



Galway City Community Network
Lionra Pobail Chathair Na Gaillimhe

Galway City Community Network
The Public Participation Network in Galway City

GALWAY CITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN: STAGE ONE

GCCN Submission March 5th 2021

Table of Contents

Preface	2
<i>GCCN Vision</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>GCCN Aim and Role.....</i>	<i>2</i>
Approach and Methodology.....	3
Policy Context.....	4
<i>Sustainable Development Goals</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCPRD).....</i>	<i>5</i>
Population Growth and Housing.....	6
Economic Development, Employment and Enterprise	9
Transport and Sustainable Mobility	12
Built Environment, Placemaking & Sustainable Neighbourhoods.....	16
Green Network and Biodiversity.....	19
Climate Action	23
Community, Culture and Education	25
Energy and Infrastructure.....	29
Older People.....	31

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.

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 Aim and Role

The aim of GCCN is to co-ordinate and support the representation of the community, voluntary and environmental sectors in Galway City and the role of GCCN is to:

- **Facilitate representation** of the community, voluntary and environmental sectors on relevant local government, local development bodies and any local, regional, national or international structures deemed appropriate by GCCN.
- Act as a platform for the community, voluntary and environmental sectors to **develop policy and positions** on issues of common concern and to advocate for these policies and positions to be implemented.
- **Strengthen capacity** of the community, voluntary and environmental sectors, including to represent GCCN on all relevant structures.
- **Provide information** relevant to the environmental, social inclusion and voluntary sectors and act as a hub around which information is received and disseminated.

GCCN welcomes the opportunity to make this submission to the City Development Plan at this Stage 1 Pre-Draft Plan stage in the planning process.

Approach and Methodology

In early 2021, Galway City Community Network established a Steering Group to oversee the process of developing the GCCN submission to the City Development Plan.

GCCN, with the support of members and a range of member organisations, organised or supported the organisations of a series of consultation workshops to facilitate participation and engagement with the Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029 Stage 1 Public Consultation. In all there were:

- Eight thematic workshops, reflecting the themes set out in the Our City, Our Say, Have Your Say Issues Paper
- Four area based workshop
- Two thematic workshops

The workshops were attended by over 400 people, including GCCN members, City Councillors and others.

One of the critical aspects of this consultation process was the involvement of staff from the Galway City Planning Office. Early on in the process, the Steering Committee met with members of the Galway City Planning Office, the outcome of which was agreement by the Planners to engage with the series of consultation workshops.

At least two or three members of the Office attended each workshop and provide a very useful presentation that set out the importance of the City Development Plan, the planning process, including how to make a submission, and the context for the theme of the workshop. Galway City Community Network would like to acknowledge, thank and commend the Planning Office for facilitating this engagement.

Following the workshops, a draft submission was prepared by GCCN staff and circulated to attendees for comment before the submission was finalised.

Policy Context

Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals are 17 high-level goals and associated 169 targets agreed in September 2015 by the members of the UN to guide and co-ordinate action to address a broad range of interconnected development issues until 2030. Each Goal has a set of targets to be achieved, and each target has a set of indicators that are used to measure success in reaching each target.

Social Justice Ireland have compiled a monitoring report on Ireland's progress for 2019.¹ Under their assessment, Ireland ranks worst on the Environment Index (13th), followed by the Economic Index (11th) and Society Index (10th). Ireland's lowest scores are for Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12) coming 14th out of 15 and for Affordable and Clean Energy SDG 7 (SDG 7) coming 12th. Ireland also performs poorly on Reduced Inequality (SDG 10), Climate Action (SDG 13), Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure (SDG 9) and SDG 17 (Partnership for the Goals), ranking 11th on each of these goals. Ireland also ranks in the bottom third on Gender Equality (SDG 5) ranking 10th. These areas in particular need additional focus if the goals are to be realised by 2030.

Galway has the opportunity to show leadership on sustainable development by developing the new City Development Plan with the SDGs at the core. This should recognise that the goals are cross-cutting and cross-sectoral and need to be implemented in a holistic manner by every department of the Local Authority.

The Galway City Development Plan should:

- Use the SDGs as a framework for the City Development Plan 2023-2029 with each goal connected to the relevant sectors.
- Include actions to reach the relevant targets with ongoing monitoring and evaluation of progress in meeting these targets.

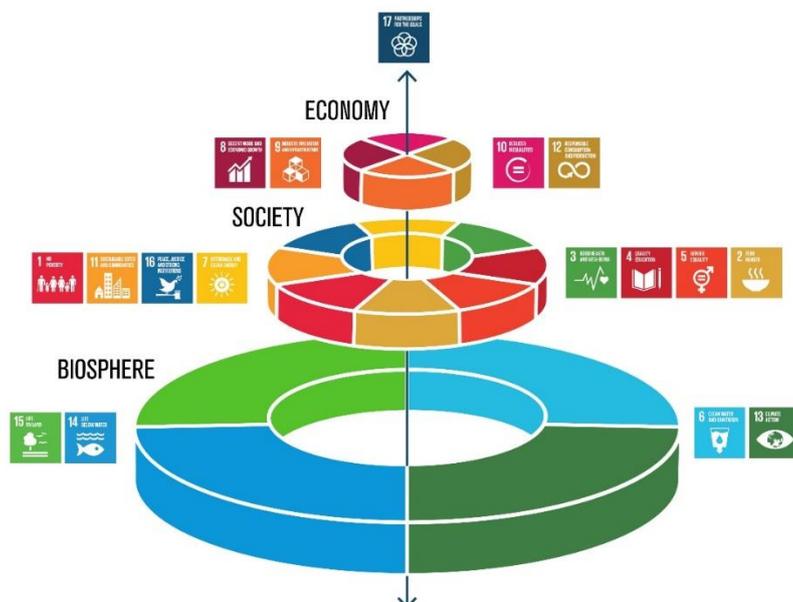


Image created by [Stockholm Resilience Centre](https://www.stockholmresiliencecentre.org/)

¹ Social Justice Ireland (2019), Measuring Progress: The Sustainable Progress Index 2019.

Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty

Public Bodies have a Statutory Duty to Eliminate Discrimination, Promote Equality, and Protect Human Rights of Staff and Service Users

The Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty ('the Duty') places a statutory obligation on public bodies to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and protect the human rights of those to whom they provide services and staff when carrying out their daily work. It puts equality and human rights in the mainstream of how public bodies execute their functions. To that end, it has the potential to positively transform how public bodies engage with members of the public, and their own staff. This is a legal obligation and it originated in Section 42 of the [Irish Human Rights and Equality Act 2014](#).

The Duty is an ongoing obligation on public bodies, which must be incorporated as part of an organisation's overall strategic planning cycle. Public bodies are also asked to account for their actions to address the human rights and equality impact of their work as it relates to members of the public, people who use their services, and their staff, in their annual report².

The Galway City Development Plan needs to take cognisance of the Duty in its design implementation and monitoring and that the human rights and equality concerns of the communities identified by the Duty and named in Irish equality legislation are assessed, addressed and reported on in all planning, implementation and monitoring processes associated with the City Development Plan.

UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD)

GCCN acknowledges GCC's commitment to the Barcelona Declaration in the current City Development Plan and the promotion of 'universal access in the public realm, public buildings and services and encourages the participation of people with disabilities in the socioeconomic and cultural life of the city'. However, with the ratification of the UNCRPD by the Irish state in 2018 there is an obligation to deliver civil and political rights to people with disabilities, and to the progressive realisation of social and economic rights. The UNCRPD should be embedded into the new City Development Plan with clear cross-cutting actions across all sectors which deliver its implementation at a local level. It is Galway City Council's duty to implement the UNCRPD to ensure the full equality of people with disabilities in Galway City.

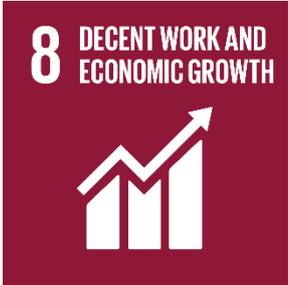
Articles with particular relevance for the Galway City Development Plan include:

- Article 4: General obligations
- Article 9: Accessibility
- Article 19: Living independently and being included in the community
- Article 24: Education
- Article 25: Health
- Article 27: Work and employment
- Article 28: Adequate standard of living and social protection
- Article 29: Participation in political and public life
- Article 30: Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport

² file:///C:/Users/CommunityWorkers'/Downloads/IHREC_Public_Sector_Duty_Final_Eng_WEB.pdf

Population Growth and Housing

Introduction

<p>Sustainable Development Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all</p> 	<p>Sustainable Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable</p> 
<p align="center">United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities</p> <p>Article 19: Living independently and being included in the community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • equal right of all persons with disabilities to live in the community, with choices equal to others • the opportunity to choose their place of residence and where and with whom they live on an equal basis with others and are not obliged to live in a particular living arrangement • access to a range of in-home, residential and other community support services, including personal assistance necessary to support living and inclusion in the community, and to prevent isolation or segregation from the community <p>Article 28: Adequate standard of living and social protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • governments must ensure access by persons with disabilities to public housing programmes. 	

The population of Galway has increased at a higher rate than the national average since 1996. Galway now has one of the youngest and most diverse populations in the country. The National Planning Framework has identified Galway as one of the cities that has the potential for significant growth and become a viable alternative to the capital.

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2020-2032 places significant emphasis on the concept of *compact growth*, and the Regional Policy Objective (RPO 3.2) is to deliver at least 50% of all new city homes targeted in the Galway MASP, within the existing built-up footprint of Galway City and suburbs, making better use of underutilised land and buildings, including infill and brownfield properties.³ The City Development Plan must, therefore, provide for the facilitation of accommodation for the projected increase in population and do so in a way that limits the need to expand beyond the footprint of built-up areas.

One of the major features that needs to be considered is the fact that projections⁴ indicate that there will be significant increases in the older age categories, including in the very old' population. This needs to be factored into the City Development Plan.

Galway still has a significant number of people and families that are experiencing or at risk of homelessness. The elimination of homelessness is something that needs to be explicitly stated in the City Development Plan with associated actions.

³ It will use the footprints established in 2016 census as a baseline for measurement purposes.

⁴ <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-plfp/populationandlabourforceprojections2017-2051/populationprojectionsresults/>

Galway is a tourist destination and as home to two third level and other further education institution, the need to accommodate students must also be factored into the City Development Plan. However, priority needs to be given to residents and the availability of affordable homes to buy and rent.

We need to focus on building communities and neighbourhoods with all the associated facilities and services as opposed to focusing on building houses. The risks are enormous in failing to take these considerations into account including social isolation, crime, problems for young people and enhanced vulnerabilities for people with mental health problems. We need to avoid ghettoization, pushing people into homelessness and vast tracts of housing where people are socially excluded with little hope for the future. We must learn from past mistakes where major developments in the city failed to include planning for services, facilities or community needs. This cannot be allowed to happen again, and new developments planned for the North and East of the city in particular, must take this into account.

At the consultation events, concerns were raised at the role and power of the forthcoming Land Development Agency, in particular at how the agency will relate to local authorities and local communities and where the power to make decisions will lie.

The failure of Galway City Council to provide adequate levels of accommodation for Travellers was noted and concerns expressed at the racism shown towards Travellers especially where the development of halting sites are proposed.

The City Development Plan should:

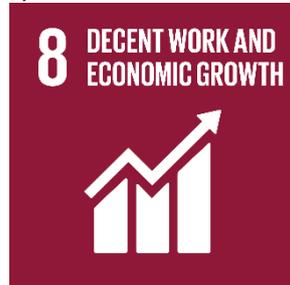
- Pledge and plan to eliminate homelessness by factoring the needs of homeless people into all developments.
- Avoid further increases in homelessness by focusing on building sustainably affordable homes.
- Ensure lifetime adaptability. All housing should be future proofed and capable of easy adaptation for older people or those who acquire illness or disability. This will be cost effective in the long term avoiding costly alterations and enabling people to stay in their own homes in old age.
- Provide for independent living for older people and disabled people, allowing for a continuum of levels of support.
- Prioritise maintenance for older people and disabled people.
- Consider people in congregated settings and facilitate their move to community settings.
- Consider older renters and the affordability of rent for people reliant on pensions.
- Provide for upgrading of heating systems retrofitting the homes of older people and disabled people.
- Ensure facilities and services for all. Facilities and services must be part of the planning process and no housing developments should be permitted without ensuring adequate access to public transport, safe and attractive cycle and walking paths, schools, sports and community facilities, social and retail outlets. New developments should be away from national primary routes with safety and community integration (not divided by main roads) being key considerations.
- Galway – a living city. The availability of social and affordable as well as private accommodation in the city centre is essential to ensuring that the city centre is vibrant, safe and a good place to live. Discussions were held on the potential for development of the docks area and around the railway station to help to meet this objective.
- The idea of urban villages should also be explored ensuring access to services, education and employment opportunities as close as possible to residential areas.
- Building communities not just housing. Affordable, accessible housing must be made available with a focus on building communities, catering for the needs of young people, families and older people, building social cohesion and a sense of ownership. People must come first, and their needs put to the fore ahead of those of developers and landowners.

- Implement the Traveller Accommodation Plan in full.
- Resource and support a fully trained, designated Disability Specific Technical Housing Specialist as has been provided to the Age Friendly Alliance.

Economic Development, Employment and Enterprise

Introduction

Sustainable Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all



United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities

Article 27: Work and employment

- recognise the right of persons with disabilities to work, on an equal basis with others, this includes the right to the opportunity to gain a living by work freely chosen or accepted in a labour market and work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities
- effective access to general technical and vocational guidance programmes, placement services and vocational and continuing training
- Promote employment opportunities and career advancement for persons with disabilities in the labour market, as well as assistance in finding, obtaining, maintaining and returning to employment
- Promote opportunities for self-employment, entrepreneurship, the development of cooperatives and starting one's own business
- Promote vocational and professional rehabilitation, job retention and return-to-work programmes for persons with disabilities
- Ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided to persons with disabilities in the workplace
- Promote the employment of persons with disabilities in the private sector through appropriate policies and measures, which may include affirmative action programmes, incentives and other measures

The economy is a critical feature of the life of any city. For a small economy like Galway, economic development and enterprise have the power to transform and create employment opportunities for many. However, economic development must be appropriate to Galway and its identity and ensure that economic development and employment opportunities are inclusive of the diversity that is now such a feature of the city.

