



# **Comhairle Cathrach na Gaillimhe Galway City Council**

**2040 Éire - Ár bPlean  
An Creat Náisiúnta Pleanála  
Aighneacht**

**Ireland 2040 - Our Plan  
National Planning Framework  
Submission**

Márta/ March 2017



## Introduction

Galway City Council welcomes the preparation of a National Planning Framework (NPF) and the opportunity to make a submission to the first stage of the process. The City Council have considered the *Ireland 2040 Our Plan Issues and Choices* document which is very comprehensive, clearly setting out the critical issues for consideration in the NPF.

This submission reflects the views of Galway City Council. It also takes into account the issues highlighted at a dedicated NPF workshop which was attended by the Elected Members and local stakeholders. Detailed notes from the workshop are included in Appendix 1.

## National Planning Challenges

Since the inception of the National Spatial Strategy Ireland has experienced considerable socio economic change which has had a significant impact on settlement patterns, economic growth and environmental sustainability. The challenge of the new National Planning Framework is to achieve a greater balance of social, economic and spatial development, realising the full potential of all areas to contribute to the optimal performance of the Country, sustaining communities and a quality of life for all citizens.

### **Effective Regional Development and the role of Cities and Regions**

As highlighted in the consultation documents, the uneven and unsustainable spread of growth nationally has created great disparity between Dublin and the rest of the country which will in the longer term lead to a reduction in national performance and competitiveness. This requires a focus on optimising the potential of other locations to take some of the strain away from the Dublin region. Galway City and the wider region have significant potential to absorb these pressures and enable greater national parity.

The consultation document refers to a co-ordinated development and investment strategy to strengthen second tier cities, that this approach offers the highest level of territorial cohesion and competitiveness at a European level. The concept of Tier Two Regional Cities if advanced can become a strong complement to Dublin and be drivers of growth and development in their regions.

Galway City has the characteristics to support designation as a Tier Two City, sustaining a strong role as a driver of growth in the west region. These characteristics include a strong population base, an educated and skilled workforce, a diverse economy with internationally trading companies, third level institutions, a distinctive built, natural and cultural heritage and a range of recreation, social and community facilities. The City will require a focussed strategy under the NPF to build on these assets to support an expanded role for the City.

The potential for connectivity between Galway and other cities along the west coast should be a consideration under the NPF. Critical mass and added value can be achievable through collaboration and co-ordination particularly in areas of innovation and education, which could provide a competitive scale to the Dublin region.

### **Sustainable Population Strategy**

The trend towards an increasingly dispersed pattern of settlement is a significant challenge creating unsustainable travel patterns, adverse impacts on environmental quality and impacting on viability of services and ability for concentrated investment. The NPF requires a clear sustainable settlement hierarchy and allocation of future growth and service provision to be allied with this hierarchy.

### **Social Sustainability**

A key challenge for the NPF is to enable all of our communities to achieve their potential, and to promote and facilitate equality of access and equality of opportunity across all communities.

### **Environmental Sustainability**

Ireland is unique in terms of its quality environment, biodiversity, landscape, culture and heritage and sustainable energy potential. These characteristics are huge assets and should be maintained and nurtured. A challenge for the NPF is to balance the sensitivities of the environment with the need to meet the strategic economic and social needs of the country into the future.

### **Requirements for Capital Investment**

Investments in key pieces of infrastructure such as transportation, water and wastewater, broadband technology will be required to sustain future growth. Investment will also be required to provide for the range of community, social, health, education and recreation facilities needed to achieve a high quality of life standard. Focussed urban investment will create the greatest overall benefits and should include investment in environmental and public realm improvements and urban renewal and regeneration. Initiatives similar to the Designated Urban Centres Grants Scheme 2014 – 2020 which allocated grant funding towards the provision of cultural infrastructure in the City are necessary to support the future growth of the City.

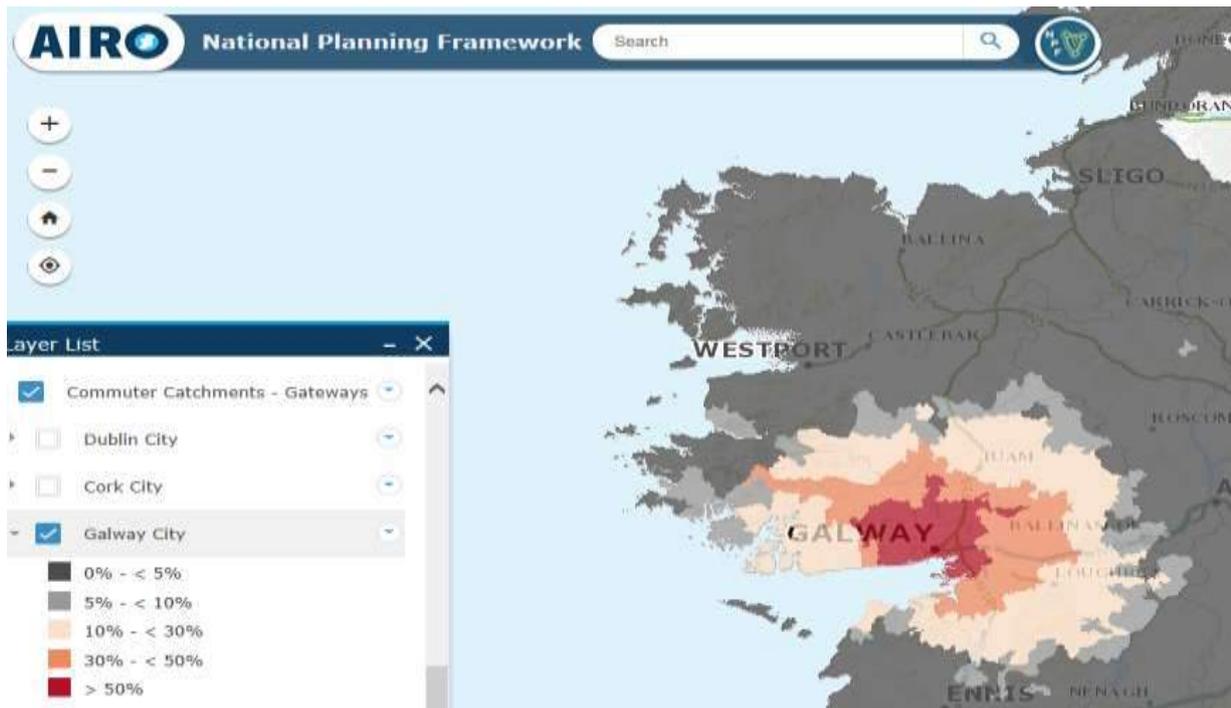
## **Role of Galway City in the National Planning Framework**

