

Galway City Council Corporate Plan

GCCN Submission

October 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.

Submission

Galway City Community Network welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to Galway City Council Corporate Plan.

GCCN suggestions

General

Ensure that the current crisis in climate and biodiversity is referenced and acknowledged.

Reference the public sector duty and the obligations it imposes on Galway City Council to promote equality, prevent discrimination and protect the human rights of employees, customers, service users and everyone affected by Galway City Council policies and plans. This is a legal obligation, called the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty, and it originated in Section 42 the Irish Human Rights and Equality Act 2014.

Reference the crisis in housing and accommodation currently in the City.

Mission statement

Replace “development and enhancement of the City” with “**sustainable** development and enhancement of the City”.

Core Values

Replace “Our core values are derived from the principles of good local government” with “Our core values are derived from the principles of **sustainability, equality** and good local government”

Partnership

The title should read “Partnership and Collaboration”.

Replace “To foster and develop partnership with public and private organisations and communities” with “To foster and develop partnership and collaboration with public and private organisations, communities and the Galway City Community Network in the development and advancement of initiatives and to maximise resources and investments for the city with a view to creating a living and liveable sustainable city.”

Include a commitment to work more closely with Galway City Community Network as the Public Participation Network in Galway City and to invoice GCCN in all policy development as a key stakeholder and consultation/collaboration partner.

Sustainability

Galway City Council should ensure that all projects will contribute to delivering the Sustainable Development Goals.

Galway City Council should adopt a holistic sustainability framework for development, such as the One Planet Living framework.

Operating Environment

Internal Environment

Refer to Galway City Community Network rather than the Public Participation Network. In the second paragraph replace “nominees of the Public Participation Network” with “nominees of Galway City Community Network, the Public Participation Network in Galway City”.

External Environment

There should be a specific reference to the housing and homeless crisis in the city and the insufficient progress to date in addressing the crisis. There should be a commitment to addressing this crisis with urgency and determination.

There should be a recognition of effects of Climate Breakdown already being felt and the likely future effects on the city and its residents and the urgent need for Climate Action including, but not limited to, the measures in the Climate Action Plan 2019.

There should be a recognition of the significant Biodiversity Loss in the City and a commitment to restoring Biodiversity in the city.

There should be a reference to the National Planning Framework objective to accommodate an additional 45,000 residents in the City by 2040 in a compact sustainable city.

There should be a reference to the intractable problem of traffic congestion in the city and a commitment to delivering on the active transport measures in the Galway City Transport Strategy which will both address the need for Climate Action and contribute to better health and quality of life for the residents of the city.

Where there is reference to stakeholders or key players in the economic, social and community life of the city, Galway City Community Network should be specifically mentioned as one of “the key players”.

Where there is reference to a “successful” city, it should be replaced with a “**sustainable**” city.

Housing

Galway City Council should include a firm commitment to providing housing solutions within Galway City. On numerous levels, insufficient affordable housing is impacting on our population. The loss of housing stock in the private rented market, the slow growth in social housing, have led to an inadequate supply of housing for the needs of the population of Galway. This has resulted in a worrying increase in the levels of homelessness. Furthermore, those in the private rented market are paying significant rents that impact on their ability to contribute more fully to the economic life of the city.

Include a commitment to the provision of housing that is appropriate to the needs of people with mobility issues, those with special needs, Older People and Travellers. In particular, it has to be recognised that there are enormous challenges for Traveller families seeking accommodation via HAP in the private rented market.

The introduction of HAP was a strategic goal set out in the last Corporate Plan. Whilst it is a welcome development, it does not offer Tenants security of tenure and does not provide the stability that families require.

Galway City Council should have an objective to deliver a significant number of social homes every year to meet the obvious need. These should be in mixed sustainable communities.

Galway City Council should ensure that an appropriate mix of homes are provided in the City to enable people to live their entire lives in their communities as their circumstances change by having appropriate choices for living within the community. That includes options to facilitate independent living within each community for as late in life as possible by providing supported/sheltered accommodation. Ultimately, the option of residential care in nursing homes within communities should be available.

Transportation

Ireland has commitments under the Sustainable Development Goals.

SDG 11: *Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.*

Target 11.2: *By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons.*

Galway City Council should prioritise active modes of travel, walking, cycling and public transport. This will bring huge benefits in terms of health, climate action and the environment.

Galway City Council should publish the draft City Centre Transport Plan prior to the end of 2019 and facilitate effective public engagement and collaboration on the draft plan.

Galway City Council should urgently progress the active travel element of the Galway Transportation Strategy, adopted more than 3 years ago, and ensure the implementation of those measures within the lifetime of this Corporate Strategy.

Galway City Council should urgently progress the development of protected cycle networks, not just disconnected cycle lanes, in the City and the development of protected cycleways between Oranmore, Claregalway, Moycullen and Bearna and the city in collaboration with Galway County Council, the Galway Cycling Campaign, the Galway City Community Network and the general public.

Galway City Council should prioritise pedestrians over all other traffic and should use pedestrian crossings to do so as is the case in cities, towns and villages throughout France for example.

Galway City Council should have particular regard for those of impaired mobility in the design of streets and footpaths. There are many instances where the width and/or surface of footpaths is totally unacceptable making it impossible for those of impaired mobility to navigate their way around the city independently.

