



15<sup>th</sup> November, 2019

**To: The Chair and Each Member of the Climate Action, Environment, Recreation & Amenity Strategic Policy Committee**

**Re: Item no. 5 on SPC meeting 19<sup>th</sup> November, 2019 – Recreation & Amenity Needs Study 2019**

Dear Member,

The purpose of a **Recreation and Amenity Needs Study and Strategy** is to provide a coordinated framework to develop a Strategy for future planning and management of recreation facilities and activities within the city, based on current and projected future needs. The findings of the study will inform the policies and objectives of future City Development Plans with regard to recreation and amenity.

Extract from the Galway City Recreation and Amenity Need Study adopted on the 28<sup>th</sup> January 2008

*“The city has a diversity of open spaces and recreation amenities including a hierarchy of public parks and civic spaces and a range of open spaces within residential, commercial and institutional areas. The recent enhancement of Eyre Square (Kennedy Park) strengthens its role as the primary civic space in Galway City. River, coastal and woodland walkways and scenic views also add to the amenities of the city. There is also a range of sports facilities catering for active recreation.*

*A unique aspect of Galway’s diverse landscape is its extensive coastline with a series of water bodies including Lough Corrib, the River Corrib and canal systems. A substantial amount of lands in the city are in a natural state or semi-natural in character. The city also contains an extensive range of natural heritage areas of international and national importance. Areas of ecological importance have also been identified for their biodiversity value at local level.*

*Within Galway City, a green network is being developed to allow for the sustainable use and management of both natural heritage and recreation amenity areas in an integrated manner. This green network also allows for nature protection and for the enhancement and expansion of passive and active recreation opportunities in tandem with the expansion of the city.”*

**The seven principles in the existing plan are as follows:**

### **1. STRATEGIC PROVISION**

Provision of amenities & facilities in locations where there are currently deficits and spare capacity and where significant population growth or development is anticipated.

## **2. GUARDIANSHIP OF THE ENVIRONMENT**

Ensure the city's identified natural/semi natural resources are managed in a sustainable manner, whilst optimising their potential as both environmental assets and recreational resources.

## **3. UTILISATION**

Improve current utilisation through improved use of existing facilities and streamlined maintenance & management.

## **4. ACCESSIBILITY**

Implement measures to increase accessibility for all user groups to a diverse range of recreation and open space facilities.

## **5. DELIVERY MECHANISMS**

When other avenues of opportunity are exhausted, develop new amenities and facilities.

## **6. COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIP**

Ensure that all providers work together to meet current and future needs.

## **7. PROMOTION**

Promote an awareness of Galway's unique natural resources, recreational facilities and involvement in the World Health Organisation's Healthy Cities Project as well as promotion of Galway as a "Child Friendly City" and as a NSS "Gateway".

## **PURPOSE OF THE UPDATED STUDY**

The purpose of the Updated Study to be set out in the brief to the consultants is as follows:

- Review the existing seven principles and recommend if these should be changed, or updated or amended in any way
- Identify current and future needs taking into account existing and anticipated population growth, density and profiles across the city and demographic changes such as substantial in-migration, falling household size and catchment areas of existing and proposed facilities.
- Identify and evaluate recreation opportunities while managing and enhancing natural heritage and biodiversity making reference to the current biodiversity plan.
- Identify key considerations in developing passive and active recreation catering for alternative activities and multi-functionality of facilities.
- Seek to fully utilise the potential of waterways and the coastline for the sustainable development of recreation and amenity while protecting and enhancing their overall character, amenity and ecological value.
- Consider the likely future development of Ardaun.
- Consider Galway City's role as a major tourist destination.
- Consider the impact of the relocation of clubs / sports facilities to outlying areas.
- Consider recreational facilities located outside the city but used by its residents and visitors.
- Consider the role of the County Council and the potential of the environs to assist in meeting the recreational needs of the city.
- Consult as widely and extensively as possible to establish attitudes and expectations for passive and active recreation.

- Determine resources needed for developing and managing existing and proposed passive and active recreation.
- Assess the role of stakeholders including local sports clubs in the provision of match funding / own funding towards the development of facilities’.
- Identify joint initiatives with recreation and amenity providers and landowners.
- Acknowledge the increased role of the private sector in the provision of recreational facilities.
- Develop a map based inventory of all sports and recreation facilities throughout the city identifying the sites and areas covered by ecological designations
- Update the city’s recreational needs for the next ten years. To meet these needs assist in the development of a series of integrated strategic policies and proposed actions specific to open space amenity; ecology; water based amenities; and sports facilities set against a level of priority with potential delivery partners identified.
- Develop a strategy based on the updated needs study for the sustainable use and management of both natural heritage and recreation amenity areas in an integrated manner
- Develop a marketing and management policy for all recreational and sporting facilities. This should include the determination of a suitable management model / framework for sports facilities going forward, i.e. use of centralised online booking systems.
- Recommend if additional masterplans/ updating of current masterplans are required for existing facilities
- Where necessary make recommendations for Guidelines to promote best practice and to indicate where particular expertise may be necessary for project development.

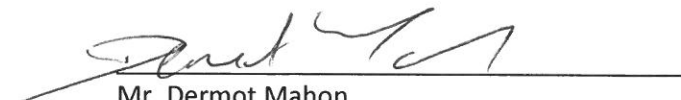
#### **THE STUDY AREA**

The Study area is the administrative area of Galway City Council and is shown on the Map below.

#### **NEXT STEPS**

It is intended to develop the Purpose of the Study as detailed above with input from SPC members into a Project Brief which be used to tender for suitable Consultants to develop the Study in the final Quarter of 2019.

Yours sincerely,



Mr. Dermot Mahon  
Acting Director of Services  
Housing, Environment & Climate Change  
Recreation & Amenity