Galway, as the largest urban centre in the West, is a key driver of economic development and competitiveness in the region and has the potential to drive growth at a national level. The City is ideally placed in terms of sectoral and spatial development to assume a role of a Tier Two City. Galway already manifests the characteristics of a global City with a dynamism that can create the critical mass to help sustain a high quality of life within the region. This is reflected in a socio-economic review of the performance of Galway Gateway set out in the *Gateways and Hubs Development Index (GHDI) 2012*, which found that Galway performed best across a range of indicators, relative to the other gateway Cities.

Galway is a vibrant and diverse City and its economic resilience is in evidence, particularly in the areas of education, ICT and medical technologies which have all sustained employment and in some areas experienced growth during the recent economic recession and continue to thrive. Critical factors in the success of the City economy is the quality of life and environment that Galway has to offer and the positive image of the City. These help attract talent and skills and enhance the health and well being of those who live and work in the city.

The vision for the City is to be a *successful, sustainable, competitive, regional centre that creates prosperity, supports a high quality of life and maintains its distinctive identity and supports a rich cultural experience. A City that is environmentally responsible and resilient to challenge. A City that can attract and retain talent and skills and fosters innovation and creativity. An inclusive City where civic engagement is valued and a shared vision is pursued through good governance and leadership. A City that offers sustainable choices in housing, work, transport and lifestyle opportunities* (City Development Plan 2017-2023). This vision will be guided by a range of existing and future plans and strategies to be prepared and implemented in the coming years.

Galway City is not a stand alone urban centre, it has significant hinterland and draws on an extensive catchment area to support its buoyant economy and reciprocally provides an important regional service to this wide area. The 2011 census captures the City’s experience of a significant commuter population of 20,560. Travel to work studies have shown this to be predominantly from Co. Galway but also extending well into Co. Clare and Co. Mayo. This figure for commuting population has increased by 8.6% from that recorded in 2006. This reflects the significant regional economic role of the City and demonstrates that people are willing to travel lengthy distances to access employment in the City owing to the quality and range of job opportunities. It also indicates the synergies that exist between the City and the wider region and in particular the surrounding towns and villages within the environs of the City.



Galway City Commuter Catchment - AIRO

### Collaboration

A central element in Galway’s success to date has been the willingness and capacity of all local stakeholders to work together. Encouraging a sense of collective identity and a shared vision through civic engagement is essential for effective implementation of plans and projects.

This is reflected in the numerous awards to the City achieved in collaboration with stakeholders including UNESCO City of Film designation, Academy of Urbanism Great Town Award, Award of Purple Flag status, Micro-City of the Year 2014/2015 award, European Green Leaf 2017 and Galway European Region of Gastronomy 2018. The designation of Galway as European Capital of Culture 2020, following a joint Galway City and County bid process, with widespread public engagement is also reflective of the partnership approach that exists in the City and wider region.

A key role in the success of the City to date and into the future will continue to be played by community agencies such as the Galway City Partnership and the Galway City Community Network. The Local Community Development Committee and Local Enterprise Offices also have a primary role including through implementation of the Local Economic and Community Plan 2015-2021. The focus of the LECP is on collaboration and inter-agency work, with an emphasis on clear and measurable actions that add value to the City.

Galway City Council is fully committed to taking the lead in bringing all of the key players in the economic, social and community life of the City on board in the delivery of the NPF and realising the vision for the City to 2040 and beyond.

### **Plans/ Strategies**

A range of plans and strategies are in place to guide the development of the City. These will enable the effective implementation of any focussed strategy arising from the NPF. They ensure that private investment and public spending is targeted to deliver the best and the most sustainable socio economic impacts for the City and consequently of wider benefit for the region. They reflect public consultation and have been prepared in collaboration with key stakeholders and include:

- Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023.
- Galway City Local Economic and Community Plan 2015-2021.
- Galway Transport Strategy which includes the N6 Galway City Ring Road Project.
- Everybody Matters A Cultural Sustainability Strategy Framework For Galway 2016-2025.
- Galway City Heritage Plan 2016-2021.
- Galway City Biodiversity Action Plan 2014-2024.
- Galway City Recreation and Amenity Needs Study 2008.
- Galway City Towards a City of Equals 2005.

Other strategies in preparation include the Galway City and County Economic Strategy, Galway City Public Realm Strategy and the Galway Tourism Strategy. Of note also is *Making Waves*, Galway's successful bid for European Capital of Culture 2020, which will create a significant cultural legacy for the City and region into the future.

Appendix 2 highlights the wide range of local plans and strategies, which provide an overall policy framework for the City. These plans will play an important role in shaping Galway as a City that offers a sustainable alternative nationally to the current growth trends and that can bring huge long term benefits to the wider region.

