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Preface

The Draft Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029 sets out Galway City Council's policies for the sustainable development of Galway City to 2029. It has been prepared following extensive consultation with members of the public, statutory bodies and relevant stakeholders.

The process of reviewing the Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023 and preparing the new Draft Development Plan commenced on 7th January 2021 with an 8 week public consultation period. This coincided with Level 5 Covid-19 restrictions which prevented the planning authority from hosting any in person consultation events. Engagement with the public consultation process was supported by the publication of the Strategic Issues Paper – Our City, Our Future and a new online portal consult.galwaycity.ie which allowed members of the public to access the strategic issues paper, make a submission and read other submissions. A dedicated email address – devplan@galwaycity.ie was also set up for correspondence. Telephone queries were also encouraged and were a valuable form of interaction. To publicise the consultation process, bilingual press releases were issued to local media outlets and a series of print and radio advertisements issued throughout the 8 week consultation. A social media campaign was created on Galway City Council Twitter and Facebook pages along with the creation of a new hash tag #galwaydevplan to allow online discussion and to support engagement.

A total of 518 written submissions were received through the online portal, by email and by post. Members of the Development Plan and Policy team also participated in a series of virtual online community town hall meetings organised by the Galway City Community Network which cumulatively included for an attendance by over 400 participants. Consultation also included for a workshop with young people organised by Galway City Comhairle na nÓg and Galway City Youth Service with support from Galway City Council.

As part of the public consultation, the City Council canvassed the views of over 35 prescribed authorities which include government departments, the Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR), the Northern and Western Regional Assembly (NWRA) and Galway County Council. A range of consultation meetings were held with key stakeholders which included the OPR, Irish Water, Department of Education and Skills, Galway Chamber, Galway Harbour Authority and NUI Galway.

This extensive consultation raised a wide range of issues relating to the sustainable development of the city and a Chief Executive's Report was prepared for Elected Members to highlight points raised in the public consultation considered relevant to the overall strategy for the development of the city; provide policy recommendations and the broad policy structure for the Draft Plan. Following consideration of the Chief Executive's Report and policy recommendations by Elected Members this Draft Development Plan was prepared.

Legislative Background

The Draft Development Plan has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (as amended) and Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. The Planning and Development Act 2000 as amended sets out the mandatory requirements for content which must be included in the Development Plan. These include, inter alia, objectives for the zoning of land, the provision of infrastructure, the conservation and protection of the environment, and the integration of planning and sustainable development with the social, community and cultural requirements of the City and its population. The Act requires the preparation of a Core Strategy, consistent, as far as is practicable with the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Northern and Western Region 2020-2032.

Section 10 (1) of the Act provides that the Draft Plan shall set out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and shall consist of a written statement and a plan or plans indicating objectives for the area. Section 10(2)(n) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) requires that Development Plans include objectives to promote sustainable settlements and transportation strategies in urban and rural areas, to reduce energy demand in response to the likelihood of increases in energy and other costs due to long-term decline in non-renewable resources, reduce anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions, and address the necessity of adaptation to climate change through the location, layout and design of new development. The Planning Act also provides the statutory basis for protecting natural and cultural heritage and for the carrying out of Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA), a process by which the anticipated effects on the environment of a proposed development or project are measured.

In making the Draft Plan, the Act states that members shall be restricted to considering the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, the statutory obligations of any Local Authority in the area, and any relevant policies or objectives for the time being of the Government or any Minister of the Government.

In accordance with European and national legislation, Galway City Council carried out a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), an Appropriate Assessment (AA) and a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), all of which informed the Plan and have ensured full integration and consideration of environmental issues throughout each stage to date in the draft Development Plan process.

The SEA is the process by which environmental considerations are integrated into the preparation of plans and programmes. The results of the SEA were fully integrated into the preparation and making of the Draft Plan. The Environmental Report details the SEA carried out for this Draft Plan.

In accordance with requirements under Article 6 of EU Habitat Directive (43/92/EEC) and the EU Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) and Section 177 of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010, the impacts of the policies and objectives of all statutory land use policies on sites designated for the protection of nature under European legislation, the Natura 2000 network (referred to as European Sites), must be assessed as part of the process of drafting the Plan. The Appropriate Assessment (AA) is a focused and detailed assessment of the implications of the Draft Plan on the integrity of relevant European Sites in view of their conservation objectives. The Natura Impact Report (NIR) has been produced to support the Appropriate Assessment of the Draft Plan. The NIR finds that the Draft Plan has the potential to result in impacts to the integrity of European Sites, if unmitigated. The risks to the safeguarding and integrity of the qualifying interest and conservation objectives of the European Sites have been addressed by the inclusion of mitigation measures that will prioritise the avoidance of impacts in the first place and mitigate impacts where these cannot be avoided. Having incorporated mitigation measures, it is considered that the Draft Plan will not have a significant adverse effect on the integrity of European Sites.

The City Council will ensure that any plan/project and any associated works in the City, individually or in combination with other plans or projects, are subject to AA Screening to ensure there are no likely significant effects on the integrity (defined by the structure and function) of relevant European Sites and that the requirements of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the EU Habitats Directive are fully satisfied. Where a plan/project is likely to have a significant effect on a European Site or there is uncertainty with regard to effects, it shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment. The plan/project will proceed only after it has been ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site or where, in the absence of alternative solutions, the plan/project is deemed imperative for reasons of overriding public interest, all in accordance with the provisions of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the EU Habitats Directive.

