

Uimhir Thagarta Uathúil: GLWC-C2-147

Údar: Galway City Community Network

Stádas: Submitted

Aighneacht:

Galway City SDG Working Group Policy Submission on SDGs in the
Draft Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029

Comhairliúchán:

Dréachtphlean Forbartha Chathair na Gaillimhe 2023-2029

Chapter 5: Natural Heritage, Recreation and Amenity

Caibidil: Imleabhar 1 » Caibidil 5: Oidhreacht Nádurtha, Áineas agus
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Chapter 5 Natural Heritage, Recreation and Amenity

Chapter 5 contains an audit of various ecosystems in Galway city and its environs, including both green and blue spaces, community spaces, and agricultural lands that serve as reservoirs, and corridors that support biodiversity (pp. 119-120 & 126-8). Of relevance to **SDG 13, Climate Action, SDG 14, Life Under the Water** and **SDG 15 Life on Land**, Galway city and its environs are noted to contain ecosystems that support biodiversity and climate change mitigation potential through carbon sequestration, which also require management and planning to conserve resources and manage climate related impacts such as flooding and biodiversity loss (pp. 117 & 130).

This is a significant task as Galway has one of the highest percentages of protected habitat in Ireland at 29%[1], however the quality of conservation is unfavourable in 91% of EU protected habitats across Ireland[2]. It is noted that it is the intent of GCC to protect the environment by ensuring that planning, adaption and mitigation activities and development respect a number of European Directives including Habitats, Birds, Water Framework and Floods Directives (p.118). This addresses the requirement of **SDG 14**, to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development and **SDG 15** to Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss. Demonstrating that this has been achieved will require some consideration.

For example, in relation to **SDG 15, Life on Land** GCC intends to ensure the conservation and restoration of biodiversity by protecting the quality of the city's open spaces and natural resources and linking them together into a green network to provide for their sustainable management and enhancement. A primary commitment in the National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021, which has been integrated into the Galway City Biodiversity Action Plan 2014-2024, is to move to a level of no net loss of biodiversity through implementation of actions including for mitigation measure (p.117). This can be indicated by demonstrating compliance to SDG GFI 15.9.1 (a) established national targets in accordance with national biodiversity strategies and action plans and the progress reported towards these targets; and (b) integration of biodiversity into national accounting and reporting systems, defined as implementation of the System of Environmental-Economic Accounting.

Also, of relevance to **SDG 15**, urban woodlands and trees are recognised as an important resource in the city and environs (p.134) and it is stated that sustainable management of this resource will be implemented going forward (pp.134 & 141). SDG GFI 15.1 required that by 2020 the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and

inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, is ensured in line with obligations under international agreement. The indicators are forest area as a proportion of total land area (SDG GFI 15.1.1) and the rate of progress towards sustainable forest management (SDG GFI 15.2.1). It would be useful in particular to know whether this has been SDG GFI 15.1.1. has been achieved, as a baseline to considering the progress towards sustainable management (SDG GFI 15.1.2). What constitutes sustainable management would need to be defined, in order for progression towards this goal to be assessed.

This chapter also contains a consideration of invasive species and notes that legislative controls are in place under the EU (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 recognising the adverse impacts of these species on the environment and economy (p.128). It may be the case that the SDG GFI (15.8) the introduction of measures to prevent and significantly reduce the impact of invasive alien species on land and water ecosystems and control or eradicate the priority species by 2020 has already been achieved as the indicator is the proportion of countries adopting relevant national legislation and adequately resourcing the prevention or control of invasive alien species (SDG GFI 15.8.1). If this is the case an audit of biodiversity will also be of relevance here, to support an outline of relevant measures in place and an assessment of the outcomes of any actions prescribed in order to demonstrate if resourcing is adequate.

[1] <https://irelandsdg.geohive.ie/apps/irelands-life-on-land/explore>

[2] National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021

Príomh-thuairim:

- That the SDG Framework of Indicators should be better integrated into the document to ensure that progression towards these goals can be measured and barriers can be addressed.

Príomh-iarratais:

- Monitoring plays a crucial role in understanding how effective the Development Plan objectives are in contributing to Ireland's commitment to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. The Council will establish a methodology, based on a selection of appropriate indicators from the SDG Global Framework indicators. Therefore, each chapter should include actions and name the specific targets and indicators from the Global Indicator Framework which they relate to.
- These appropriate indicators will be included in Appendix 1 (p.327) and integrated into the methodology outlined in the Draft Strategic Environmental Assessment Report (p.60) and plan arising from a Public Sector Duty Assessment.
- GCC will undertake its required Public Sector Duty Assessment, across all aspects of the Councils responsibilities, within year 1 of the new plan. The plans and actions developed to address issues raised in the equality and human rights assessment will include the appropriate SDG indicators.
- The Chief Executive's two-year report will include a review of the progress achieved in relation to the SDGs and any recommendations necessary to ensure that Ireland's commitment to achieve the SDGs by 2030 will be realised.
- GCCN, as the Public Participation Network for Galway City should be named as a key stakeholder as provided for in the Local Government Reform Act 2014.
- The actions of this plan should integrate 'Target 16.7: 'Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels' within Appendix 1: Implementation and Monitoring to center meaningful engagement of communities and young people in the implementation and monitoring of the plan.

Main reasons:

The attainment of the SDGs is of crucial importance towards mitigating crises in the future, and securing the human rights of citizens, so cannot be separated from Public Sector Duty.

Ceangaltáin:

GLWC-C2-147-2705 - SDG Indicators and Rights Relevant to GCDP .pdf