## **Key Elements that support the designation of Galway as a Tier Two City**

A successful City is a combination of economic, environmental, social and cultural factors. All these elements play an important role in shaping Galway as a world-class City of creativity, investment and opportunity, a City that can sustain and attract a highly motivated and educated labour force and a City that offers the best conditions to its people and a superior quality of life.

### **Population**

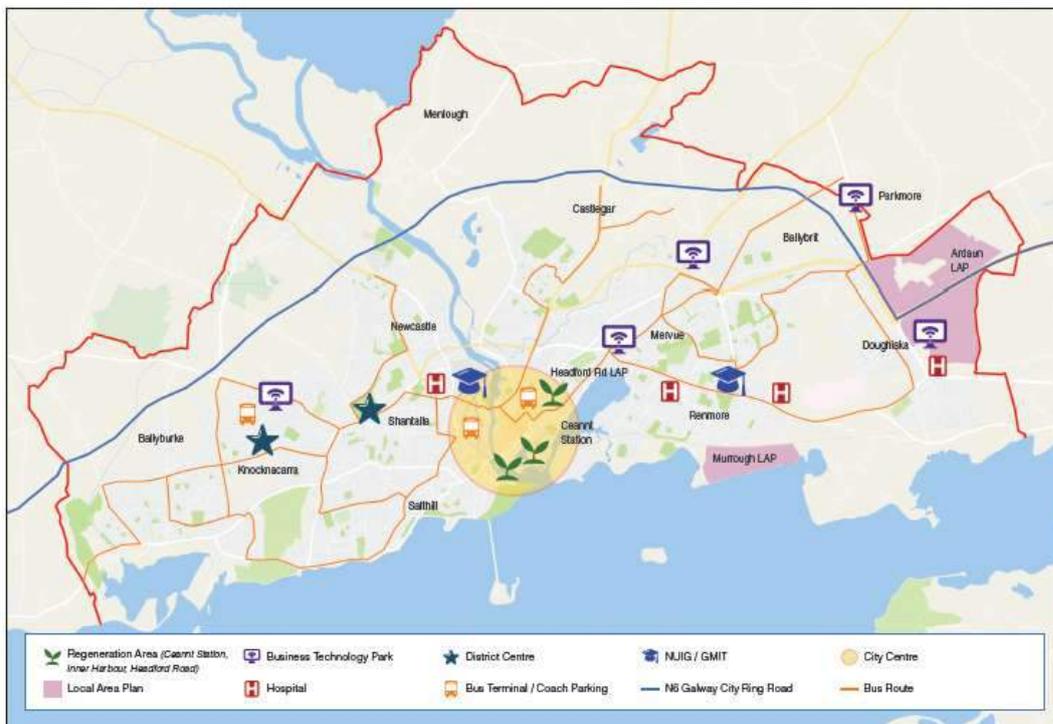
It is notable, as stated in the *Issues and Choices* paper, that of the five Cities only the Galway built-up area experienced consistent population growth in excess of the national average (31%) from 1996-2016, increasing in population by more than 23,000 or 41% (current population 79, 504). This indicates the resilience of the City and reflects the attractiveness of Galway as a City in which to live and work.

Preliminary census results for 2016 indicate a growth in the City population of 5.3% since 2011, which is well above the national rate of 3.7%. It also compares well with other urban areas- Dublin City 4.8%, South Dublin 5.1%, Dun Laoghaire/Rathdown 5.3%, Cork 5.4% and Limerick City 2.1%. These figures indicate that the City despite the challenges of the economy has maintained a growth rate on a par with other major urban areas.

Galway is a young City with over 40,000 pupils and students in primary, secondary, further and third-level schools and colleges across Galway, including over 27,000 students enrolled in the National University of Ireland, the Galway Mayo Institute of Technology and the Galway Technical Institute (2011 census).

Education attainment is strong in the City with 45% of adults educated to third level which is above the state average and a much higher proportion of the population than in other Irish cities (Dublin City 37.6%, Cork City 29.9% Limerick City 23.1% (CSO – Area Profiles Census 2011)). This gives Galway a strong economic competitive edge nationally, as Ireland evolves to knowledge based economy.

It is also a multi-cultural City and is a City which celebrates diversity. 19.4% of its residents are non-Irish, compared to a national average of 12% (2011 census). Galway is Ireland's only Gaeltacht City with a strong history and tradition of the Irish culture. These characteristics contribute to the distinctive character and vibrancy of the City reinforcing a strong identity and a cohesive society.



Core Strategy Map from Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023

## Health and Well Being

The *Issues and Choices* paper highlights the importance of health and well being and quality of life issues. These are central to policy development within the City, in particular in areas such as housing and sustainable communities, integration of transportation and land use, protection and enhancement of the built, natural and cultural heritage and strengthening of the green network.

The City has a rich diversity of natural resources including Galway Bay and an extensive coastline, woodlands such as Merlin Park, Bearn Woods and Terryland Forest Park and waterways such as the River Corrib and the canals. A fifth of the total land area of the City is designated as protected habitats, recreation and amenity open space and agricultural land. These spaces are a vital part of everyday urban life in Galway and this high quality environment contributes to the attractiveness of the City and the health and well being of the population.

The Recreation and Amenity Needs Study for the City highlights the value of both passive and active recreation in the lives of Galway citizens and sets out a comprehensive assessment of the future needs of the City in terms of open space and sports infrastructure. It highlights the significant range of active sports facilities in the City such as sports grounds, playing pitches, sports centres and the considerable private sector provision of recreation and leisure activities through leisure centres and gyms, all of which support a healthy lifestyle for the City population.

