Ireland 2040 – Submission on behalf of Galway Healthy Cities

Galway Healthy Cities welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the discussion on what sort of place should Ireland be in 2040 and what do we need to do to achieve this. This contribution focuses more on the 'how' this can be achieved.

We very much welcome that one of the key objectives is to facilitate improvements to people's quality of life and well-being. This is the first objective identified and it is pertinent as all of the other objectives stated contribute to quality of life and well-being. To have a specific section that focuses specifically on people's health and wellbeing is, again, very positive.

Some recommendations / suggestions include

- Health and Wellbeing should form a central theme in the Ireland 2040 Plan and include goals and policies to promote and protect health and wellbeing
- Ensure tackling inequalities is at the heart of policy making in the Ireland 2040 Plan. NICE[1] recommends that Local Authorities should use equity proofing tools e.g. Health Equity Audit and Health Impact Assessment to assess the potential impact of all their policies on health and health inequalities. Even policies and partnership activities without an explicit health focus should be assessed as a matter of routine.
- Health Impact Assessment is incorporated as a core element of all aspects of the plan. The World Health Organization's (WHO) definition of HIA is: "…a combination of procedures, methods and tools by which a policy, programme or project may be judged as to its potential effects on the health of a population, and the distribution of those effects with the population"[2]
- Prioritise evidence-based actions to promote health and wellbeing objectives as part of the plan. For example NICE modelled whether high-standard spatial planning for areas such as improving walking and cycling infrastructure and retrofitting local homes with insulation were worthwhile in terms of outcomes. In both cases, outcomes significantly outweighed costs, by 60:1 for walking, 168:1 for cycling, and 50:1 for insulating local homes
- Incorporate Health Promoting Design Principles will ensure that environment impacts positively on physical and mental health e.g. location and density of land use, street layout and connectivity, access to affordable and healthy foods, safety, open and green space, affordable and energy efficient housing, air and noise quality, active travel
- Provide training and ongoing capacity development for, decision makes, leaders, policy makers and politicians is key in ensuring a healthy urban environment for all e.g. training on best practice healthy environments, links between planning and health, evidence in relation to health impacts of policies

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[1] NICE Health Inequalities and Population Health What NICE says (2012)
https://www.nice.org.uk/advice/lgb4/chapter/what-nice-says

[2] http://www.who.int/hia/en/

- Develop a monitoring and evaluation framework to assess how health and wellbeing is promoted and protected as the development plan unfolds
- Ensure residential developments have regard to the national quality audit tool (Walkability Audit) being produced by The Centre for Excellence in Universal Design[3] for urban roads and streets using a universal design approach, to ensure that the needs of all people regardless of age, size or ability are taken into account.
- Support initiatives to promote active and safe travel
- Ensure that we create an environment that supports reducing alcohol related harm, by implementing evidence based policies addressing price, availability and marketing.
- Promote a Child-Friendly Environment in which children and families feel comfortable, and in which their parents and guardians feel confident about child safety and wellbeing
- Promote vibrant and empowering communities that offer children outlets for physical activity, self-actualisation and positive socialisation
- Ensure the physical and social environment is accessible and inclusive of all populations e.g. older people, people with disabilities, minority, ethnic and vulnerable groups
- Ensure the Development plan facilitates the development of physical environment for workplaces and industry including active travel, mobility management, recreational facilities and amenities which are conducive to promoting the healthier choice as the easier choice.
- Support implementation of Healthy Workplace initiatives as identified with Healthy Ireland.
- Incorporate Universal Design and life time adaptability in the design and construction of housing giving consideration to the needs of varying population groups e.g. people with disabilities, older people etc
- Consult with and incorporate the needs of all various groups including people with disabilities and older people in the provision of housing
- Ensure Ireland 2040 and all related material and communication is written in plain english

Submitted by: Evelyn Fanning, Chair of Galway Healthy Cities

www.galwayhealthycities.ie

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[3] Walkability Audit - How Walkable is Your Town, Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, 2015