

CHIEF EXECUTIVE MONTHLY REPORT MÁRTA / MARCH 2023



TUARASCÁIL AN PHRÍOMHFHEIDHMEANNAIGH
CHIEF EXECUTIVE’S REPORT
MÁRTA / MARCH 2023

Do Gach Ball do Chomhairle Cathrach na Gaillimhe,

Re: Agenda Item 4(a)(ii) Chief Executive’s Report

A Chara,

I set out hereunder the Chief Executive’s monthly management report, as provided for under Section 136(2) of the Local Government Act 2001, as amended. The Report outlines the current position on strategic and other issues, on the Council’s financial position and on matters arising from the previous meeting of Galway City Council.

1. Transport.....	3
2. Housing.....	19
3. Recreation & Amenity	24
4. Economic & Culture & Community & Sports Partnership.....	39
5. Environment & Climate Change	71
6. Financial Report.....	77
7. Other Issues.....	79
8. Notable Dates.....	86

1. Transport

1.1 Report on consultation on Dublin Road BusConnects project,

The second Non-Statutory Consultation for the Project which ran from 13th January to the 10th of February has now concluded.

There was a high level of engagement at the open public consultation event in the Renmore Community Centre on Monday 23rd January as well as online. Over 100 submissions were received through the virtual room online. Numerous meetings with potential effected landowners, residential groups and interested parties and stakeholders have been undertaken.

The response to the public consultation was extremely supportive of the proposals. The consultants for the project are preparing a consultation report and examining the suggestions and proposals for inclusion in the preliminary design where appropriate.

Upcoming Works include Detailed update of Programme, Preferred Option design and drawings, Close out of Option Selection Report, Close out Phase 2 Project Appraisal, Issue Tree Survey, Commencement of Appropriate Assessment, Natura Impact Statement and Continue to progress drainage design, utility design and geotechnical assessment.

1.2 Options report on reinstatement of former Clifden Railway Bridge with a Pedestrian /Cycle Bridge

AECOM Consulting Engineers have completed a Structures Options Report for the proposed Clifden Railway Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge. It is proposed to present this report and its findings to Councillors at the March Council Meeting.

1.3 Update on Pedestrian Cantilever Bridge at Wolfe Tone Bridge

Ryan Hanley Consulting Engineers are appointed as multi-disciplinary consulting engineers to oversee the detail design and construction of this project. The project is at detail design stage and is progressing well. It is anticipated that a preferred contactor will be identified in Q2 2023.

1.4 Rapid Build Active Travel Advice

In February 2023, the National Transport Authority issued the NTA Active Travel Circular 01/23 - Rapid Build Advice Note. The advice note provides guidance on the

delivery of Active Travel schemes to facilitate the delivery of Climate Action Plan Targets by 2025.

To achieve these targets, the NTA is introducing a change in approach for the Active Travel Programme and Cost Effective Rapid Build construction, including road space reallocation, are now required to be the first design option considered in any new active travel infrastructure project funded by the NTA. This approach aims to address the increased cost of traditional “building line to building line” construction which makes this target challenging to achieve with the allocated budget. In addition, the planning process for many of these larger traditional build projects is slow and will limit our ability to hit Climate Action Plan targets in a timely manner.

Rapid Build active travel facilities are schemes that utilise cost-effective measures to deliver walking and cycling infrastructure quicker than traditional (full build) construction methods. They do not typically involve major construction works such as full road reconstruction or significant changes to drainage systems or relocation of utilities etc. however they may involve changes to kerb lines and minor drainage works. The works will also be typically within the boundaries of the existing roadway which can simplify the planning process, which positively effects project programme and delivery. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Road markings/traffic restrictions.
- Narrowing/converting general traffic lanes to active travel facilities.
- Converting on-street parking to active travel facilities.
- Creating Traffic Free streets; and
- Redesigning junctions to provide greater capacity for walking, cycling and public transport.



1.5 Galway Cycle Network Update

1.5.1 Eglinton Canal

Galway City Council commenced a tender for the works on Eglinton Canal as previously advised. Detailed design and preparation of the tender documentation has been completed and tenders for the main works are scheduled for return in March 2023 and it is anticipated that a contractor will be appointed in May and works completed in the current year.