Galway is also a cultural, creative City with a thriving arts sector which also contributes significantly to health and well being. The Cultural Sustainability Strategy 2016-2025 highlights the uniqueness of Galway culture and its richness and diversity and its importance to the future of the City and County enhancing the lives of those living and working in Galway and the surrounding region.

An important element of health and well being in the City is access to a range of health care services. Galway is a centre for regional health care services for the West Region. Galway University Hospitals (Merlin and UHG) provide a secondary, regional and supra-regional service in respect of cardiology and cancer services and they are also one of eight major academic teaching hospitals in Ireland. The Galway Clinic and Bon Secours also enhance the role of the City as a regional centre for healthcare.

The implementation of the Galway Transportation Strategy (2016) has potential to create considerable improvements to health and well being in the City providing greater opportunities for more active and healthy travel within the City and environs through provision of safe walking and cycling facilities with additional greenways, cycle lanes and an enhanced pedestrian network.

Galway City is a member of the World Health Organisation (WHO) European Healthy Cities Network since 2006. The Galway Healthy Cities Project recognises the tangible benefits to health that come from living in a good quality and clean environment and ensures that health and well being is incorporated into the policy framework of local agencies in the City. Other initiatives in the City which include Child Friendly City, Age Friendly Galway and the Sports Partnership all have enhanced health and well being as primary goals. The designation of Galway as European Green Leaf City 2017 also reflects the quality of the environment in the City and an ongoing commitment to improved health and well being.



### **Placemaking and Community Development**

The landscape setting of the City, at the foothills of Connemara where the River Corrib meets Galway Bay creates a distinctive place and a unique urban setting. The extensive green network of parks and open spaces, waterways together with a compact, walkable City centre all contribute to a successful place. Galway has strong links with the past which are evident in the built form, architecture and archaeology of the City, in particular the historic City core, and which are significant elements in the definition and experience of the urban environment and engender a strong sense of place. The City Council's engagement through the *Street Conversations 2013* confirmed that Galway is perceived as "...a human scale, friendly and culturally vibrant" place. The sense of pride of place that inhabitants of the City have was also evident. Good urban design, architecture and high quality public realm also play an important role in placemaking in the City.

The strong tradition of organised community and cultural activity with an array of structures and initiatives within the City is also what contributes to the City as a successful place. The image of Galway, paralleled with an inclusive community, local distinctiveness and attractive lifestyle, is a

critical asset for sustaining communities and good placemaking as well as for the attraction of inward investment.

### **Transport**

The integration of transportation and land use is essential in creating sustainable places to live and work. It plays a major role in the reduction of traffic congestion, providing opportunities to reduce car dependency and allowing for greater investment in alternative means of travel including public transport, walking and cycling. It also delivers considerable benefits in terms of reduced greenhouse gas emissions, enhanced health and well being and has benefits for the public realm. Within Galway City and environs, the promotion of integration is reflected across all plans and strategies, including in particular the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS) 2016 which is a joint Galway City Council and County Council strategy prepared in partnership with the National Transport Authority.

The GTS represents a modern fit for purpose strategy that will address the current significant problems of accessibility within the City and environs. It is a long term transport plan that will underpin the future sustainable growth of the City. It recognises that Galway needs to fulfil its role as a regional growth centre where accessibility and connectedness are critical for the functioning of the city.

It includes a series of measures which will address the congestion problems experienced across the City, particularly during peak hours, and sets out an overview of actions and measures for implementation over a 20 year time period. It reflects an integrated approach where the objective is to arrive at the optimum sustainable transport solution which will deliver the most benefit for all transport users while also taking into consideration environmental, economic and social factors.



The strategy includes traffic management, giving priority to walking, cycling and bus movements, modifications to the traffic network, management of parking activities and heavy goods vehicles, improvements to the public realm and use of 'smarter mobility'. It also includes for the provision of a new outer ring road which will focus on supporting trips that cannot be facilitated by measures such as City bound, cross-City and cross County movements. This will relieve congestion in the city and in turn improve the quality of the city environment and increase opportunities for reallocation of existing road space for sustainable transportation.

### **Access and connectivity**

Improved accessibility and connectedness is critical for the functioning of the City and to achieve optimum success as a Tier Two City and to realise effective regional growth. Considerable progress has been made in recent years with the national road and motorway network, which provides vital inter-urban and inter-regional connectivity. The completion of the M6 motorway considerably reduced travel times from Dublin to Galway and has made the City more accessible nationally.

The imminent completion of the M17/M18 Gort to Tuam motorway will significantly reduce travel time to Shannon Airport and will make considerable time savings between the City and Knock Airport. It will add to the accessibility of the City and improve strategic linkage within the West region and enhance linkage to Sligo, Derry and Limerick. The N59 and N84 national roads are important regional links to and from the City also.

The City is a significant rail destination with direct intercity services to Dublin via Athlone and to Limerick via Ennis. It also provides a valuable commuter service to towns such as Ballinasloe, Athenry, Craughwell and Oranmore. It is envisaged that the long term redevelopment of Ceannt Station Quarter as a new major multi-modal transport interchange will involve rail services expanding in frequency where there is sufficient passenger demand and usage.

The City is also an important intercity and regional bus destination with facilities provided at Ceannt Station and Fairgreen Coach Station. The planned upgrades at Ceannt Station will in conjunction with Fairgreen Coach Station act as a multi-modal interchange capable of accommodating enhanced inter-urban, commuter and City rail and bus services.

The potential for double tracking of the railway line from the City to Athenry, or a more limited accommodation of stopping bays and the provision of a rail freight service from Galway Port are also strategic projects that will enhance accessibility and connectivity in the region to 2040.

Galway Port is an important transport facility serving the City and wider region. Coastal connectivity is an important aspect of development of the west region and 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, improving accessibility and with the potential to contribute to both tourism and enterprise.