Social Enterprise

One of the critical omissions from the Issues Paper is mention or reference to social or community enterprise. The National Social Enterprise Policy for Ireland 2019-2022 defines social enterprise as *an enterprise whose objective is to achieve a social, societal or environmental impact, rather than maximising profit for its owners or shareholders. It pursues its objectives by trading on an ongoing basis through the provision of goods and/or services, and by reinvesting surpluses into achieving social*

objectives. It is governed in a fully accountable and transparent manner and is independent of the public sector. If dissolved, it should transfer its assets to another organisation with a similar mission⁵.

The Policy notes the supports provided to social enterprises by local authorities and this submission suggests that supports to facilitate social enterprises could be included in the City Development Plan. Social enterprise has significant potential to contribute to the development of a sustainable and circular economy and local job creation. To ensure that Galway City maximises the potential of the renewed focus and resource allocation to social enterprise, **the City Development Plan should:**

- Establish the conditions for supporting social enterprise by including social enterprise hubs and sites in all development and redevelopment sites
- Provide spaces at affordable rents and rates levels for a range and variety of social enterprises
- Audit vacant and derelict sites for the potential to be used as sites for social enterprise
- Ensure complementarity with the Local Economic and Community Plan supports for social enterprise.

Tourism

The Public Realm Strategy notes the unique qualities of the city, in particular the fundamental elements of stone and water underpinning its character.⁶ This submission contends that the uniqueness of the city extends far beyond this and includes the green, blue and brown areas that characterise the city but need to be further developed in way that ensures protection of amenities and biodiversity. Tourism development needs to be based on this.

The City Development Plan should:

- Provide for the sustainable development of areas such as the Merlin Woods Castle
- Develop eco-tourism opportunities by developing the woodland areas in and around the city
- Focus on local retail and facilitate spaces that highlight local crafts
- Build land/green bridges to connect Terryland Forest Park as a prime local and tourist amenity area.

City Centre and Retail

The City Development Plan should:

- Develop 'above the shop' living, drawing on models in Limerick and other areas that have identified way of making facilitating people to live in older buildings
- Focus on 'local' in its retail strategy
- Consider the Headford Road site as a prime location into which the city centre could be expanded
- Develop and diversify the Night-Time Economy, ensuring that there is no increase in the number of outlets selling alcohol.

Creative Sector

Galway is known for its vibrant arts and culture sector but there are many involved in the sector that say that their work is not facilitated by the city that benefits so much from their creativity.

The Galway City Development Plan should:

- Go beyond acknowledging the importance of the sector
- Provide spaces to art and culture to be created and consumed

⁵ National Social Enterprise Policy for Ireland 2019-2022, page 8

⁶ Public realm Strategy, Executive Summary

People with Disabilities

The UNCRPD recognises 'the right of persons with disabilities to work, on an equal basis with others, this includes the right to the opportunity to gain a living by work freely chosen or accepted in a labour market and work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities'. The plan should include measures to support the realisation of this right.

The City Development Plan should:

- Promote quality employment opportunities and career advancement for persons with disabilities in GCC.
- Promote opportunities for self-employment, social enterprises, entrepreneurship, the development of cooperatives and starting one's own business through GCC Enterprise Unit.
- Promote the provision of reasonable accommodation to persons with disabilities in the workplace.

Transport and Sustainable Mobility

Introduction

<p>SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts</p> 	<p>SDG 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable</p> 	<p>SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages</p> 
<p align="center">United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities</p> <p>Article 9: Accessibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure to persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public <p>Article 19: Living independently and being included in the community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to Personal Assistants based on rights and choices rather than available funding 		

Ambition and Vision

There is a need for a clear vision and a strong ambition in relation to the development of a sustainable transport infrastructure in the city. The Galway Transport Strategy will not deliver this ambition given that it is not projected to achieve a sufficient modal shift to public transport and cycling modes in particular. There is a lack of provision of zebra crossings, an overfocus on car parks rather than sustainable transport into the city, no focus on disability access or disabled parking, no real bus service for outlying towns and over dependence on the ring road. As a result, Galway Transport Strategy should not be the framework for the city development plan. An integrated approach to land use planning and transport is required.

There needs to be a new plan for the city as opposed to simply reinforcing existing strategies and plans as stated in the Issues Paper. Whilst the focus on pedestrianisation is welcome there is little clarity on how this will be achieved and shift from the current situation of a pedestrian hostile city. It should not be based on designs that create avoidable conflicts between pedestrians and cyclists. A transition to electric cars will not solve Galway's transport problems as electric vehicles take up the same amount of space so will not reduce gridlock. The over reliance on cars needs to change with a vision for a 15-minute city with city wide safe accessible active travel infrastructure and with public transport that is easily accessible from people's houses, that is convenient and affordable. The current targets for public transport are not ambitious enough for the transition needed in response to the climate crisis. Long-term strategic decision making is needed to ensure a sustainable city for future generations.

The City Development Plan should:

- Include a vision for transport that goes beyond the limitations of the Galway Transport Strategy. This vision should include a modal shift away from cars which would include a reduction in traffic and prioritising the facilitation of active transport and sustainable transport solutions including light rail. This vision should support the creation of a 15-minute city and the plan should clearly set out how this will be achieved.

- Include comprehensive measurement of noise and air pollution and how this pollution will be addressed.

Hierarchy of Road Users

Whilst the Galway Transport Strategy subscribes to a hierarchy of road users which places people with disabilities at the top followed by children, pedestrians, cyclists, public transport, and lastly motorised vehicles. However, currently the city is designed for motorised vehicles. If pedestrians are really the priority, then this should be evident in design like for example the zebra crossings placed a maximum distance of 50m apart. All transport projects should be assessed and proofed using this framework.

The City Development Plan should:

- Clearly demonstrate how this hierarchy of road users is applied in the design of transport projects.
- Set out clear targets for shifting the modal share in favour of walking, cycling and public transport with commitments regular monitoring of progress.

Safety Issues

There is a lack of safety for road users using the active transport modes of walking and cycling. There are even greater safety concerns for more vulnerable road users like children, older people and people with disabilities. There is heavy traffic with a lack of infrastructure to support pedestrian and cyclist safety such as zebra crossings, continuous footpaths, raised junctions and segregated mobility lanes. Junctions and roads are designed for cars not pedestrians or cyclists. They are too wide for pedestrians to safely cross and overall junctions and traffic management measures are not 'cyclist friendly'⁷ as recommended in the National Cycle Policy Framework. There is a need for more ambition as the cycle map in the GTS is limited as is the progress made so far on cycle ways.

The City Development Plan should:

- Include a plan for ambitious, safe and segregated pedestrian and cycling infrastructure.
- Prioritise the needs of pedestrians in the city centre through the provision of wider footpaths and shared streets.
- Include key indicators on safety that should be established with timescales and targets, measured and monitored on an ongoing basis.
- Undertake a 'safe routes to school' programme of works connecting schools to residential areas, community facilities and retail etc. by walking, cycling and public transport.
- Include a clear speed management strategy with targets for the application of lower speed limits with 30km/h as the default and targets for monitoring and compliance.

