GALWAY CITY COMMUNITY NETWORK
The Public Particpation Network in Galway City

STRATEGIC PLAN
2021-2023

INTRODUCTION

Galway City Community Network (GCCN) is the network of community, voluntary and environmental organisations and groups active in Galway City. As the Public Participation Network[1] for Galway City, GCCN is the main link through which the local authority, agencies and the state connect with the community, voluntary and environmental sectors in Galway City.
GCCN is committed to contributing to the development and achievement of a vision for the well-being of this and future generations.

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'.

[1] Public Participation Networks (PPNs) were established in each local authority area in Ireland as part of the process local government reform under the Local Government Reform Act 2014

GCCN Values

GCCN values motivate us in our work to advance human rights, equality, social inclusion, environmental protection and sustainable development. The values of GCCN have been identified and agreed by GCCN members and inform, guide and shape the collective approach, ethos, communications, priorities, policies and actions of the network. The values of GCCN are:

- **Sustainability** – including valuing, preserving and protecting the natural environment.
- **Equality** – including working in a nondiscriminatory way, valuing and respecting diversity, empowering people, and securing people's access to social and economic resources.
- **Culture** – including valuing, empowering, and fostering the diversity of cultures in the city and enabling people to express their creativity.
- **Community** – involving the physical space, identity, and/or interests shared by a group, where people enjoy wellbeing and harmony, organise collectively, and engage in shared creativity.
- **Empowerment** – including representation and participation in decision-making and democracy in the city.
- **Inclusion** – involving fostering and ensuring a sense of belonging to and opportunities to engage with one's community and the city.
- **Participation** – including an acknowledgement of the right of civil society organisations to play a role in shaping the decisions that affect the lives of those they represent.
- **Autonomy** – including the belief that civil society has the right to organise autonomously and to determine their own goals and actions while maintaining the highest level of accountability and transparency.
- **Solidarity** – involving building the relationships with, and supporting the work of, the environmental, social inclusion and voluntary sectors.
- **Accountability** – including in how GCCN sets and advances its shared policy positions and how it reports to stakeholders including funders.

GCCN AIM

The aim of Galway City Community Network is to co-ordinate and support the representation of the community, voluntary and environmental sectors in Galway City.

GCCN Role

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 Galway City Community Network 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 Objectives

The objectives of GCCN provide a framework for the work of the organisation in reaching the GCCN vision and fulfilling the GCCN role. These objectives are to:

OBJECTIVE 1.

Facilitate representation of the community, voluntary and environmental sectors on all relevant decision-making bodies, developing and implementing effective and inclusive models of representation, participation and engagement of civil society in local decision making.

To meet this objective GCCN will:

1. Ensure GCCN participation and representation in all relevant local decision-making processes and structures in Galway City.
2. Facilitate and strengthen the GCCN Linkage Groups as key mechanisms for supporting all GCCN representatives, providing clear mandates, feedback and accountability mechanisms.
3. Ensure that GCCN internal structures and representative processes are inclusive and reflective of diversity.
4. Develop processes for monitoring, recording and tracking the experience of our engagement with all local and national decision-making bodies and GCCN's impact and influence.

OBJECTIVE 2.

Build the profile and engagement of GCCN as a key stakeholder in the development of Galway City.

To meet this objective GCCN will:

1. Develop GCCN submissions, research and policies reflective of GCCN values and work to embed these values in policies of the local authority, state agencies and others.
2. Enhance GCCN engagement with Galway City Councillors and other elected representatives nationally and locally to pursue our policy goals and objectives.
3. Promote transparency, community engagement, consultation and participation as outlined in the GCCN Guidelines for Successful Engagement: GCCN Policy on Participation, Representation and Consultation with Galway City Council and local relevant state agencies and bodies.

OBJECTIVE 3.

Strengthen GCCN's membership and enhance the capacity of the community, voluntary and environmental sectors to contribute to the sustainable and inclusive development of Galway City.

