persons (58 locations in total).

Members discussed the document, it was the overall opinion there was a scope for increased height builds in the City. However proper planning was vital and if people were to live 3 or 4 storeys up adequate storage space must be provided. It was also of the utmost importance that the old medieval part of the city was protected and that high density building would not affect the overall look of the city.

Clarification on GCC's plan of submission was requested and care take as to where these high rise apartments would go. Members requested that care be taken also not to implement building designed for the capital, imposing it outside of the Dublin area may not work.

Caroline Phelan (A/DOS) suggested it was a very generic proposal from a Planning Department point of view and all points raised by members would be included in Galway City Council submission. Both Caroline Phelan (A/DOS) & Diane Egan (Executive Planner) agreed to circulate GCC submission to members prior to submitting.

5. RSES and MASP – Update

Helen Coleman (Senior Executive Planner) circulated an information paper on the stages in the RSES process. The project was currently at preparation draft RSES stage and Galway City Council had made their submission. It was decided by members to defer discussion on this further until the Draft RSES (regional plan) was published.

It was suggested and agreed to specifically schedule a meeting for 30th October 2018 to allow for input during the public consultation.

6. Urban Regeneration & Development Fund

To be discussed at meeting of 30th October 2018.

7. Headford Road Project

To be discussed at meeting of 30th October 2018.

8. A.O.B

An additional meeting was to be scheduled for 30th October and the SPC meeting of 4th December was to remain scheduled also.

This concluded the business of the meeting

SPC Meeting – 4th December 2018

Project Ireland 2040 - Urban Regeneration and Development Fund 2018

Under Project Ireland 2040 a fund has been set up by the Dept. of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DHPLG) to drive regeneration and rejuvenation of strategic and underutilised areas within Ireland's five cities, key regional drivers and other large towns. The fund is operating on a competitive, bid-based Exchequer grant basis, with proposals being required to meet certain criteria and demonstrate a range of deliverables. The fund is one of four funds established under the National Development Plan 2018-2027. The DHPLG will have responsibility for implementing the fund, which has €100m available for expenditure in 2019 and an overall allocation of €550 million allocated to the fund up to the end of 2022.

The closing date for Applications for funding under the *Urban Regeneration and Development Fund 2018* was Friday 28th September 2018. Galway City Council submitted **8** applications for funding. Applications were divided into two categories- Category A are those which are "ready to go" projects which can be initiated in 2019, while Category B are those which require further development and technical assistance. It is anticipated that funding applications made under Category A will be adjudicated on by the end of the year and applications made under Category B will be adjudicated on shortly afterwards. There will be a call for funding in consequent years which will hopefully, if successful enable our applications under Category B to advance to eligibility under Category A that is full completion status.

The following URDF applications were submitted by Galway City Council:

1. **Category A -Ardaun LAP -Upgrade of Martin Roundabout to a signalised junction to provide bus priority, as well as with full pedestrian and cyclist crossing facilities.**
2. **Category A - Walking and Cycling strategy- Investment in cycle infrastructure.**
3. **Category B -Ardaun LAP– Planning and design of link road upgrade and new southern access from N67 to Ardaun.**
4. **Category B - Regeneration of Local Authority Depots at Sandy Road Liosbán – feasibility study, masterplan and design.**
5. **Category B - Local Area Plan for Headford Road Regeneration Area.**
6. **Category B - Public Realm and Amenity Project - detailed design scheme for a series of integrated public realm and amenity projects in Galway City Centre.**
7. **Category B - Walking and Cycling strategy- Investment in cycle infrastructure.**
8. **Category B - Salmon Weir Footbridge - Provision of a new pedestrian footbridge over the River Corrib adjacent to the existing Salmon Weir Bridge.**

SPC Meeting – 4th December 2018

Proposal to initiate a process to consider the variation of Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023

Section 16 of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2018 amends Section 13 of the principal act in relation to a variation to the development plan. It states that an Elected Member may submit a resolution to the Chief Executive requesting the preparation of a report on a proposal by the Members *“to initiate a process to consider the variation of the development plan where three quarters of the Members of that authority have approved such a resolution.*

The Chief Executive is required to submit a Report to the Elected Members within four weeks of the adoption of the resolution.

Elected Members Proposal

NOM 15/18 Notice given by: Cllr. D. McDonnell

“I, Councillor Declan McDonnell wish to propose a Variation to the Galway City Council Development Plan 2017-2023 on lands at Ballybrit (adjacent to the Old Monivea Road). I formally request a rezoning of 0.1 ha of land from “I” (Industrial) to “CI” (Commercial/Industrial) as per the hatched area in the attached map. Note this request is effectively extending the CI zoning to cover the entire land parcel as shown in light blue on the Map- Map circulated.”

