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Climate Resilient Galway

Draft Climate Adaptation Strategy for Galway City

Submission from

Galway City Community Network, the Public Participation Network in Galway City

August 2019

Preface

Established in 2014, **Galway City Community Network** (GCCN) is the Public Participation Network in Galway City. It represents groups and organisations in the community, voluntary and environmental sectors in Galway City. 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 development and implementation.

Galway City Community Network is one of the founders and an active member of the Galway Environmental Network.

Submission

Galway City Community Networks welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to *Climate Resilient Galway*, the Draft Climate Adaptation Strategy for Galway City.

Key points:

1. Dáil Éireann has declared a climate emergency and Climate Action has been prioritised by the national government. It has appointed one of its most senior and experienced politicians to the post of Minister of Communications, Climate Action, and Environment and published a National Climate Action Plan. However, the draft strategy does not appear to treat the need for climate action with the same high priority in terms of its inclusiveness, breadth, or structures;
2. The Draft Strategy appears to be about the city administration, that is its properties and services, rather than the community as a whole. There is clearly a need for a strategy that encompasses the whole community and that can benefit from the many strengths in the larger community that can be brought to bear on the challenge of climate change. A strategy that does not address this aspect cannot be regarded as complete. Therefore, how and when community involvement will take place needs to be added to the Strategy document;
3. The Adaptation Strategy Process (p. 36) describes the process by which the Strategy was developed. It is unfortunate that the bulk of the consultation process has come at the very end of the process.

As such, it leaves insufficient space for constructive engagement or contribution. We trust that active community involvement will be incorporated into any City-wide climate adaptation strategy and will also be central to the forthcoming climate mitigation strategy;

4. The Strategy needs to reference the Climate Action Plan 2019 to tackle Climate Breakdown and incorporate all relevant actions;
5. The Strategy needs to reference the declaration by Dáil Éireann of a climate emergency in May 2019 and commit Galway City to implementing all subsequent actions;
6. GCCN recommends that Galway City Council declare a climate and biodiversity emergency and ensure subsequent action;
7. While the Sustainable Development Goals are referenced on page 13, proposed actions should be matched to the appropriate goals. Please see the GCCN submission to the SDG **Implementation Plan, Localising the SDGs: Supporting SDG implementation at the sub-national level** at the link: <https://galwaycitycommunitynetwork.ie/gccn-submission-to-the-sdg-implementation-plan/>
8. GCCN welcomes the reference to the importance of community and community groups (p. 15-16). While there has been little action on this to date, GCCN would welcome involvement at all levels of Adaptation Strategy monitoring and implementation;
9. The Galway City profile (p. 20) should make reference to the Green Leaf designation and the learning (if any) that has accrued from that;
10. The Observed and Projected Climate Change for Ireland Summary (p. 28) should be written in the current tense given that we are already seeing the effects of climate breakdown;
11. The graphics on Pages 30, 31, 32, 33, 34 and 35 need to be much clearer;
12. On page 49 "Natural and Cultural Capital" is repeated in error in the first column of the table instead of Public Health;
13. The section on Biodiversity needs to make reference to the IPBES Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in the section of Biodiversity on page 56;
14. Under "Risks and Opportunities" (p. 63) the insurance risk is not confined to "increased insurance premiums" – there is a very real risk of an inability to obtain insurance cover at all;
15. The development of appropriate venues should be included in the vision on page 71;
16. All references to the Public Participation Network need to be changed to a specific reference to the PPN in Galway City – the Galway City Community Network;
17. GCCN welcomes the proposal to support communities, organisations and groups on adaptation initiatives, however the draft strategy does not describe through which structures, how, and by whom that will occur. To be complete the strategy should address this aspiration clearly;

18. In the section on Objectives to Meeting the Adaptation Goals (p. 74), the Plan section should be amended to refer to 'climate action' instead of 'climate change';
19. Goal 1 on page 78 makes reference to the review of the City Development Plan being due to commence in 2021. This will be a two-year process and the new plan will not come into effect until January 2023. We cannot afford to wait for another three and a half years to incorporate climate adaptation strategies into the Development Plan. The intention of the NPF is that development plans and local area plans will be reviewed once the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies are published. This needs to happen as soon as the RSES for the North and Western Region is published and climate adaptation strategies need to feature in the review;
20. Goal 1 on page 78 also makes reference to Local Area Plans. Galway City Council has repeatedly avoided preparing LAPs for strategic sites in the city centre which will be subject to significant regeneration, such as Bonham Quay, Ceannt Station, the Harbour Lands, the East Side of Eyre Square, Nun's Island, the Headford Road south of the Bodkin Junction including the Dyke Road Site, etc. LAPs would present an opportunity to properly take account of biodiversity and incorporate climate action (adaptation and mitigation) measures and this should be emphasised;
21. Under "Action Plan: Community Services", on page 90, there is mention of a Community Awareness Campaign "through Public Participation Network" but the "Public Participation Network" is not included under "Relevant Partners". GCCN should be formally recognised as a "Relevant Partner";
22. GCCN should be specifically mentioned as a "stakeholder" under "Communicating" on page 98;
23. The voluntary input into Planting Trees in Terryland Millennium Forest Park should be specifically recognised under "Mitigation" on page 102;
24. Climate Action and Energy are irrevocably linked. A large part of the necessary climate actions are the reduction in the use of fossil fuels, reduction of the carbon loading in the atmosphere, the creation of clean, renewable sources of energy, energy security, and increase in energy efficiency. These should be referenced in the document;
25. A standalone Climate Action and Biodiversity SPC should be established;
26. In addition, acknowledging that the effects of climate breakdown will impact on all aspects of life both Climate and Energy actions must cut across all SPC domains, i.e. Housing, Transportation, Planning, Commerce, and Environment. To restrict consideration to only one SPC sub-optimises the necessary actions and the opportunities.