To meet this objective GCCN will:

1. Increase GCCN membership with a particular emphasis on marginalised groups.
2. Hold regular GCCN Plenary meetings.
3. Identify and meet the training and support needs of GCCN members and representatives as identified by them.

OBJECTIVE 4.

Provide relevant, up to date and accessible information to the community, voluntary and environmental sectors and publicise GCCN work.

To meet this objective GCCN will:

1. Implement the GCCN internal communications strategy.
2. Develop and implement a GCCN external communications strategy to publicise the GCCN vision, values and policy positions.

OBJECTIVE 5.

Engage in cross-sectoral collaboration and strengthen alliances

To meet this objective GCCN will:

1. Support the Galway City Covid-19 response.
2. Build on collaboration and further develop alliances on a range of initiatives and priorities.
3. Continue to engage at national level.

OBJECTIVE 6.

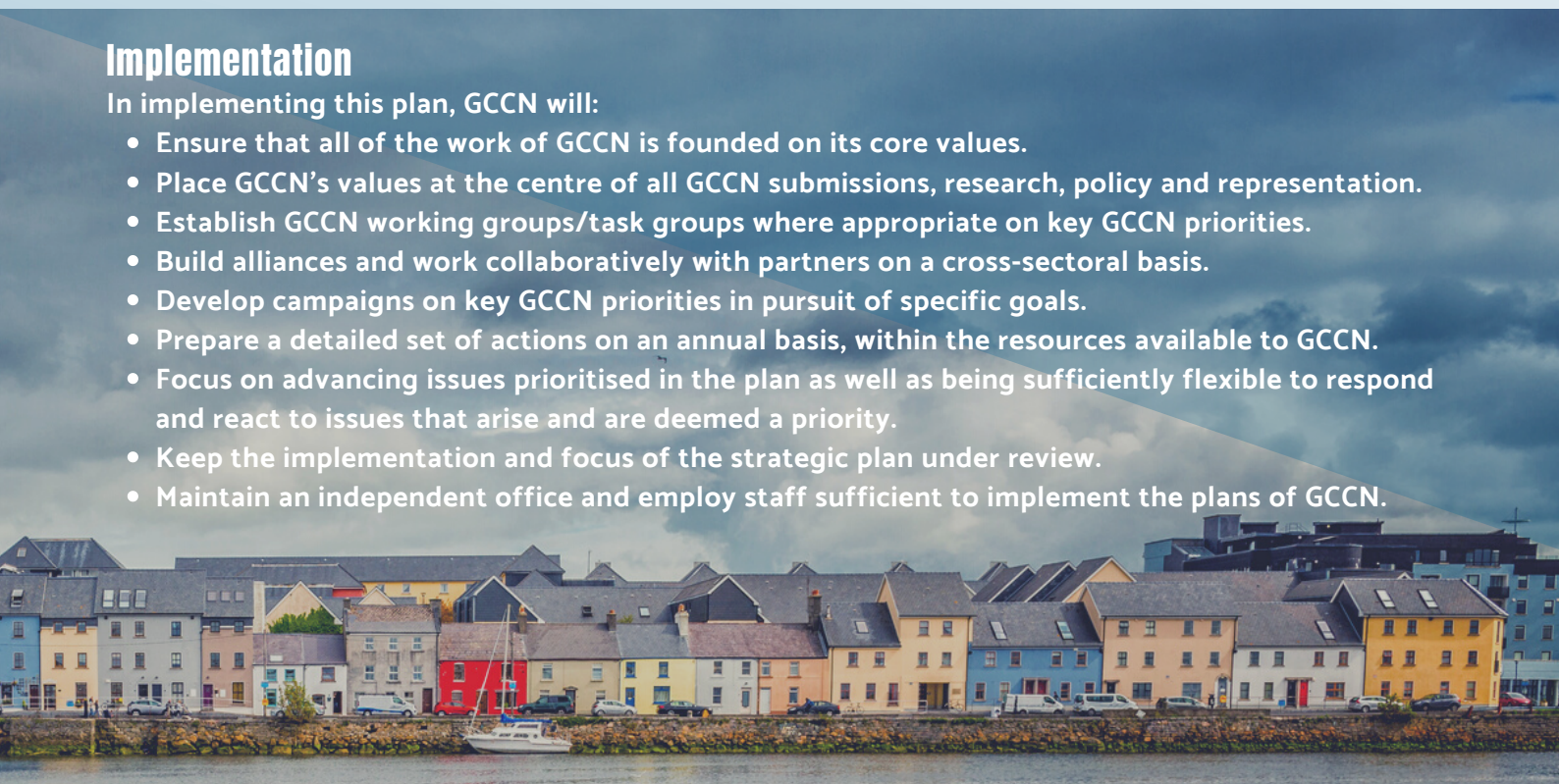**Ensure high levels of governance and the sustainability of GCCN.**

