

# Submission on the Draft National Planning Framework: Ireland 2040

On behalf of the Galway Harbour Company  
(trading as The Port of Galway)



Planning & Environmental Consultants

## DOCUMENT DETAILS

**Client:** Galway Harbour Company

**Project title:** Galway Harbour Company NPF Submission

**Project Number:** 171034

**Document Title:** 171034 – Draft NPF Galway Harbour Sub

**Doc. File Name:** NPF Galway Harbour Sub F1 – 2017.11.09 – 171034

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### Document Issue:

Rev	Status	Issue Date	Document File Name	Author(s)	Approved By:
01	D1	08.11.2017	NPF Galway Harbour Sub D1 – 2017.11.08 – 171034	CMcG	CR
01	F	09.11.2017	NPF Galway Harbour Sub F – 2017.11.09 – 171034	CMcG	CR
01	F1	09.11.2017	NPF Galway Harbour Sub F1 – 2017.11.09 – 171034	CMcG	CR

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Introduction

On behalf of our client, **Galway Harbour Company t/a The Port of Galway**, we wish to make a submission on the draft publication of *'Ireland 2040 Our Plan - National Planning Framework'*. The purpose of this submission is to ensure that the finalised and adopted National Planning Framework: Ireland 2040 (NPF) takes cognisance of the importance of Galway Port and Inner Dock area.

Galway Port is an important transport facility serving both Galway City and the wider region. Coastal connectivity is a crucial element of the development of the West of Ireland. The port has significant potential for expansion for freight, fishing and cruise liner tourism. Improvement of port facilities is of strategic importance to the City and the region as a whole. Improved port facilities will assist in improving accessibility to Galway and has the potential to contribute to both tourism and enterprise.

## 1.2 About Galway Harbour Company

The Galway Harbour Company is a stand-alone economic entity with a mandate to sustain and grow the business of the Port of Galway. Their aim is to ensure that the Port remains at the heart of Galway City's economic and social development.

During the past decade, the Galway Harbour Company has developed into one of the most successful commercial regional ports in Ireland. In 1997, a change in corporate structure saw the Galway Harbour Company become a state owned commercial company. This change has facilitated the Port's future development and allows greater flexibility in its operations.

The Galway Harbour Company currently occupies c. 32 acres of inner docklands in Galway City. These lands include the actual working dock, roads, adjacent quays and the adjacent sites in the ownership of Galway Harbour Company. These sites are leased to the various industries such as Oil companies, Fish Businesses etc. They also have their own car parks and the Harbour offices on these lands. There is approximately 1,800 sq m. of covered storage, various yards and open storage. There are nine berths with a total quay length of 1,189 metres. There are 40 dedicated marina berths in the harbour.

Galway Harbour Company has for some years, been developing proposals for a Harbour Extension at Galway to address severe constraints to their operations within the existing harbour.

## 2 CONTEXT

### 2.1 Galway Port: An Overview

From the perspective of the Port of Galway there are two key priorities for inclusion in the NPF;

- a) Port of Galway Extension – The extension will be on lands to be reclaimed from the foreshore and the sea in Galway Bay to the south of the existing Galway Harbour Enterprise Park. The works will include re-development of some of the land at Galway Harbour Enterprise Park. The proposed development will include the relocation of the majority of the existing harbour related activities and businesses to the new deep water berths, quays, jetties and yards to be located at the harbour extension.
- b) Regeneration/Development of the Inner Dock area delivering Galway Harbour Village - This proposal is included as a key feature of regeneration projects but due to its scope and potential should be highlighted as a separate entity. A masterplan for the inner docks area is nearing completion and will include significant office/residential/hotel accommodation, cultural, art related and tourist initiatives.