-Extract from Council Meeting Agenda Monday 12th November 2018

Following discussion at the Council meeting on the 12th November 2018, the Notice of Motion was amended as follows:

“I request that the CEO prepare a Report pursuant to the Planning Act 2018 to consider a variation of the City Development Plan at lands as per Motion 15/18 to allow development on site of a supermarket”

The Motion was passed unanimously.



The Chief Executive must submit a report to the Elected Members before Monday 10th December 2018.



Comhairle Cathrach na Gaillimhe
Galway City Council

Halla na Cathrach
Bóthar an Choláiste
Gaillimh
H91 X4K8

City Hall
College Road
Galway
H91 X4K8

Building Height Guidelines Consultation 2018,
Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government,
Custom House,
Dublin 1,
D01 W6X0.

Our Ref: CP/HC/SS/21/09

21st September 2018

RE – CONSULTATION ON DRAFT 'URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND BUILDING HEIGHTS GUIDELINES FOR PLANNING AUTHORITIES AUGUST 2019

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please find attached the following comments on behalf of the Planning Section, Galway City Council regarding the Draft Urban Development and Building Height Guidelines for Planning Authorities.

The Planning Section welcomes these draft guidelines as they recognise the need to centralise and consolidate development within the existing built up areas of our cities and towns thereby supporting the accommodation of anticipated population and economic growth in line with sustainable development principles. The Core Strategy of the Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023 reflects these principles as it focuses on the regeneration opportunities offered by key city centre brownfield sites including Ceannt Station, Inner Harbour and Headford Road lands and a key greenfield suburban development site Ardaun. These locations present opportunities for increased heights and potential to establish their own distinctive character¹.

The Planning Section raises the following points;

General – existing/proposed building height studies:

- The Guidelines should specify a requirement for Planning Authorities to prepare building height studies for their functional area. Such studies, based on established urban design principles, would give an appropriate contextual reference, explore the defining qualities of the city/town, provide assessment principles/framework for appropriate building heights and provide benchmark heights and skyline reference points and area specific recommendations for higher buildings most notably in the context of historic centre cores.

¹ Section 8.7 Urban Design, *Building Height* of Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023.

- It is noted that there is no reference in the draft guidelines to existing building height studies undertaken by Planning Authorities. These provide evidence based spatial and visual analysis on the capacity of urban areas for tall buildings and also areas considered inappropriate or overtly sensitive for tall buildings. Such studies are *genius loci* and have determined the optimal building height for their urban areas having regard to the characteristics and features of their towns and cities. The importance of these local studies should be recognised as they do provide more specific guidance and are unique to place. These studies were generally adopted, have been subject to rigorous stakeholder and public involvement, consultation and consensus.
- The guidelines should include that there is scope for achieving well designed and intensively developed areas without the need for excessive increases in height above current benchmarks. Increased densities can be delivered effectively through good urban design approached in a comprehensive manner rather than solely via significant additional height.
- It should be explicit that building height is just one parameter among a range of parameters to be considered in the design process in the overall urban context.
- The importance of context should be emphasised in the guidelines. Building height tolerance will vary depending on local character and existing urban structure and scale.

Section 3.2 Development Management Criteria:

- It is noted the ecological sensitivities of context is referenced a number of times in the draft guidelines, environmental assessment processes and protected species such as birds and bats are specified. While architecturally sensitive areas are noted, limited reference is given to existing building heritage/character, protected structures, architectural conservation areas, the significance of heritage assets and their settings, the effect on historic skylines and protected and strategic views. There would be important historical and cultural built heritage reference points within urban skylines most notably church steeples and landmarks, Shandon Bells, St. Finbarr's Cathedral in Cork, the Cathedral and St. Nicholas' church in Galway, industrial features e.g. chimney stacks Poolbeg, that give a sense of place and orientation landmarks within the townscape. It is noted that the London Plan contains the St. Pauls Heights Study which seeks to protect and enhance views of this internationally recognised landmark. There is need for acknowledgement in guidelines that there will remain locations that will be sensitive to tall buildings within cities and urban areas, ACAs, settings of protected structures, protected/strategic views, landmarks, and skylines.
- Topography, ridgelines, natural features are not mentioned but may be covered by the term 'environment' in the draft guidelines document. Topography is another defining element in the capacity of the receiving environment to accommodate tall buildings. Differences in ground levels can be a key determining factor in building height and defining element of a place e.g. north side of Cork City with its steep scarp slopes and ridges and Old Town in Edinburgh with stories of tall buildings occurring below street level.

Section 3.2 Specific Assessments:

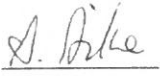
- While the micro-climate effects associated with tall buildings clusters is mentioned in the draft guidelines, there is no reference to the visual and spatial cumulative effects of tall buildings, the skyline relationship with other existing or future tall buildings.

Section 3.0 Building Height and the Development Management Process:

- The Planning Section questions if the protection of existing residential amenities of adjoining properties and the impact on privacy, light, overbearing, bulk and scale should be elaborated on further in the development management criteria section. It will be on this subject that most 'tall building' development proposals will be appealed by third parties.
- Detailed criteria for assessment of an acceptable building height in a particular area would be useful.