Strategic Policy Framework

The Plan sets out a strategy for the city within the context of various national and regional level strategies, plans and guidelines that impact on proper planning and sustainable development. Those with the most direct effect on the formulation of the core development strategy are summarised hereunder.

- *UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)* as set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development '*Transforming our World*'. It includes 17 SDGs reflecting economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. Each chapter will include UN Sustainable Development Goals to show the alignment between the chapters and the goals.
- *Project Ireland 2040* establishes a spatial planning framework for Ireland and comprises of the National Development Plan (NDP) 2021- 2030 and the National Planning Framework (NPF) a high level strategy to guide development and investment up to 2040.
- *Climate Action Plan 2021* sets out Ireland's commitment to achieve a 51% reduction in overall greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and to reach net-zero emissions by no later than 2050, as committed to in the Climate Act 2021.
- *Smarter Travel, A Sustainable Transport Future, 2009-2020*, sets out government policy towards the development of sustainable transport and travel. Its implementation will also assist in meeting Ireland's international obligations towards tackling climate change. This is in the process of being replaced by a Sustainable Mobility Framework Policy, but remains the primary policy at the time of this Draft Plan.
- *Northern and Western Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES), 2020-2032* sets out a strategic regional planning framework for the Northern and Western regions and reinforces the National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs) and the Regional Planning Objectives (RPOs). The RSES supports the role of the City as a Regional City and a key economic driver for the Northern and Western Region.
- *Galway Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) 2020-2032*, identifies the key infrastructure, services and facilities that will be required to support sustainable city growth and regeneration. It gives direction on how the NPF population targets can be met in accordance with the principles of sustainable development with the aim to deliver compact growth.
- *Galway City Council Climate Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024*, sets out Galway City Council's short and medium term objectives for the adaptation to climate change. The strategy is based on four main themes: critical infrastructure and buildings, natural and cultural capital, water resources and flood risk management and community services and sets out specific actions under each.
- *Galway Transport Strategy (GTS) 2016-2036*, aims to address current and future transport requirements in the city and county catchment area. Investment projects over the lifetime of the plan are in line with good planning principles and aligned with the settlement and development strategy for the city.
- *Galway Public Realm Strategy (2019)*, sets out a vision and strategy for improvements to guide future investment and development in the network of public and green spaces in the centre of the city. It focuses on creating a high quality public realm in favour of pedestrians and cyclists.
- *Galway City Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2015-2021*, sets out objectives and actions to promote and support economic, local and community development both by Galway City Council itself and in partnership with other economic and community development stakeholders.

- *Ministerial Guidelines and Directives*, including those on Core Strategies, sustainable urban housing, creation of sustainable residential developments, urban design, retail, apartment design, the provision of schools, childcare facilities, flood risk management, SEA, architecture conservation, appropriate assessment and Urban Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets.
- *Housing Supply Target Methodology for Development Planning* (2020) and the follow up document *'Guidance on the Preparation of a Housing Need and Demand Assessment'* (2020) and the DHLGH methodology known as the HNDA Tool (2021). The output of the HNDA tool was used in the preparation of the *Galway City Housing Strategy and Housing Need and Demand Assessment 2023-29*.

Structure and Format of Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029

The Draft Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029 is presented in three sections:

1. Main policy document, which is arranged in topic-based chapters intended to make policies on particular issues easier to find. It is arranged as follows:

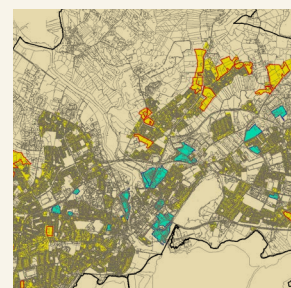
Volume 1 includes the written statement that consists of:

- Introduction sets out the role of the Draft City Development Plan, its statutory basis and includes the Core Strategy. The Core Strategy sets out an overarching strategy for the spatial development of the city over the medium to longer term and will form the basis for policies and objectives throughout the Plan. It translates the strategic planning framework set out in the NPF and the RSES to city level.
- Chapters 2 to 11 set out detailed policies and objectives under a range of specific topics.
- Chapter 11 incorporates land use zoning objectives and development management standards and guidelines to be applied to future development proposals in the city.
- Chapters set out the overall planning context for and framework for the related policies and specific objectives. Policies are the Council's general objectives on a topic basis while specific objectives are more area/site specific relating to various land-uses and/or project proposals.
- Appendices included in the policy document comprise of; 1) Implementation and Monitoring, 2) Statement of Compliance with Ministerial Guidelines, 3) List of Protected Structures in the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) and 4) the Glossary & Acronyms.

Structure of the Draft City Development Plan



Volume 1:
Main Policy Document



Volume 2:
Maps



Volume 3:
Environmental Assessments
SEA, NIR & SFRA

- There are also two separate supporting documents that accompany Volume 1, which are the Housing Strategy and the Housing Need Demand Assessment (HNDA) (August 2021) and the Urban Density and Building Height Study (September 2021).
2. Volume Two consists of the following maps and provides the graphic representation of the policies and objectives in the main policy document. These are:
- City Centre Map - Land Use Zoning and Objectives, scale 1:2,500
 - Overall City Map - Land use Zoning and Objectives, scale 1:10,000
3. Volume 3 consists of the associated Environmental Assessments of the Plan including, the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Environmental Report, Natura Impact Report (NIR) and the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA).

Local Planning

Where appropriate, the policies of the Plan will be developed in more detail at a local level through Local Area Plans, Area Plans and Framework Plans. A Local Area Plan is in place for Ardaun (2018-2024) with proposed Local Area Plans for Murrough and Headford Road area and area plans for Castlegar and Menlough.