Other strategic projects such as the Galway to Dublin Cycleway and development of the greenway network, in particular the Galway City Centre to Bearna Greenway and the Galway to Clifden Greenway present opportunities for greater accessibility and connectivity in the City and the wider region.

## Key Assets that support the designation of Galway as a Tier Two City

Galway City Council aims to position Galway as a world class City of innovation and creativity, a City that will continue to be a driver of economic development and competitiveness in the region and a City that can drive growth at a national level. The key assets set out below highlight that the City has the attributes to achieve this aim and has considerable scope to take on a strengthened role under the National Planning Framework.

### Housing

The lack of housing supply in the City and the slow rate of house construction reflect the national situation. As the economy recovers, the City is well prepared with sufficient land capacity and the policy framework to meet both the legacy of historic demand and the projected demand. Housing provision in the City is supported by the vision that everyone should be able to live in good quality,



The West Region taken from the Action Plan for Jobs: West Region 2015-2017

affordable homes in sustainable communities. The City Development Plan provides the framework for integrating housing into the economy, linking housing and transportation infrastructure and ensuring that housing is supported by basic services. It includes a robust policy in relation to the development of sustainable neighbourhoods to create communities with a strong identity where a good standard of living can be achieved by all.

This policy promotes a range of house types, sizes and tenures suitable for households with different income levels or those who may have specific requirements. This includes specific accommodation of housing needs to cater for an ageing population at locations that have good access to community facilities and amenities.

It promotes sustainable densities, incorporating high design standards and key urban design principles and provides for a co-ordinated approach with investment and the delivery of essential infrastructure and fostering sustainable transport patterns.

Galway City has sufficient capacity to accommodate housing to meet the needs of a City of Tier Two status. The core strategy of the City Development Plan sets out a co-ordinated settlement strategy for the City consolidating the existing suburbs (Knocknacarra, Ragoon, Castlegar, Roscam) and creation of sustainable communities on the Regeneration Sites within and adjacent to the City centre (Ceannt Station Quarter, Inner Harbour and Headford Road Area). These designated Regeneration Sites have scope for a significant quantum of residential development that can meet the needs of decreasing household sizes and also offer opportunities for delivery of large scale student housing projects.

To the east of the City, Ardaun is identified as a Major Urban Housing Delivery Site and provides opportunities for high density residential development structured and co-ordinated with other essential community services.

Acknowledging the strong commuter pattern, the surrounding towns and villages within the environs of the City are designated in the core strategy of the County Development Plan 2015-2021 to have capacity to expand and sustain growth, linked in with proposed public transport links as set out in the GTS.

### **Economic Development**

Galway has the dynamism of a Global City that can create the critical mass that will help sustain job growth within the region. The City has considerable potential for further development and capacity for new enterprises.

Galway provides for a diverse range of economic activities, services and employment opportunities. Professional services are recorded as being the largest employment industry reflecting the high level of education of the population and the strong presence of knowledge based industries in the City. It has a strong entrepreneurial culture and track record of innovativeness. It is an attractive place for foreign direct investment (FDI) reflected in the niche manufacturing industries that have clustered in Galway and the associated collaboration with third level institutes.

The City has an important commercial and retail function and is reflected in the scale of employment in these sectors. The role of the City defined as a regional shopping centre in the national shopping hierarchy reflects the regional significance of the City. Huge potential exists to extend the main commercial area into the Ceannt Station Quarter and expansion in the Headford Road commercial area.

The emerging food sector also shows promise of expansion potential and diversity and has linked benefits with the tourism market and the hospitality sector.

The commercial offer in the City centre is broad in range and maintains a high degree of vitality and vibrancy. There is a notable presence of the hospitality sector, cafe culture and the entertainment area bolstered by the tourism market and the strong student population. The medieval core, the

walkability of the city centre and the location on the river and Atlantic sea add to the experience of the commercial core giving it added value.

City centre locations are becoming increasingly attractive locations, particularly in the information and communication technology sector. These locations are seen to offer opportunities for innovation labs and business incubation in spaces that encourage collaboration and creativity. City locations such as Galway, with an historic core and high quality attractive waterfront setting, are perceived to inspire creativity and are particularly suitable for small, emerging enterprises but can with investment, support a presence by larger more established companies. Interest in Galway City centre locations is already manifested with refurbishment of existing commercial office space and significant interest in the development of key City centre Regeneration Sites for new office space. To meet future demands, the City centre has a number of key locations, namely Ceannt Station Quarter, Inner Harbour, Nun's Island area, Eyre Square East and the Headford Road LAP area which are ripe for regeneration. Other areas with capacity include Mervue and Ballybrit and on undeveloped lands at Ragoon/Knocknacarra and within the Ardaun LAP lands.

Demands for large scale operations can be met at the undeveloped IDA Business and Technology lands at Parkmore (38ha), the strategic IDA site at Oranmore (27ha) and the strategic site at Athenry (97ha). The Galway Airport Site is also a key opportunity site which has recently been subject to a joint acquisition by Galway City and County Council. The site has significant development potential and a number of options for its future use are emerging from a feasibility study carried out on the site.

The City is also adopting a Smart City approach exploring the use of 'big data' in the interest of enhancing the quality and performance of urban services, to reduce costs and consumption of resources, and to engage more effectively and actively with citizens. Research is being carried out in NUIG under the Insight Programme – Centre for Data Analytics.

## **Education**

The presence of a strong educational sector is a huge asset to the City and plays a significant regional role, in particular the National University of Ireland, Galway (NUIG) and Galway Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT). These add significant value to Galway City in terms of being a significant employer, playing a major role in education provision and through the development of a knowledge economy.