Appendix A, attached to this submission contains points regarding the draft guidelines expressed by the Members of the City Council's Planning SPC at a meeting on 4th September 2018. The points raised recognise that increases in building heights at appropriate locations, can help use land efficiently and provide for sustainable densities however the need to safeguard the protection of existing build and natural heritage and the innate special character of areas including city medieval core is reiterated.

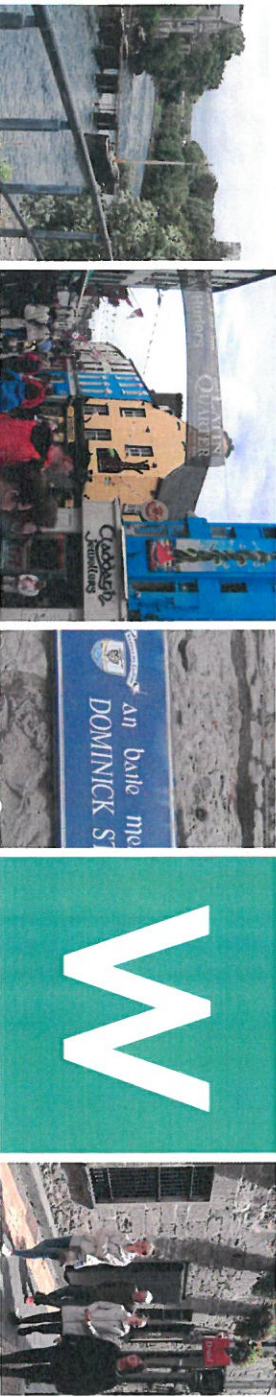
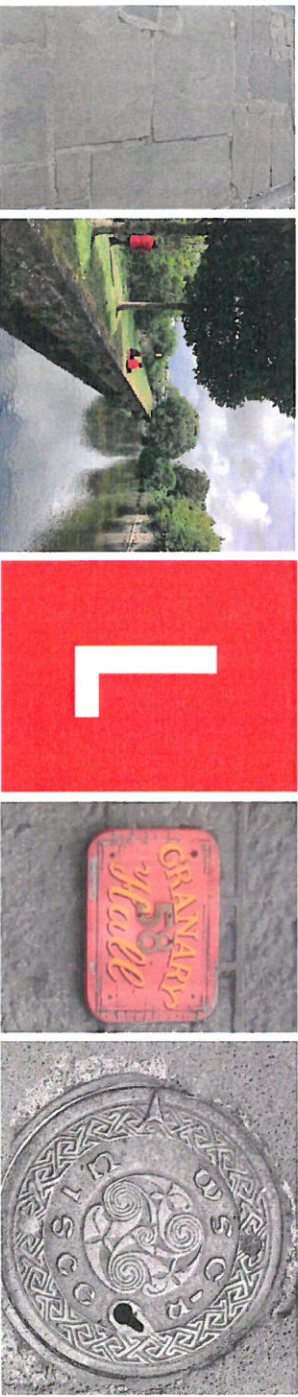
Is mise le meas,

pp. 
Caroline Phelan
A/DOS Planning

Appendix A

Points expressed by SPC Members at Planning SPC Meeting 4th September 2018 regarding DRAFT 'Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities'

- The intrinsic character, streetscape and historic legacy and amenity of Galway's medieval city core needs to be safeguarded.
- Need to acknowledge the need to protect character areas within city centre, medieval core, designated ACAs, other unique areas and streetscapes.
- Sensitivity needs to be applied to areas within the inner city character areas, suburban areas and the context of regeneration areas such as Eyre Square East and Ceannt Station.
- Higher buildings need to respect context and locality, responsive to what is in keeping with the prevailing character of the area.
- Acknowledgment that increased building height and density can be considered at appropriate locations.
- Need to address health and safety issues including fire safety and lift provision and proper management of buildings of increased height.
- Higher buildings should include appropriate provision for the daily requirements of people including storage of large items including bikes, buggies at ground level of buildings. There is scope for increase height so long as facilities for storage and waste is provided.
- Need to go up to sustain the city and cease expanding outwards.
- New employers and employees want to locate and live in the city.
- Need to be careful where high buildings are proposed in terms of dangers of overlooking and overbearing.
- There is a market for higher buildings but it is essentially medium rise rather than skyscrapers.
- Higher buildings could be considered in some key suburban areas, where appropriate.
- Delivery of housing should not be at a loss of other aspects of urban design.



**Improving Galway's
streets and public spaces
POP-UP EVENT**

Come and give us your views on Galway city centre's streets and public spaces!

- Friday 30 November, 3pm-8pm
- Saturday 1 December, 10am-2pm

At Galway Continental Christmas Market.

For more information, visit www.galwaycity.ie

This event is organised by Allies and Morrison and Galway City Council to inform a public realm strategy.