Equitable Access to Transport

Article 9 of the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities states people with disabilities must have equal access to the physical environment and transportation. The Public Realm Strategy 2019 states that it will 'promote universal design to help open up the city centre to all and make getting into and moving around the centre much easier'⁸ however the city is not accessible to people with disabilities. Universal design should be at the core of design for all transport infrastructure.

The City Development Plan should:

- Include Universal Design as a core component of Transport and Sustainable Mobility with clear actions illustrating how the principle of Universal Design will be applied in transport infrastructure.

⁷ Department of Transport, *National Cycle Policy Framework*.

⁸ Galway City Council (2019), *Public Realm Strategy*.

- Carry out regular audits, in partnership with disability organisations, in the public realm and civic spaces to include both the city centre and suburbs based on the principles of universal design. Develop an action plan using the results of these audits which includes relevant material alterations for current infrastructure.
- An audit of the accessibility of current transport infrastructure including bus stops, shelters, taxi ranks, public and private intercity bus and train stations. This audit should be development in collaboration with groups representing people with disabilities. Development of an action plan using the results of this audit which includes relevant material alterations for current infrastructure.
- An accessibility review and assessment of measures implemented under the Galway Transport Strategy and the development of new measures which align with universal design.

Sustainable Neighbourhoods

Residential areas need to be redesigned to become more liveable with the problems of safety and congestion addressed. The speed and volume of traffic with the resulting levels of noise pollution and safety issues in residential areas needs to be urgently addressed.

Permeability needs to be a focus so there is connectivity between residential areas. There is a commitment to permeability between housing estates in the current plan but is not being implemented. New housing developments should be required to provide permeability to other housing, schools, sportsgrounds/parks and local shops.

The City Development Plan should:

- Include the redesign of residential areas to prioritise pedestrian and cyclist safety through traffic calming measures, mobility lanes, safe walkways and zebra crossings.
- Include micro mobility schemes integrated with public transport as part of neighbourhoods.
- Ensure permeability and connectivity between housing developments and other housing and amenities.
- Eliminate and replace unnecessary barriers such as kissing gates.
- Design neighbourhoods so residents can access most services in 15 mins journey on sustainable modes of transport.
- Ensure access to sustainable transport options in new neighbourhoods such as Ardaun.

Active Travel Infrastructure

Active travel infrastructure should avoid pedestrians sharing the same space as cyclists or cyclists sharing the same space as motorised vehicles. Where the three must share spaces then the volume and speed of motor vehicles must be actively reduced. For example, the proposed Cross-City Link scheme has a lack of segregated cycling infrastructure and involves cyclists sharing space with motorised vehicles. Active travel infrastructure such as greenways provide a valuable opportunity to improve the health and well-being of Galway residents and to create sustainable tourism opportunities for the city.

The City Development Plan should:

- Review proposed active travel infrastructure designs to ensure routes are safe, direct, coherent, attractive and comfortable.
- Improve cycling infrastructure in the city through the Hierarchy of Solutions in the National Cycle Policy Framework.
- Maximise permeability and ensure connectivity of active travel infrastructure in accordance with national policy by including contra flow cycle lanes on one-way streets as recommended in the Jacobs Report (2011) and included in a previous development plan (“Implement two-

way access to cyclists on one-way streets where feasible” from Cycling section of City Development Plan 2011 – 2017, Page 35)

- Develop a network of connector and amenity routes for active travel and recreation by utilising the existing network of bóthairín and country lanes.
- Include the development of the Galway Urban Greenway, the Galway to Clifden Greenway and the Galway to Dublin Greenway ensuring connectivity between all three.

Connectivity between modes

The City Development Plan should:

- Ensure connectivity between city and commuter towns through quality and frequent train links and Park and Rides.
- Establish a network of Park and Rides which feed into a high frequency light rail system.
- Ensure connectivity with pedestrian and cycling infrastructure and the bus network.

Planning to Address Population Growth

There is significant population growth predicted for the city over the course of the next plan. A sense of urgency is needed to address the current transport issues and to develop transport infrastructure to address this population growth. Given the MASP will incorporate parts of the county into the city it is vital that the City and County Councils work together on a sustainable transport plan. It is critical that land use and transport planning are fully integrated. Creation of public and active transport links between these new parts of the city under the MASP is crucial.

The City Development Plan should:

- Set out the development of sustainable transport infrastructure to service the predicted increased population.
- Develop a joint transport plan with the County Council particularly public transport and active travel links connecting new parts of the city under the MASP.

Built Environment, Placemaking & Sustainable Neighbourhoods

Introduction

Sustainable Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable



United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities

Article 9 – Accessibility

- to enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life
- to ensure persons with disabilities have access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas.

Article 19: Living independently and being included in the community

- equal right of all persons with disabilities to live in the community, with choices equal to others
- the opportunity to choose their place of residence and where and with whom they live on an equal basis with others and are not obliged to live in a particular living arrangement
- access to a range of in-home, residential and other community support services, including personal assistance necessary to support living and inclusion in the community, and to prevent isolation or segregation from the community

The Galway City Development Plan Issues Paper notes that; ‘The built environment has a strong influence on the way we live. Good design enhances our experience and connection to the environment’. It highlights the contribution the development plan can make to this by ensuring a high quality built environment.

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy 2020-2032 places significant emphasis on the concept of *compact growth*, and the Regional Policy Objective (RPO 3.2) is to deliver at least 50% of all new city homes targeted in the Galway MASP, within the existing built-up footprint of Galway City and suburbs, making better use of underutilised land and buildings, including infill and brownfield properties.⁹ The City Development Plan must, therefore, provide for the facilitation of accommodation for the projected increase in population and do so in a way that limits the need to expand beyond the footprint of built-up areas.

It is important that there is a vision for what is considered good and bad planning and design, learning from mistakes made and building on good practice. Renmore was cited as an example of good practice in this regard and Knocknacarra as poor design in many aspects.

⁹ It will use the footprints established in 2016 census as a baseline for measurement purposes.

There is a need to focus equally on the suburbs as the city centre and recognise that most people live in the suburbs and we need to ensure that they are sustainable places in which to live.

The City Development Plan should consider the concept of urban villages that have the services and facilities for communities within 15 minute's walk and are connected by sustainable transport.

The Galway City Public Realm Strategy is a very useful strategy for the city and needs to be fully implemented. It states that it will 'promote universal design to help open up the city centre to all and make getting into and moving around the centre much easier'. Universal design should be at the core of design for all developments and Galway City Council needs to go beyond promotion and include Universal Design as a requirement for all developments. The principle of Universal Design was not included in the current Issues Paper. This needs to be addressed in the development of the new plan with Universal Design included as a core part of the Built Environment and Placemaking chapter with clear actions illustrating how the principle of Universal Design will be applied in planning.

Whilst the SDGs are mentioned in the issues paper the City Development Plan needs to set out how these are integrated into all developments set out in the plan.