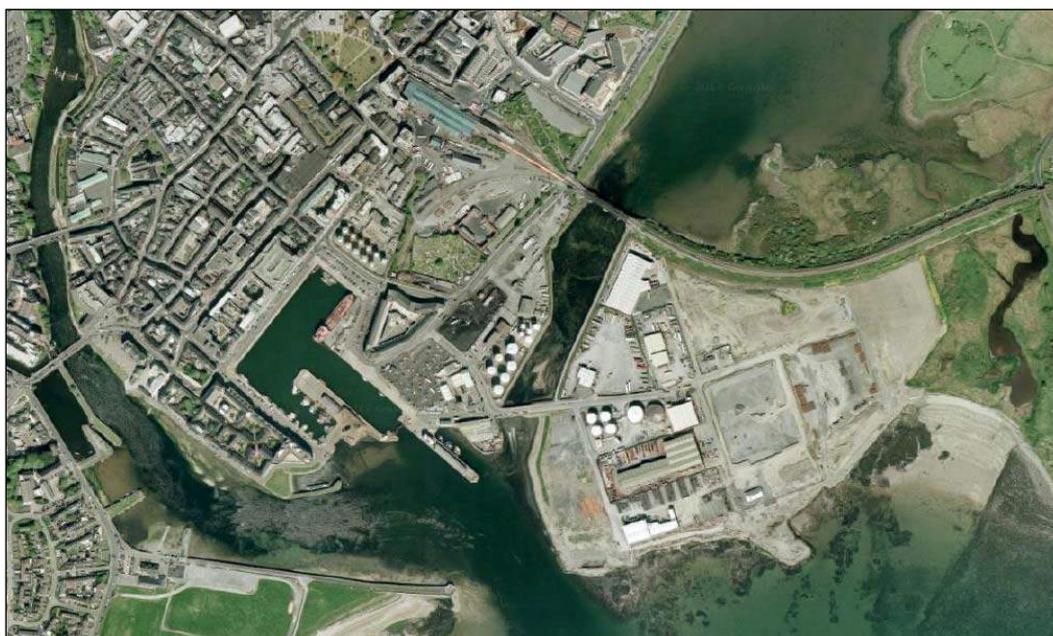


Figure 1: Aerial Context of the extent Port of Galway

#### 2.1.1 Rationale

The Port of Galway is a gated port, subject to tidal constraints, open just 4 hours per day, limited in terms of ship size and unless extended into deep water will go into decline. This will result in there being no commercial port along the Irish western shore stretching from Loop Head to Derry, a distance of 1,500kls. This would be the longest stretch of coastline in the entire EC without a designated core or comprehensive EC port. With a history stretching back some 1,000 years it would mean the inevitable decline, and the probable closure of the Port of Galway as a modern

commercial port. This cannot be allowed to happen if we as a nation are seriously committed to regional development.

### **2.1.2 Background**

The development of a deep-water port in Galway is essential and in keeping with many of the key elements/objectives of the NPF:

- It is visionary & strategic
- It projects a substantial additional number of FTEs (full time equivalents) on completion of stage 1 and significant employment levels during the construction phase
- It allows for the development of the existing inner harbour area thereby providing a working business area and living environment
- It allows for the creation of a new Galway Harbour Village and urban regeneration
- It creates an environment for regional development with the provision of a port extension that will cater for an area of almost 1/3 of the Island of Ireland
- It will create a modern deep-water port on a coastline extending to circa 1,500kms (2.4% of EU coastline)
- Ireland owns approx. 140 million acres of Marine territory off the West/N-West coast of Ireland
- It will remove a significant level of commercial transport from the public roads and thereby reduce significantly CO2 emissions

### **2.1.3 Planning Status Update**

Galway Harbour Company (GHC) submitted a planning application, in relation to a major port extension, to An Bord Pleanála (ABP) as a Strategic Infrastructural Development (SID) in January 2014 (An Bord Pleanála Ref: 61.PA0033). The port extension comprises some 20 hectares and extends 980 metres into deep-water. The planning application was approved for consideration by ABP as an IROPI, "*Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest*". It was the first such application in Ireland under this EC derogation. A decision is expected in 2018 from ABP with an anticipated commencement date for construction in mid-2019. The build period will extend to 3 years for stage 1 and at a cost of circa €65M. When completed in 2022 the entire operation of the current port will be transferred to the port extension. The resultant freeing up of the inner dock will allow for major rejuvenation of the area and the creation of a vibrant, living, city centre location providing accommodation, business park facilities, leisure/tourism and arts facilities. The draft Masterplan for the inner dock area shows the emergence of Galway Harbour Village. The planning application requests a development period of 10 years to allow for the completion of all 4 stages at a total cost of circa €140M.