To meet this objective GCCN will:

1. Ensure compliance with all legislative requirements.
2. Hold regular meetings of the secretariat.
3. Ensure adequate resources for the organisation, projects and initiatives.

Implementation

In implementing this plan, GCCN will:

- Ensure that all of the work of GCCN is founded on its core values.
- Place GCCN's values at the centre of all GCCN submissions, research, policy and representation.
- Establish GCCN working groups/task groups where appropriate on key GCCN priorities.
- Build alliances and work collaboratively with partners on a cross-sectoral basis.
- Develop campaigns on key GCCN priorities in pursuit of specific goals.
- Prepare a detailed set of actions on an annual basis, within the resources available to GCCN.
- Focus on advancing issues prioritised in the plan as well as being sufficiently flexible to respond and react to issues that arise and are deemed a priority.
- Keep the implementation and focus of the strategic plan under review.
- Maintain an independent office and employ staff sufficient to implement the plans of GCCN.

GCCN Structure

GCCN holds three Plenary (membership) meetings a year, one of which is the Annual General Meeting. The Plenary meetings are critically important for GCCN. The membership retains responsibility for all decision-making and the Plenary meetings provide the opportunity to discuss issues of importance and adopt policy and/or positions where appropriate.

The GCCN Secretariat is elected at the GCCN Annual General Meeting and is responsible for the management of GCCN activities.

Linkage Groups are subgroups of GCCN that are convened on a thematic basis. The Linkage Groups discuss and develop GCCN policy, support the GCCN representatives in the thematic area and provide the platform for electing replacement representatives as appropriate.

GCCN Representation

There are three Electoral Colleges in the PPN, social inclusion, environment and voluntary, and each member must opt for membership of one. Members represent GCCN on the following local and national committees:

Local Community Development Committee
SPC1: Housing and Social Inclusion
SPC2: Planning
SPC3: Economic, Community and Cultural Development
SPC4: Transportation
SPC5: Climate Action, Environment, Recreation and Amenity
Joint Policing Committee
Alcohol Forum
Civic Engagement Forum - NUI Galway
Comhairle na nÓg
Galway Age Friendly
Galway Childcare Committee
Galway City Partnership
Galway Sports Partnership
Healthy Galway City Steering Committee
LCDC Social Inclusion Subgroup
LECP Advisory Committee
Western Regional Drugs and Alcohol Taskforce

Galway City Community Network would like to thank GCCN members for participating in the development of the Strategic Plan 2021-2023 and Rachel Doyle for her work in facilitating and documenting the process.

Galway City Community Network CLG

Address: Westside Community Resource Centre
Seamus Quirke Road, Galway

Phone: +353 (0) 87 9326467 / (0) 87 4328489

Email: info@galwaycitycommunitynetwork.ie

Website: www.galwaycitycommunitynetwork.ie