The possibilities for making Galway a city that is lived in, addressing the housing and homelessness crisis through the provision of affordable accommodation in the city centre. The potential for the development of boarded up premises and the possibilities of accommodation provision above retail outlets should be explored. This is currently being done in Limerick City where an estimated 6,000 accommodation units have been identified.

Retrofitting Older Neighbourhoods needs to be a priority as opposed to a sole focus on new neighbourhoods with little emphasis on retrofitting and upgrading older neighbourhoods in terms of cycle and path-ways, zebra crossings, green and blue spaces, support biodiversity and rewilding. The focus on new neighbourhoods near existing ones needs to encompass a focus on sustainability.

Creating a sense of neighbourhood identities should be a focus and the concept of a 15 minute city embedded as a core aspect of the plan. More public seating throughout neighbourhoods is also needed.

Sustainable neighbourhoods need essential services such waste-water treatment, paths, cycleways and childcare. There is no point in talking about new developments e.g. Ardaun without a focus on services.

Protected and listed buildings can and should be adapted for reuse. Galway city is the only city in Ireland which does not have a conservation officer. This needs to be addressed.

The pandemic and the resulting changes in how we live and work cannot be ignored in the forth-coming plan

Other countries and cities have developed novel and creative ways of developing in sustainable and inclusive ways. Examples include avoiding the development of completely new housing/accommodation and instead adding to existing ones bringing new people into areas where there are already well established communities.

Community Development and Youth Supports are essential to overcome isolation and exclusion and build a sense of social cohesion, equality and participation within communities.

COVID-19 has brought a new appreciation for the importance of green and blue spaces. The City Development Plan needs to plan for access to these spaces for all residents.

The City Development Plan should:

- Set out a vision for planning and design for the city.

- Follow the guidance in the RIAI Town and Village Toolkit¹⁰
- Place the unique features of Galway, particularly the city's relationship with the river, sea and canals, at the heart of the vision for planning.
- Ensure that the majority of development takes place within the existing footprint of the city but focus on building communities rather than merely housing and ensure that developments are accompanied by green spaces and recreation facilities for all ages.
- Ensure that planning for regeneration sites includes urban greening.
- Increase, improve and enhance green, blue and brown amenities. Assess and remove barriers to access including physical barriers.
- Fully implement the Public Realm Strategy
- Ensure public art in public spheres and maximise use of the Per Cent for Art Scheme
- Commit to undertaking an audit of potential accommodation availability in the city centre in existing buildings including those not currently in use.
- Use the UNCRPD as a framework for ensuring accessibility to the built environment.
- Include Universal Design as a core part of the Built Environment and Placemaking chapter with clear actions illustrating how the principle of Universal Design will be applied in planning.
- Carry out regular audits, in partnership with disability organisations, in the public realm and civic spaces to include both the city centre and suburbs based on the principles of universal design.
- Develop an action plan using the results of these audits which includes relevant material alterations for current infrastructure.
- Set out a strategy for the retrofitting and upgrading of older neighbourhoods and suburbs.
- Set out Galway City Councils commitment to ensuring that services are planned for in advance of all new developments including community centres/ youth centres, schools, easily accessible public transport, adequate water treatment and green/recreational areas.
- Include a plan for the adaptation and reuse of protected and listed buildings in the city.
- Commit to the employment of a Galway City Conservation Officer
- Outline the likely changes to living patterns in the city post Covid and the manner in which these changes will be supported.
- Set out models of good planning and design internationally and strive to incorporate such practices in the development and implementation of the plan.
- Benchmark all actions against in the Sustainable Development Goals.

¹⁰ https://www.riai.ie/uploads/files/general-files/RIAI_TownandVillageToolkit.pdf

Green Network and Biodiversity

Introduction

<p>Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development</p> 	<p>Sustainable Development Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification and halt and reverse land degradation + halt biodiversity loss</p> 
<p align="center">United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities</p> <p>Article 9: Accessibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure to persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public <p>Article 30: Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the right of persons with disabilities to take part on an equal basis with others in cultural life participate on an equal basis with others in recreational, leisure and sporting activities children with disabilities have equal access with other children to participation in play, recreation and leisure and sporting activities, including those activities in the school system 	

Ireland’s Vision for Biodiversity as set out in the National Biodiversity Action Plan is ‘that biodiversity and ecosystems in Ireland are conserved and restored, delivering benefits essential for all sectors of society and that Ireland contributes to efforts to halt the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystems in the EU and globally’.¹¹

Climate and Biodiversity Emergency

The plan should recognise that we are facing a Climate and Biodiversity Emergency. This recognition is absent from the Issues Paper which lacks the required sense of urgency. The 2023-2029 plan is the last opportunity to be on course to reach 2030 targets so it is crucial that the plan reflects the scale of the challenges we are facing and includes the bold actions required. Objective 1 of the National Biodiversity Action Plan is to ‘mainstream biodiversity into decision-making across all sectors’¹² highlighting the important of coherent cross sectoral actions.

The City Development Plan should:

- Recognise the Climate and Biodiversity Emergency within the plan and include a range of cross-sectoral measures to address this.
- Take environmental and biodiversity issues into account in every action of the plan so they are totally integrated across all sectors.

¹¹ Department of Heritage, Culture and the Gaeltacht (2017), ‘National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021’, Dublin: The stationery Office.

¹² Ibid.

A Vision for Galway

A clear vision for the city needs to be set out addressing the question: 'What do we want Galway to look like in 80-100 years' time?' and how will the plan be a stepping stone to that vision. Environmental concerns should not be framed as anti-development. Pitting environment and development against each other is counter-productive. A sustainable future for the city means ensuring development aligns with intergenerational justice and protected for future generations. This process needs to engage with the diverse communities across the city, so they are active participants in the development of a green and blue future for Galway. SACs, SPAs and NHAs need to be framed as part of this sustainable future rather than a nuisance or a block to development.

There are numerous progressive local and national policies which need to be implemented. There is a need for clear actions and the commitment to deliver with dedicated resources and an emphasis on increased education and awareness and partnership with the numerous local groups working on these issues. Best practice from other cities should be explored such as Boston which has developed wild corridors around the entire city. Now is the time for ambitious and creative action and 'thinking outside the box'. Environmental action, sustainability, biodiversity and tackling climate change will bring tangible benefits the city and the communities that live here.

The City Development Plan should:

- Include clear actions to deliver on local and national policies with dedicated resources for the implementation of these actions.
- Learn from best practice from other cities to incorporate appropriate measures into the plan

Planning for Green and Blue

All developments should have a green audit. New housing developments should have green infrastructure (parks, biodiversity spaces, protection of older species) planned first. The city should grow around green areas, and this must be a priority as opposed to squeezing pieces of green areas into left over spaces.

There is extensive local expertise in numerous groups working on environmental issues and biodiversity. Early stage pre planning consultation between these groups and developers would ensure plans protect the environment and biodiversity.

The development of Statutory Local Area Plans provides a useful opportunity to embed biodiversity into the core of local development. The new role of Biodiversity Officer could play a key part in centring biodiversity in new LAPs.

The City Development Plan should:

- Ensure all proposed developments undergo a green audit.
- Include provisions for early stage pre planning consultation between local environmental groups and developers to ensure plans protect the environment and biodiversity.
- Embed biodiversity into Local Area Plans.