The planning application received the written support of many entities including Galway Chamber of Commerce, Galway City Council, The Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport, IMDO, Galway City Councillors, the vast majority of Oireachtas members, IBEC and the public.

## 3 POLICY SUPPORT

### 3.1 EU Policy

In line with EC strategy/policy, the port development will ensure connectivity with one of the most peripheral areas in the EC. In 2016, Galway Port traffic included 163 Aran Island freight ships.

The following policy extracts form '*Regulation (EU) No.1315/2013 of European Parliament and the Council of 11th December 2013*' highlight the importance of Galway Port's role in terms of accessibility and connectivity with regard to the Aran islands.

**(2)** *'The planning, development and operation of trans-European transport networks contribute to the attainment of major Union objectives, as set out in, inter alia, the Europe 2020 Strategy and the Commission White Paper entitled "Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area – Towards a competitive and resource efficient transport system" ("the White Paper"), such as the smooth functioning of the internal market and the strengthening of economic, social and territorial cohesion. Their specific objectives also include allowing the seamless, safe and sustainable mobility of persons and goods, ensuring accessibility and connectivity for all regions of the Union, and contributing to further economic growth and competitiveness in a global perspective...'*

#### **Article 4 (Objectives of the trans-European transport network)**

*'(a) Cohesion through: (i) accessibility and connectivity of all regions of the Union, including remote, outermost, insular, peripheral and mountainous regions, as well as sparsely populated areas'*

#### **Article 10 (General priorities)**

*'1. In the development of the comprehensive network, general priority shall be given to measures that are necessary for:*

*(a) ensuring enhanced accessibility and connectivity for all regions of the Union while taking into consideration the specific case of islands, isolated networks and sparsely populated, remote and outermost regions.'*

### 3.2 National Ports Policy 2013

The core objective of National Ports Policy 2013 (NPP) is to facilitate a competitive and effective market for maritime transport services. It acknowledges that the long term international trend in ports and shipping is towards increasing optimising of efficiencies of scale, with larger vessels, greater depths of water required in ports and enhanced landside transport connections.

Galway port is included within a group of 14 no. Ports of Regional Significance. The Policy states that the Regional Ports "handle commercial traffic and function as important facilitators of trade for their regional and local hinterland." It further notes that 5 no. of the Regional Ports are in state control, including Galway Harbour.

The NPP recognises the importance of regional ports in serving their hinterlands and in supporting balanced regional development. It further notes that these ports could play a more significant role in supporting national economic development in certain specialised trades (e.g.: oil/petroleum import & storage/off-shore energy servicing) and maritime tourism. The NPP also supports the development of the cruise tourism sector.

Galway Harbour is identified as an “important strategic regional hub for petroleum importation, storage and distribution” (Section 2.7.3). The NPP also identifies Galway Harbour as having important potential in terms of servicing the ocean energy sector by endorsing the findings of the IMDO Report (Section 4.2). It further identifies the benefits of reintegration and rejuvenation between port and city using the Volvo Ocean Race as a demonstration of success in this regard (Section 4.5).

The NPP acknowledges that the inner harbour is “an immensely attractive location for the development of marine tourism and leisure facilities, in particular a marina, as well as for urban redevelopment”. It confirms that the NPP endorses the development proposals in respect of the inner harbour, as referred to in the Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region 2010–2022 and the Galway City Development Plan 2017–2023, for marine tourism and leisure facilities as well as for urban redevelopment and regeneration. It further confirms the Government’s support of development of cruise tourist traffic at Galway harbour, specifically noting Galway Harbour Company’s efforts to develop this business.

## 4 PORT OF GALWAY AND THE NATIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The Galway Harbour Company welcome the Draft NPF's recognition of the importance and role of Ireland's Ports and shipping services as key enablers of economic growth. However, the only ports identified in relation to National Infrastructure Objectives are Dublin Port and Shannon-Foynes (as per page 134 - High-Quality International Connectivity);

### ***'Ports***

*Improve land transport connections to the major ports including:*

- *Facilitating the growth of Dublin Port through greater efficiency, limited expansion into Dublin Harbour and improved road access, particularly to/from the southern port area.*
- *Enhancing road connectivity to Shannon-Foynes Port, including local by-passes.'*

The Galway Harbour Extension project is the largest single infrastructural development in Galway City and the West of Ireland over the next 10 years. Once built, large infrastructure such as the Harbour Extension will have a lifetime for centuries and will transcend the time frame of the NPF. It is imperative that the adopted NPF refers to its construction, which is anticipated to occur during the lifetime of the plan from 2019 to 2028, and also the anticipated effects of its influence once operational.