As an indicator of the success of NUIG, it was the only Irish University to increase its ranking in the QS World University rankings in 2014/2015 and reflecting its attractiveness, it has the highest number of international students out of all of the Irish Universities (15% of the student population).

The Galway Mayo Institute of Technology is also of critical importance to the City and is renowned for its excellence in the Creative Arts and Digital Media; Entrepreneurship and Gastronomy. Both NUIG and GMIT have collaborative research and training roles with industry which is supported also by national investment research programmes such as REMEDI and GMedTech. Research competencies have been growing particularly in the life sciences area in NUIG and also in the medical technologies research group at GMIT.

Having third level institutions of such calibre in Galway City is a key factor for companies choosing to locate in Galway as they have access to a very highly educated and skilled workforce at their doorstep. They are also responsive to the research demands of industry.

The presence of a third level student population of over 24,000 is also a significant contributor to the local economy and adds to the vibrancy of diversity of the City.

### **Creative/Culture Sector**

Culture and creativity is at the heart of life in Galway City and there is huge potential to develop Galway as a world-class, creative City region. It already has a global reputation as the home of Druid Theatre Company, Galway International Arts Festival and Macnas. There is also a vibrant community arts sector in Galway that gives a strong cultural identity to the City.

The strength and potential of the creative sector is evidenced in particular by designations such as the UNESCO City of Film and European Capital of Culture 2020. There is considerable scope for the establishment of the City as a hub for the Creative and Cultural Industries, building on the distinctive culture and creative legacy in the City. The development of film, media and entertainment, design and craft has potential to add significant value to the overall economy and strengthen the identity of Galway.

Galway City is unique in that it is a bilingual City. The use of the Irish language is part of everyday life in the City. A significant area of the City has Gaeltacht status and the City is a service centre for the Connemara Gaeltacht. In the 2011 Census, amongst the cities in the state, Galway City and its suburbs had the highest rate of Irish speakers (44.2%). Galway based organisations such as Gaillimh le Gaeilge plays a lead role in the promotion of the culture and language in the City. The drive to achieve official status for the City as 'Bilingual Capital of Ireland' reflects the strong Gaeltacht culture and identity within the City and its bilingual status will enhance the attractiveness of the City.

### **Tourism**

Tourism is a major economic activity within the local economy of the City and its continuing growth generates a range of associated economic activities and expanding employment opportunities. 16% of the 7.1 million overseas visitors to Ireland, visited Galway City and County. There is huge potential to develop tourism in the City and extend bed nights as a gateway to the west region with potential to further develop urban, culture/heritage/food tourism. The location of the City mid way along the Wild Atlantic Way is also an opportunity for expansion of the tourist product in the City.

The success of the City as a festival City is a significant tourism product, sustaining services and ensuring year round bed nights. It is a major revenue generator with the Galway Races, the Arts Festival and the Film Fleadh alone generating almost €100m in revenue in 2010 (*Galway City and County Baseline Economic Report – Whittaker Institute NUIG 2015*).

Galway City has an unparalleled water environment with an extensive coastline, Lough Corrib, River Corrib, waterways and canals. The potential for water based tourism is significant and has been demonstrated by the momentum created in the City during the hosting of the Volvo Ocean Race stops in 2009 and 2012. Silverstrand and Salthill beaches which have blue flag beach status and Salthill promenade are part of a range of coastal amenities which will continue to play an important recreation and tourism role in the City.



### **Marine Sector**

Galway has a strong maritime culture and tradition being located in an area with extensive coastline. The marine sector is an important asset to the economy with freight, cruise line tourism and fishing well established activities in the existing harbour.

This sector has huge potential for growth in Galway and the city can facilitate the realisation of the goals set out in '*Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth*' – *An Integrated Marine Plan for Ireland (2012)*.

Galway Harbour is ideally placed along the western seaboard to tap into emerging marine enterprises in particular, in the sustainable energy sector and off shore renewable energy.

The proposals for redevelopment and extension of Galway Harbour includes for commercial quays, a deep water docking facility, fishing quays and provision of marina and water based sport facilities. This project has the potential to contribute significantly to the economy of both the City and the region, increasing connectivity and contributing to the tourism, enterprise and off shore energy sectors.

There is also considerable scope for marine diversification into new applications for health, medicine and technology. Marine research at the Marine Institute in Oranmore linked with the environmental, marine and energy research at the Ryan Institute NUIG are key players in the future growth of this sector in the west region. The Socio-Economic Marine Research Unit (SEMRU) in NUIG and Marine and Freshwater Research Centre (MFRC) in GMIT also play an important role.

There are also significant amenity benefits within the marine sector with a range of beaches, open spaces and walkways offering tourism and leisure opportunities and enhancing health and well being. Biodiversity and environmental benefits are significant also, with high quality bathing waters, and a rich and diverse range of habitats and species reflected by the presence of two European Sites (Galway Bay SAC and Inner Galway Bay SPA) within the city.

## Key investment requirements

Notwithstanding the assets that Galway has, there are a range of key investment requirements in infrastructure and other projects needed in order to fulfil an effective role in the National Planning Framework, to successfully contribute to effective regional development and to support the development of Galway to flourish as a modern City Region. The list set out below includes both plans and projects which will support the wider region and to support a successful competitive, living city.