Habitat Protection and Rewilding

Green and Blue spaces should be connected into a network which supports the resiliency and protection of biodiversity and wildlife rather than just isolated pockets surrounded by heavy traffic. Habitats are becoming islands and addressing this by developing a connected network is vital for wildlife survival. Safe routes for wildlife between spaces need to be developed through wildlife corridors, green bridges, underground pipelines and tunnels.

More emphasis is also needed on protection of smaller areas of green and blue space in local areas recognising they are important habitats for plant and animal life. Green spaces are also vital for peoples' health and well-being so additional housing provision should not come at the cost of communities' access to green space. New housing developments result in clearing existing habitats such as scrubland. This loss of habitat should be avoided and instead conserved and enhanced where possible. If this is not possible, substitute enhanced habitat should be made available. Altering habitats such as diverting waterways from

wetlands simply displaces water flow to another area. Planning permission is still being granted for developments on new (due to this displaced water) and existing flood plains which does not align with sustainable and climate resilient development. Current planning for infrastructure on the coastline needs to take into account the predicted rising sea levels.

The Issues Paper refers to the Pollinator Plan however broader species protection measures are also required. Galway should be rewilded with indigenous flora, making use of stone walls and ensuring that all landscaping being done in the city reflects this objective. The appointment of a full time Biodiversity Officer in the city and a new biodiversity plan would assist these recommendations.

The City Development Plan should:

- Connect Green and Blue space with wildlife corridors throughout the city.
- Conserve and enhance habitat where possible. If this is not possible, substitute enhanced habitat should be made available. For example, green space lost due to developments must be recorded and substitute enhanced habitat made available.
- Protect existing green space in housing estates and the public realm.
- Include protection measures for other species alongside the Pollinator Plan.
- Develop a new Biodiversity Plan.
- Map and protect existing bóithríns and greenways in the city.

The Parks City Movement

Galway City Council should sign up to this initiative and become a National Park City following the example of London which aims to make the city greener, healthier and wilder.

The City Development Plan should:

- Reflect the National Parks City initiative with actions related to schools, transport, business and other sectors.

Balancing Recreational Use and Protection

There needs to be a balancing of access to the green and blue network for recreational use and protection of the network to address biodiversity and species loss. There needs to be a distinction between areas, areas for recreational use and reserved areas for rewilding and habitat preservation. An education and awareness raising programme would need to be implemented alongside these measures.

The City Development Plan should:

- Map areas of recreational use and reserved areas in collaboration with local communities, environmental groups and other stakeholders.
- Include an education and awareness raising programme related to these measures.

Education and Awareness

The development of demonstration and pilot sites are needed as spaces for education and connection with nature. Education and awareness on climate, biodiversity and environmental planning should be accessible for all ages, but in particular for younger generations who are *'the decision makers of the future'*. The positive benefits of the green and blue network for health and wellbeing should also be recognised.

The City Development Plan should:

- Include the demonstration sites which can be used for educational activities in all areas of the city.

Equitable Access

There should be equitable access to the Green and Blue Network for all communities in Galway. These networks should be accessible by sustainable transport such as walking, cycling and public transport. There should be safe walking routes and bicycle tracks between green and blue spaces. Spaces should be universally accessible for everyone including older people, children and people with disabilities.

Equitable resources for the protection and development of these spaces should be allocated across the city being cognisant that socio-economically marginalised communities tend to have less access to green and blue spaces which further exacerbates health inequalities. One example is the water quality of Ballyloughane beach which the EPA has categorised as poor.¹³

Galway's heritage and history must be protected while supporting new initiatives and learning from good practice (e.g. Rusheen Bay).

The City Development Plan should:

- Include measures to ensure accessibility and equal access to the Green and Blue Network for all communities in the city regardless of location or ability. Walkways, signage and benches need to be at regular intervals and based on universal design principles.
- Include measures to connect the network with an accessible and sustainable transport network.
- Targeted access measures to outdoor spaces that enhance emotional and mental health of disabled people.
- Provision of additional spaces to be allocated in existing and new neighbourhoods for community gardens which are accessible through universal design principles.
- Ensure equitable resources for the protection and development of the network across the city.
- Ensure protection of Galway's heritage while supporting best practice new initiatives.

Implementation and Monitoring

Plans must be more than aspirations. There is a need for tangible targets which will support the development of a thriving and sustainable Galway. Galway is one of 5 regional cities being looked at for regional development. Environmental assessments are being carried out and funding will be available for new developments in the city.

The City Development Plan should:

- Include tight targets, indicators and timescales must be put in place with associated participative monitoring structures and processes to guarantee implementation.

¹³ Environmental Protection Agency (2020), 'Bathing Water Quality in Ireland: A report for the year 2019', Wexford: EPA.

Climate Action

Introduction

<p>SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts</p> 	<p>SDG 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable</p> 	<p>SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages</p> 
<p>SDG 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development</p> 	<p>SDG 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss</p> 	

Climate change is the defining issue of our time – and we are at a defining moment. We face a direct existential threat - António Guterres, UN Secretary General 2018

In May 2019, Ireland declared a climate and biodiversity crisis. This sense of urgency must be reflected in the new City Development Plan and must be substantiated with real action. The City Development Plan should follow the principle laid down by the European Commission for the Recovery and Resilience Facility that there should be a minimum of expenditure/investment of 37% on climate action, with all remaining expenditure and plan/policies being required to comply with the ‘do no harm’ principle, i.e. not undermining environmental objectives.

The City Development Plan should:

- Establish a Galway City Climate and Biodiversity Council, reflecting the National Climate Council.
- Facilitate the development of an adaptation and mitigation strategy by the Galway City Climate and Biodiversity Council for the City, as opposed to Galway City Council as exists currently.
- Develop and enhance collaborative work with Galway County Council.

According to the EPA (2019), arresting growth in emissions is a challenge in the context of a growing economy and one that must be addressed by households, business, farmers and communities if Ireland is to reap the benefits of a low-carbon economy. They also state that Ireland’s emissions profile has changed considerably since 1990, with the contribution from transport more than doubling¹⁴. In the

¹⁴ <https://www.epa.ie/ghg/>

context of addressing emission levels in a city area, transport and residential are two of main areas to focus on and **the City Development Plan should:**

- Produce a plan for how Galway will reduce its emissions by the 7%, reflecting the national target
- Provide for measurement of emissions with an initial focus on developing baseline data for the City against which progress/regress can be assessed
- Develop a comprehensive strategy for the reduction of emission levels in line with the national target
- Focus on the development of sustainable transport solutions, including a feasibility study into Light Rail
- Focus on development that facilitates Walkable Cities¹⁵ and develop brown field sites to create a more compact city, learning from innovative worldwide developments such as the [15-Minute City](#)
- Provide the infrastructure so that households can use sustainable modes to transport to travel to education, work and amenities.
- Promote a modal shift by actively promoting sustainable transport options, with a focus on safe walking and cycling.
- Ensure that new build estates embed the requirements for sustainable transport use, such as adequate bike parking

Since the publication of the last City Development Plan, the dangers associated with flooding have come into stark reality.