Furthermore, the successful implementation of the NPF will require the complementary development of different types of mutually dependent infrastructure such as roads and ports. We must begin today to plan and prepare to deliver the infrastructure needed in future years. The NPF should be ambitious and should encourage the development of infrastructure programmes and projects based on medium to long term projections.

### **4.1 Balanced Regional Development**

A comparison of Central Statistics Office Q1 2012 and Q2 2017 shows a decline of 14k in "Total Work Force" for West NUTs Region i.e. 216k (2012) down to 202k (2017). In comparison, almost all other Regions show significant growth with the exception of the Mid-West which shows a decline of 6k for the same period.

Harnessing the potential of Ireland's Ocean Economy can help to create thousands of jobs in the West of Ireland and also help achieve Ireland's target of €6.4bn and 29,000 jobs from the Blue Economy by 2020 and 2.4% of GDP by 2030. 140 million acres of ocean bed rests off West & N-West NUTs Regions and thus Galway Port is ideally situated to capture the obvious economic benefit for the Western Region, particularly in the area of Marine Renewable Energy which has seen turnover by the sector of €59M, an increase of activity of 119% (2014-2016). With three Marine Research Centres in Galway (Marine Institute, NUI Galway Ryan Institute, & GMIT Marine & Fresh Water Research Centre) and the National Research Ship RV Celtic Explorer based in Galway, the Port of Galway has great potential for innovation and growth and helping Ireland achieve its maritime economic and employment goals as set out in Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth – an Integrated Marine Plan for Ireland.

This strategy consists of two components:

- (1) Developing sectors that have high potential for sustainable jobs and growth;
  - a) Coastal & Maritime Tourism
  - b) Ocean Energy
  - c) Blue biotechnology
  - d) Aquaculture
  - e) Seabed mining
  
- (2) Essential components to provide Knowledge, Legal certainty and security in the Blue Economy;
  - a) Marine Knowledge – Galway already has three research centres
  - b) Maritime spatial planning – The Marine Institute in Rinville West, Oranmore, Co. Galway is tasked with ensuring an efficient and sustainable management of activities at sea
  - c) Maritime surveillance – Galway is base for Irish Patrol Ships.

## 4.2 Why Galway Port?

Some of the benefits of the extension of the harbour have already been outlined above. Others include;

- Increased length of deep-water quay
- Ability to dock commercial ships up to 40,000 tonnes, (Currently 7,000 tonnes)
- Major destination for cruise liners/tourism benefit
- Ability to dock the largest cruise liners in the world (no cruise liners in 2009-16 in 2018 with circa 10,000 passengers)
- Increased storage facilities – 20 hectares
- Ability to cater for customer demand- currently turning away business because of port restrictions
- Significant Increased employment following and during the construction of Phase one of the port extension
- Economic & Financial benefits
- Reduction in CO2 emissions by reducing the transport of 170M tonnes per annum on Irish roads which equates to 59.5M litres of diesel
- Socio-Economic benefits to the region of some €147M based on NPV
- Development of 12 hectares of existing inner dock land
- Creation of significant employment during the construction phase of Galway Harbour Village and subsequent to its completion
- Copper fastens Galway as the “Gateway” city of the West of Ireland

## 5 CONCLUSION

Despite being included in many submissions to the NPF including those made by Galway City Council, Northern & Western Regional Assembly, The Western Development Commission, Atlantic Economic Corridor, IBEC, Galway Chamber of Commerce etc. this major port extension development is not referred to in the current draft of the plan.

The total absence in the draft 'NPF' document of what will be the largest single infrastructural development in Galway City and the West of Ireland over the next 10 years must be rectified. As a priority, it is essential that the development of the port extension be included in the final version of the NPF. It is a medium-term development in terms of construction extending from 2019 to 2028. The concurrent development/emergence of Galway Harbour Village should also be included. The draft masterplan is imminent and this mixed used development over 88,000sq. metres will compliment significantly the emergence of the port extension.