- Implementation of the *Galway Transport Strategy (2016)* which includes measures to enhance public transport and sustainable transportation and provision of the N6 Galway City Ring Road.
- Continued investment by Irish Water in critical infrastructure set out in the Galway Main Drainage Scheme and investment in the proposed Galway East Main Drainage.
- Investment in measures to address housing supply and demand set out in *Rebuilding Ireland*.
- Investment in provision of an enhanced regional health care service, developed to a modern standard to support existing and future population within the region.
- Continued investment in all levels of education.
- Investment in City Centre enhancement, urban renewal and public realm schemes.
- Investment to support future projects emanating from the Climate Change Adaptation Plan.
- Continued investment in broadband and hyper-connectivity measures.
- Development of the Ardaun LAP area as an eastern extension to the City to support high density residential development and mixed uses.
- Regeneration of the surplus lands at Ceannt Station to support a new City centre quarter, together with the redevelopment of the station as a major multi modal transport hub to serve the City and the wider region.
- Regeneration of the Inner Harbour area as a mixed use quarter and expansion of Galway Port facilities
- Regeneration of the Headford Road LAP area as a mixed use quarter adjacent to the City centre and NUIG and comprising a significant Local Authority land bank.
- Development of the Murrough LAP area for recreation and amenity and mixed uses.

- Successful delivery of the European Capital of Culture 2020 and its legacy.
- Implementation of the Public Realm Strategy for the City.
- Implementation of a Place Branding Strategy- that reflects the unique picture of the City at every level of interaction, reinforcing the image of the City as a desirable destination to live, work and visit.
- Provision of a range of community and social facilities and cultural infrastructure to meet the needs of an increased population.
- Development of the Galway Airport Site.
- Implementation of the objectives of the *Recreation and Amenity Needs Study* including investment in park and open space acquisition and continued provision of recreation facilities.
- Improvements to the rail network – supporting intercity connectivity, commuter rail and double tracking of the Galway to Athenry line.
- Development of the National Cycleway and greenway network.
- Implementation of the *Sailín to Silverstrand Coastal Protection Scheme* and Salthill Promenade upgrades.
- Implementation of the Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Programme and investment in measures to manage flood risk in the City.
- Continued support and investment for the implementation of environmental protection measures such as the River Basins Management Plans and measures to support improved bathing water quality.

## **Implementation of the National Planning Framework**

As highlighted in the *Issues and Choices* paper, successful implementation of the NPF will require statutory backing with robust legislation. It will be required to be embedded in all sectoral policy and investment plans across all government departments and agencies. Measures to ensure adherence and implementation of the NPF to 2040 will be required; these may include a role for the Office of the Planning Regulator and strengthening the role for regional governance.

At local level, it is considered that the existing local government framework is best placed for the effective delivery of the NPF. A critical factor in the success of the City to date has been the existence of a dedicated City Council which has enabled a clear, specialised and focussed urban policy approach. To enable the sustainable urban development envisaged by the NPF requires that dedicated city focus, which can continue to be provided by the City Council.

An implementation programme including measures for monitoring and evaluation should be developed in parallel to NPF.

## Environmental Assessments

The City Council welcome the preparation of environmental assessments as part of the NPF and have considered the SEA Scoping Report and make the following observations:

### Section 5 Scoping, Section 6 Preliminary Environmental Baseline

With regard to opportunities and challenges identified in Section 5 Scoping, it is suggested that the following are also taken into consideration in the preparation of the environmental baseline for the SEA of the NPF:

#### 5.3.3 Soil

- Opportunities for the protection of sites of geological importance.
- Challenges related to potential in-combination impacts on biodiversity, water, material assets (re waste management), cultural heritage and landscape.

#### 5.3.6 Climatic Factors

- The *National Climate Change Adaption Framework, 2012* as a key supporting national policy.

#### 5.3.8 Cultural Heritage

- Opportunities also for the enhancement of Ireland's cultural wealth.
- Challenges associated with protecting and enhancing linguistic heritage.

#### 5.3.9 Landscape

- Challenges associated with conserving areas of heritage value while enhancing landscape or recreational assets.

### Section 6 Proposed Framework for Assessing Environmental Effects

With regard to Table 7.1 Draft SEA objective and targets, it is suggested that the following are taken into consideration as SEA objectives and targets for the NPF:

- *Biodiversity, Flora and Fauna*: Consider including as an SEA objective to promote ecological awareness and biodiversity.
- *Climatic Factors*: Consider including as an SEA objective to manage adaption to climate change impacts and as an SEA target the integration of climate adaption plans in regional, county/City and local level land use plans.

### SEA Monitoring

As part of the development of an SEA monitoring programme for the NPF, consideration should be given to the development of indicators and monitoring arrangements that can also be applied to lower tier regional, county/City and local level land use plans. This would assist with SEA monitoring and lead to a more stream lined monitoring process for all tiers of land use plans.

## **Appendix 1 National Planning Framework Consultation**

### **Notes from NPF Workshop- GALWAY CITY COUNCIL 27<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2017**

#### **Attendee's**

Facilitator - Sean O'Riordain, Sean O'Riordain & Associates

Speakers- Denis Kelly, North West Regional Authority

Caroline Phelan, Planning Department, Galway City Council

Brendan McGrath, CE, Galway City Council

Councillor Noel Larkin, Mayor of Galway

Councillor Donal Lyons, Galway City Council

Councillor John Walsh, Galway City Council

Councillor Niall McNelis, Galway City Council

Councillor Pdraig Conneely, Galway City Council

Richard Manton, Galway City Community Network

Paul Carey, Port of Galway

Eamon Bradshaw, Port of Galway

Fergal Barry, Galway Mayo Institute of Technology.

Breda Fox, Galway Local Enterprise Office.