The City Development Plan should:

- Develop a comprehensive plan for flood prevention and mitigation for the City, based on stakeholder participation, with development of Green Infrastructure and Nature Based Solutions

COVID-19 has highlighted the importance of access to green, blue and brown spaces as no other time in recent history.

The City Development Plan should:

- Protect, enhance and sustainably develop its green, blue and brown spaces
- Identify areas within the city and suburbs that would be suitable for rewilding

¹⁵ <https://drawdown.org/solutions/walkable-cities>

Community, Culture and Education

Introduction

<p>Sustainable Development Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all</p> 	<p>Sustainable Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable</p> 
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United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities

Article 19: Living independently and being included in the community

- Access to Personal Assistants based on rights and choices rather than available funding

Article 24: Education

- Persons with disabilities can access an inclusive, quality and free primary education and secondary education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live
- Enable persons with disabilities to learn life and social development skills to facilitate their full and equal participation in education and as members of the community

Article 25: Health

- Provide persons with disabilities with the same range, quality and standard of free or affordable health care and programmes as provided to other persons, including in the area of sexual and reproductive health and population-based public health programmes

Article 28: Adequate standard of living and social protection

- To ensure access by persons with disabilities, in particular women and girls with disabilities and older persons with disabilities, to social protection programmes and poverty reduction programmes

Article 29: Participation in political and public life

- involvement in political and public life, and part of community can be things like joining and volunteering for a political party or advocacy organisation, or even running for office,

Article 30: Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport

- the right of persons with disabilities to take part on an equal basis with others in cultural life
- participate on an equal basis with others in recreational, leisure and sporting activities
- children with disabilities have equal access with other children to participation in play, recreation and leisure and sporting activities, including those activities in the school system

Community, Culture and Education are three significant features of life experiences of residents and communities and their sense of wellbeing. COVID-19 has highlighted their importance and engendered a new sense of community and solidarity throughout the city. We must build-on, support and facilitate this.

Barriers such as poverty and homelessness prevent people and communities from engaging in education, cultural and community activity. All actions must be proofed to ensure that these barriers are addressed.

All actions pertaining to community, culture and education in the plan should be future proofed and climate proofed seeking to advance awareness and action on climate and taking into account the changing demographics in the city for the duration of the plan.

Actions undertaken should take cognisance and seek to address the potential to create further divisions within the city in terms of access and participation and every effort made to ensure that no action serves to benefit or to discriminate against any particular groups or communities over others.

The Local Economic and Community Plan must be regarded and highlighted as a sister plan to any measures included in the City Development Plan 2023-2029 in the Community, Culture and Education section. The City Development Plan and Galway City Council needs to fully commit and support the implementation of actions in the Local Economic and Community Plan.

Community

A sense of community is critical to a sense of belonging, wellbeing, and willingness to contribute to the place where you live. COVID-19 has made community, and the sense of solidarity that is reflected in community, even more critical. Building on a sense of community is vitally important as the city seeks to recover from COVID, to build resilience in the longer-term and to address social issues such as racism, isolation and social exclusion.

Currently, there is a significant dearth of accessible, affordable community facilities in the city. Opportunities, facilities and amenities for recreation, community and culture are not evenly spread within the City and there are major deficits in many areas in the city centre and the suburbs.

Significant amounts of the housing developments currently underway make little or no allowances for play or sports. There will be a social cost to the omission in later years.

The promotion of quality of life involves investment in quality living spaces through urban design, land planning and zoning, and the attendant amenities, and supporting infrastructures by facilitating urban and economic growth. The equally important task of creating sustainable communities also requires the need to foster a sense of community and citizenship through targeted and comprehensive investment in social and communal infrastructure. *Healthy Ireland* is Ireland's public health framework. It takes a whole of government and whole of society approach to improving health, wellbeing and quality of life. Under this framework all government department and agencies, including local authorities, have a responsibility to promote healthy communities.

The Irish State has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD). Commitments, which are highlighted in this and other GCCN submissions, must be incorporated in all aspects of the Galway City Development Plan.

The City Development Plan should:

- Audit/Map communities/areas to document current deficits in community facilities and the needs in this area
- Develop a network of community hubs in the city that are interdisciplinary (community, education, arts etc.), free of charge, accessible and on public transport routes, prioritising the areas where there is least availability currently
- Ensure that the provision of community facilities is embedded in all development plans for the city.

- Ensure that all communities facilities are fully accessible and based on universal design principles and best practice. Map current facilities against accessibility, including parks and playgrounds for children and young people with disabilities. Undertake remedial action where required.
- Ensure that all new housing development embeds adequate facilities for play and sports and ensure that these are fully accessible.
- Ensure that facilities are retained in community ownership and management with the support of community enterprises or local co-operatives. Access by the community needs to be retained as an absolute priority.
- Retain and enhance support for the Child-Friendly City and the Galway Age Friendly Programme and develop a similar Disability-Friendly Programme that demonstrates identifiable improvements in the city and suburbs.
- Support on a sustainable basis the establishment of an LGBTI+ Resource Centre in the city.
- Support alcohol free venues for arts, festivals and music events to create safe and enjoyable environments, accommodating young students, families and individuals from a variety of backgrounds, age-groups and cultures.
- Support community policing, neighbourhood watches and traffic calming devices.
- Develop and promote the green, blue and brown spaces in the city and ensure that they are fully accessibly to all.

Education

The consultations for this submission highlighted lack of secondary schools on the East side of the city.

The City Development Plan should:

- Provide for a second level school on the East side of the City.

An Ghaeilge

Tá an Ghaeilge rí-thábhachtach do chathair na Gaillimhe. The importance of the Irish language to the identity and culture on the city cannot be overstated. Galway's bilingual status is of immense importance to the city and many who live here. All supporting initiatives must be inclusive of all those living in Galway including new communities.

The City Development Plan should:

- Continue to support Galway as a bi-lingual city
- Support a multi-lingual Galway, acknowledging the diversity that is an increasing and welcome feature of the city.
- In the context of the official Government legislation recognizing Gaillimh/Galway as a *Gaeltacht Service Town* that Galway City Council engage with the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media and other relevant stakeholders with a view to the development of a planned approach, within the context of the 20 Year Strategy for the Irish Language, to the establishment of further Irish-medium second level schools in parts of Galway City not currently serviced by such schools, with the aim of increasing participation in Irish medium education at second level.

Culture

Galway City is internationally renowned for its celebration and facilitation of arts and cultural expression. However, many in the arts and culture community state that the city does not

adequately support their creative work. There is a dearth of spaces for creative work, rehearsal and performance and many of the spaces are in need of significant maintenance and/or are not fit for purpose.

The City Development Plan should:

- Develop an Arts Facility Master Plan, with identified provision for all art forms, including arts spaces outside the city centre and major developments in the city
- *Community proof* all arts and cultural infrastructure so that accessibility for all sectors of the community, particularly those that have a disability and/or are socially excluded, marginalised and disadvantaged, is proactively encouraged.
- Support the establishment of a school of music within the city.
- Sustainability should be at the heart of development in Galway City. Increasingly arts, culture and community are being recognised as being integral to environmental sustainability and they must be supported accordingly.
- All current and future developments need to be future proofed and build and maintenance need to be on a carbon neutral basis.