Galway City Council should adopt a “no tolerance policy” in relation to the epidemic of parking on footpaths throughout the city and its suburbs.

Planning

Include a commitment to prepare Local and Area Plans utilizing best practice for obtaining the active participation and input of all stakeholders.

Include a commitment to alter the usual consultation process after draft plans have already been prepared and adopt a process that enables early and effective public engagement that is based on genuine participation and collaboration.

Galway City Council should no longer require developers to prepare masterplans for significant brownfield and regeneration sites in the city as it is encouraging and facilitating developer-led planning. Galway City Council should amend the Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023 accordingly.

Galway City Council should prepare Local Area Plans, involving early and effective public participation and collaboration, for the following areas:

- The Headford Road south of the Bodkin Junction, including the Dyke Road Car Park and Black Box site;
- Murrough;
- Nun’s Island;
- Ceannt Station;
- The Regeneration area on the east side of Eyre Square;
- The Harbour Lands.

Galway City Council should proactively collaborate with Galway Council in preparing Local Area Plans for the following areas which will be included in Galway Metropolitan Area Spatial Plan (MASP) once the draft RSES has been adopted by the NWRA:

- Galway Airport and surrounding area;
- The Ardaun lands within Galway County Council’s functional area;
- Oranmore;
- Claregalway;
- Moycullen;
- Bearna.

Galway City Council should review and amend the Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023, following public participation and collaboration, to ensure that it is consistent with the National Planning Framework and the NWRA's Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (once adopted).

Galway City Council should prepare a draft Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029, following early public engagement, and involving genuine public participation and collaboration throughout the entire process.

Galway City Council should appoint a City Architect to engage with the public representatives, the general public and the various stakeholders in the City in developing a Vision for the City in 2100 and to work with the planners in the preparation of the necessary plans to achieve that Vision.

Environment

Include a commitment to ensure Galway City contributes at least proportionally to meeting Ireland's greenhouse gas mitigation targets.

Include a commitment to the collaborative development of a Climate Action Plan for Galway City.

Include a commitment to work to complete the implementation of the Galway City Biodiversity Plan.

Include an objective to work collaboratively with environmental groups, such as the Galway Environmental Network and An Taisce, to develop a greater public appreciation of the significant social and economic value of our natural environment, the health benefits that can be gained from exposure to the natural environment as we go about our daily lives, the scale of the biodiversity loss that has already occurred, the condition of our environment and the very real threats to the environment and biodiversity.

As a key priority, Galway City Council should appoint a Biodiversity Officer to ensure that the protection and enhancement of biodiversity are adequately considered in the Galway City Development Plan and Local Area Plans.

Include a commitment to the establishment of a Waterways Forum based on the principles of collaboration and partnership.

Recreation and Amenity

Galway City Council should endeavour to encourage people to lead active and healthy lives, in contact with nature by providing attractive, accessible, biodiverse spaces for recreation and amenity that each community can avail of.

Economic and Community Development

Include the following commitments:

- To support and resource the implementation of the revised Local Economic and Community Plan and to the collaborative development of the successor LECP in 2021;
- To adopt the *All Ireland Standards for Community Work* as referenced in ***Sustainable, Inclusive & Empowered Communities: a five-year strategy to support the community and voluntary sector*** recently launched by the Department of Rural and Community Development;
- To work closely with Galway City Community Network, including holding familiarisation sessions for Councillors and staff;
- To the development of a cohesive plan to implement the Sustainable Development Goals within the corporate structure and how engagement with partners can lead to outcomes to meet agenda 2030 with the community;

- To adopt a youth policy and continued support for advocacy programmes for the development of local youth within the city;
- To the development and implementation of a people's portal to increase democratic interaction with the council as well as provide credible feedback in relation to services and increased participation of citizens in their local council plans;
- To the development of diverse economic mixes of commercial life in the city centre and the development of plans to create sustained prosperity for local businesses through marketing programmes, brand identity for the city and tourism promotion;
- To adopt a policy to advocate for the use of social enterprise to adopt and creatively solve issues to meet agenda 2030 criteria;
- To the continued adoption of designations that elevate and add value to an improved image of the city as well as the development of services provided by the city council in tandem with the expectations of outcomes and legacies of such programmes;
- To the development and implementation of an inclusive and accessible streetscape that encourages positive use as well as improved amenity value to the community and local commercial uses through engagement and removal of car-dominated streets;
- To the adoption of Galway Tourism policy and development into the future of opportunities that provide an economic and sustainable future for the city.

Culture

Include an objective to provide the following facilities that would be considered appropriate for a Regional City that will have been European Capital of Culture 2020.

- A performance venue;
- An exhibition space for the arts;
- A range of facilities and workshop spaces to support a vibrant arts community.

Include a commitment to facilitate and manage a programme of development in the support of creative enterprises in relation to the Galway 2020 Capital of Culture and beyond.

Include a commitment to increased improvement of the streetscape to provide areas of respite that align to the best practice of cultural use, a welcoming city for any age as well as to visitors to the city.

Include a commitment to the adoption of use and redevelopment of Galway City's waterways for future generations.

Explore the opportunities to preserve the heritage and cultural value of Galway's medieval city for future generations in alignment for consideration for special protections, conservation, and designation of landmarks to UNESCO international standards.

Finance

Include a priority to proactively seek goods and services through effective and collaborative procurement methods which value environmental sustainability as well as ensuring value for money.