Declan Gibbons, Galway Film Centre

Declan Brassil, Galway City Partnership

Catherine Blewitt, IDA Ireland

Derrick Hambleton, Galway Association of An Taisce

Conor O'Dowd, Galway Chamber

Pat Hardiman, ICTU

Simon Heaslip, Galway West End

Anne O'Neill, HSE

Michelle Beirne, Planning Department, Galway City Council

Brenda Monaghan, Planning Department, Galway City Council

Brian Corcoran, Planning Department Galway City Council

Diane Egan, Planning Department, Galway City Council

Thomas Connell, Director of Services, Galway City Council

Edel McCormack, Director of Services, Galway City Council

Liam Blake, Planning Department, Galway City Council

Norann Keane, Planning Department, Galway City Council

Helen Coleman, Planning Department, Galway City Council

## General

- Encourage groups around the City to make submissions
- 1,000,000 extra people in Ireland in 2040, ¼ of these will be in Dublin, 1/5<sup>th</sup> of these will be over 65.
- By 2028 most of the heavy infrastructure should be in place to cater for extra million.
- NPF has to go to Oireachtas and will need a strong foundation.
- NPF needs to be a broad sectoral framework- not just a planning framework
- Ireland lacks strong tier two cities in comparison to Europe - Belfast and Cork are the only two Category two Cities. Galway has huge capacity for Galway to take more growth.
- Timelines should be put on projects to eliminate delays
- Need to create new vehicles/models – for SPV-Currently at local level frameworks are weak for implementation – need to have systems in place

## Galway

- Become a tier two City at the very least- Set a growth level ambition
- Galway should not be complacent -System need to be in place in GCC to ensure Galway can be vanguard in Europe.
- Galway can be one of the best regions in Western Europe - Look at opportunities in our region.
- Galway is extremely successful at attracting business and this brings problems if not planned properly.
- Need a charter for the City – across all sectors- based on the Leipzig Charter.
- Galway should look at connectivity with other cities -Athlone, Sligo, Letterkenny/Derry.

## Social framework

- What are the values inherent in the National Planning Framework?
- Needs to be much more than an economic framework needs social dimension to be addressed.
- Need to go back to the “City of equals”.
- Are underlying principles – equality should be the norm.
- Quality of life in City is paramount.

## Galway projects

- Galway City Ring Road Project
- Port redevelopment
- Ardaun
- Concert Hall
- Art Exhibition space
- Galway East Main Drainage Waste Water Treatment Plant
- Upgrade Salthill Promenade
- Implement Silver Strand to Sailín Coastal Protection scheme
- Improvements to Terryland Forest Park
- Development of recreational facilities.
- Construction of 60,000 seated stadium for the west region

## **Transportation and Accessibility**

- Galway needs to be a strong City – Greater accessibility is needed
- Ring Road needs priority and possibly plan for another ring road in the longer term post 2040
- 2024 estimate for Galway City Ring Road completion- will require 600 million capital investment
- Galway Port should be designated as a Tier 1 Port
- Port redevelopment – presently seeking approval
- Public transport is a big issue, lags behind Dublin, not properly connected to rural towns, needs to be improved – not good enough to have one bus a day from Tuam to Galway
- Rail – make it affordable for people to travel to Dublin and other destinations
- Double Tracking of the Athlone to Galway railway line is required
- Railway infrastructure required
- Upgrades to N59, R336, N17, N14/15- links to Port and Motorway
- Park & Ride is a transport solution – look at airport site
- More Bus lanes
- More rapid method of transport is needed.
- Knock Airport- important transport hub for the region- also Shannon.
- Current Parkmore congestion needs to be addressed

## **Housing**

- Shortage of houses (3,500 approx.) 25,000 required up to 2040. Smaller household sizes
- Ardaun is a key priority.
- Housing to be made more affordable

## **Education**

- Education is an important presence and a key to economic development eg. Limerick without UL would be a much weaker City.
- Technology institutes – create scale- all Institutes in the region- come together pooling resources and can more effectively generate leverage.
- Should be a focus on apprenticeships as well as third level in our schools
- NUIG and GMIT – are Innovation districts – have other campuses in the region and can expand to other areas.
- Third Level Education “new university needed possibly”

## **Employment**

- Industry – Need to develop the Ragoon industrial lands on the west side of the City.
- Galway Film industry – potential to have a regional film fund for west – gets support if working in west of Ireland- is a jobs rich sector.
- Industry changing hugely – RTE may be gone in 20 years
- Location doesn't matter – Technology transferable
- Skills, technology – great potential for new employment – media /entertainment
- Employment – need to spread work more evenly

## **Health**

- New hospital is required in the City.
- Not in UHG but in Merlin Park

## **Tourism**

- Tourism strong in the City - how can we drive this in region

## **Finance**

- Need to make provision for Revenue implications
- Desire for multi annual budgeting for capital investment plan – bring this up as a priority- cannot plan effectively on a one year basis – need longer term.
- Have good plans but no revenue dedication.

## **Broadband**

- Need comprehensive roll out of Broadband in the short term and roll out of newer technologies- hyper connectivity.
- Broadband will become outdated- need to look post Broadband – look at it like Finntech / Medtech.

## **Climate Change**

- Climate is changing – have to look at energy – electricity- electric cars/driverless cars.
- Agriculture – change emphasis to small type- address greenhouse gas emission.

## **Other**

- Brexit – will have a significant impact on all of Ireland – will increase costs for imports for retailers such as Tesco/M&S.
- Few people are aware of the NWRA or their role.
- Big challenge around communication

*Workshop concluded at 12.30 pm*

## **Meetings Schedule**

13<sup>th</sup> February 2017 – Council Meeting -Presentation on NPF from David Minton of CEO of NWRA and Caroline Phelan Senior Planner at GCC.

17<sup>th</sup> February- Attendance by CE and Elected Members at NPF launch in Sligo.

27<sup>th</sup> February 2017 - National Planning Framework Workshop Galway City Council

6<sup>th</sup> March- Council Meeting - Discussion of draft working document.

## Appendix 2 Range of Local Plans and Strategies (2015)



Figure 1. Policy framework used to prepare the Galway City Local Economic and Community Plan. \*in preparation