Energy and Infrastructure

Introduction

<p>SDG 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all</p> 	<p>SDG 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns</p> 	<p>SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts</p> 
<p align="center">United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities</p> <p>Article 4: General obligations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To take into account the protection and promotion of the human rights of persons with disabilities in all policies and programmes• closely consult with and actively involve persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities, through their representative organizations		

Just Transition

There is a pressing need to transform both Galway's infrastructure and energy systems to address the climate and biodiversity crisis. It is crucial that this transformation is based on a just transition and energy democratisation. Globally this energy transformation to socially fair, democratic, and decentralised energy is most effective when communities are at the helm of local renewable energy projects. Research has shown that investment in social economy energy cooperatives delivered two to three times more value to the local economy than private enterprises.¹⁶

The EU Renewable Energy Directive II includes provisions on community renewable energy including people and communities' rights to produce, sell and own renewable energy. The Local Authority can play a vital role in developing these decentralised community led energy systems. This scale of project would also be more appropriate with the limited land within the city. There is significant local expertise within the Galway Energy Cooperative which should be drawn on. The current plan focuses on the Galway Energy Agency as a key actor however the agency is not currently resourced to fulfil this role without any dedicated staff.

More ambition is needed for this energy transition. The Issues Paper acknowledges the limited scope for large scale renewable energy projects such as wind energy within the city however initiatives such as collaboration with the County Council on larger scale projects needs to be explored. Assessing the energy potential within the city is also needed for example hydro power and solar energy. The current plan notes exploring the potential for 1 hydro-electric plant. Measures need to align with the scale of energy transition needed.

¹⁶ Énergie Partagée/Shared Energy (2019), 'Statistical field study of the local economic benefits of citizen projects', accessible at: [Les retombées économiques locales des projets citoyens d'énergie renouvelable : bénéfices pour les territoires | Énergie Partagée \(energie-partagee.org\)](https://www.energie-partagee.org/en/retombées-économiques-locales-des-projets-citoyens-d'énergie-renouvelable-bénéfices-pour-les-territoires)

The City Development Plan should:

- Clearly set out how Galway will reduce its emissions by the 7% year on year to 2030, reflecting the national target. This should include an assessment of the resource impact of industries.
- Include measures to address energy poverty within the plan.
- Collaborate with communities, with a particular focus on socio-economically marginalised communities, on developing decarbonising zones and low carbon communities.
- Include ambitious targets for deep retrofitting of social housing stock.
- Resource the Galway Energy Agency with sufficient staff and a budget to tackle the scale of energy transformation required.
- Collaborate with the Galway Energy Cooperative to develop an Energy Master Plan for the city.
- Collaborate with the Galway Energy Cooperative on community-based energy transition projects.
- Commit to a River Corrib and Canal Hydropower Project.
- Develop untapped potential of solar energy including micro-generation schemes in housing estates, on community buildings, schools and public buildings.

Waste-Water Management

The current waste-water collection network and treatment system is not adequate to serve the current future needs of the city. Given the targeted population growth and additional housing developments the waste-water collection network and treatment system needs to be upgraded to avoid environmental damage.

The City Development Plan should:

- Indicate how and when capacity of the existing collection network is going to be brought up to an adequate level to cater for present and future demand
- Include a waste-water treatment plant on east side of the city.

Pollution Monitoring

There is insufficient water and air pollution monitoring in the city and air and noise pollution is a growing concern including its impact on city residents and wildlife. The Noise Action Plan 2019-2023 is limited to recording noise pollution of major roads however a major source of noise pollution is industry. There were concerns expressed that despite the ban on coal use in the city there is a coal processing plant in the city and the pollution impact this has.

The City Development Plan should:

- Include the development of 3 additional air quality monitoring stations across the city.
- Development of a new Noise Action Plan which also records noise from industry.
- Include measures to reduce water, air and noise pollution levels.

Older People

Introduction

<p>SDG 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable</p> 	<p>SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages</p> 
<p>United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities</p> <p>Article 4: General obligations Article 9: Accessibility Article 19: Living independently and being included in the community Article 24: Education Article 25: Health Article 27: Work and employment Article 28: Adequate standard of living and social protection Article 29: Participation in political and public life Article 30: Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport</p>	

Older people make a significant contribution to the social, economic, cultural and environmental fabric of Galway City. It is critical that the City Development Plan plans for the inclusion of older people and for appropriate levels of support for people as they age. Projections¹⁷ indicate that there will be significant increases in the older age categories, including in the very old’ population to 2051 and planning for this needs to factor in the City Development Plan.

Our living environments have a tremendous impact on our health and wellbeing. Ensuring their suitability and adaptability to people’s needs and preferences – including when these needs and preferences evolve over time – is one of the most effective approaches to respond to challenges brought to us by ageing demographics. Older people want to be facilitated and supported to live independently for as long as possible and thereafter to live in accommodation that provided supports at levels that suit their needs at that time. This means ensuring a continuum of housing type that is accessible and adaptable. Homes4Life is one initiative that addresses this challenge by contributing to the development of better living environments integrating construction and digital solutions where this is beneficial.¹⁸

Community safety is critical to the wellbeing of older people, as is access to appropriate recreational, green and blue amenities. This has become all the more important in the context of COVID-19 and is an area that the City Development Plan needs to seek to significantly improve.

Galway, as an Age Friendly city, has acknowledged the importance of supporting older people but the benefits from this initiative must be far more far-reaching and identifiable.

¹⁷ <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-plfp/populationandlabourforceprojections2017-2051/populationprojectionsresults/>

¹⁸ <http://www.homes4life.eu/about/>

The City Development Plan should:

- Continue to support the Age Friendly Alliance and improve the benefits from being an Age Friendly City
- Promote Positive Ageing, recognizing the contribution of older people to the wider community
- Provide for a network of information hubs around the city focusing on the needs of older people in relation to accessible information. The library network is one of the possibilities in relation to this, as is outreach from the Citizen's Information Centre
- Provide for resource centres where older people can access services, community supports and information in the centre and in the suburbs similar to the Westside Resource Centre and the Ballybane Resource Centre
- Ensure that all public information is available in a range of formats, to reduce impact of the Digital Divide, many older people do not have access to online resources
- Provide for more local bus shelters
- Apply for inclusion in the Homes4Life initiative
- Ensure lifetime adaptability. All housing should be future proofed and capable of easy adaptation for older people or those who acquire illness or disability. This will be cost effective in the long term avoiding costly alterations and enabling people to stay in their own homes in old age.
- Provide for independent living for older people and disabled people, allowing for a continuum of levels of support.
- Prioritise maintenance for older people and disabled people.
- Consider people in congregated settings and facilitate their move to community settings.
- Consider older renters and the affordability of rent for people reliant on pensions.
- Provide for upgrading of heating systems retrofitting the homes of older people and disabled people.
- Ensure the maintenance of pathways and walkways
- Ensure adequate cycling facilities so that cyclists are not forced to use footpaths
- Develop a plan for the growing cohorts of older people living in the suburbs