1.5.2 Bothar Stiofain

Part 8 planning documentation, including EIA and AA Screening report have been drafted for the scheme. Design drawings of the routes are currently being finalised. Discussions with landowners along the route have commenced with respect to land acquisition. GCC are currently in the process of engaging Valuations Services to inform the scheme costs, prior to submission of all statutory process documentation to the National Transport Authority for review and approval. On receipt of approval, a formal Part 8 planning application will be lodged with the planning authority for the scheme.

1.5.3 Ballyloughane

This proposal remains on the agenda of the Council Meeting for consideration by Members.

1.5.4 Doughiska Road South

Construction of the Doughiska South Cycle Network Scheme commenced in December 2022 with works ongoing along the route. The construction programme for the scheme is nine months. Most of the works between the coast road and the Railway level crossing have been completed. Works north of the railway are ongoing.

1.5.5 Ballybane / Castlepark

Part 8 planning documentation, including EIA and AA Screening report have been drafted and a pre-planning meeting has been held on Friday 24th of February 2023. GCC are currently in the process of engaging Valuations Services to inform the scheme costs, prior to submission of all statutory process documentation to the National Transport Authority for review and approval. On receipt of Gateway Approval from the NTA, we will proceed with a Part 8 Process under the Planning and Development Regulation for this scheme.

1.6 Barna Greenway

ARUP Consulting Engineers on behalf of Galway City Council have carried out a review of the preliminary design stage of the Bearna Greenway Project which was completed in 2017. This report is now available at the below link;

<https://www.galwaycity.ie/bearna-greenway-scheme>

This report concluded;

1. A wider study area should be proposed and assessed.
2. Scheme vision, aims and objections should be reaffirmed/updated given changes in national and local policy.
3. Routes Options Assessment shall be consistent with the Common Appraisal Framework.
4. Review strategy in relation to land acquisition.
5. Update environmental reports for current legislation/standards.

The above will be considered within the scope of the review of the GTS. It should also be noted that the National Transport Authority have not provide a budget allocation for this scheme in 2023.

1.7 Review of Galway Transport Strategy

The National Transport Authority have issued to tender for the appointment of consultants to undertake a review of the Galway Transport Strategy. Bolton page for the receipt of tenders what's the 31st of January 2023.

1.8 NTA review of City Bus routes / licences

The National Transport Authority are undertaking a review of the city bus routes. They have indicated that they will go to public consultation in April and an information session will be held with Councillors in conjunction with the public consultation.

1.9 Martin Roundabout update

The construction of Martin Junction Upgrade is continuing on site. Surfacing works are progressing well with recent night works to tie in the main body of the junction. Traffic signalling works have commenced with poles and signal heads being installed and electrical work ongoing. Works are scheduled to be substantially completed in April subject to ESB connections. Landscaping works will continue post activation of the main signals.

1.10 Parkmore Access Improvements - update

1.10.1 Parkmore Bus Priority Scheme

The Parkmore Bus Priority Scheme is currently at detailed design stage. The consultants, DBFL, are progressing the scheme and are currently finalising the detailed design and preparing construction tender documents.

The topographical and Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) surveys have been undertaken. IGSL have been awarded the contract to undertake Site Investigation works for the project.

The tender for construction of the project is expected to be advertised in late Q2 2023 with Construction beginning in Q4 2023.

1.10.2 Parkmore Internal Bus Re-Routing

Draft Part 8 documents for the Parkmore Internal Bus Route Project have been completed. The project is located within the Galway County Council administrative boundary and Galway City Council are leading the project under a Section 85 agreement with Galway County Council. Therefore, the Part 8 for the project will go to Galway County Council for approval.

There is a meeting scheduled this week between the City, County and the IDA to progress the project through the Part 8 process in the coming months.

1.11 CFRAM – Coirib go Cósta Galway City Flood Relief Scheme Update

The Coirib go Cósta Galway City Flood Relief Scheme is currently in the options development stage of the project. The revised Hydraulic model and the subsequent damage assessment are being finalised currently. Extensive non statutory public engagement will take during the optioneering stage throughout 2023. The scheme programme is currently under review in conjunction with the outcomes from the modelling process and a programme update will issue in the next period. This project is funded by the Office of Public Works.

1.12 Salmon Weir pedestrian bridge update

The finishing works are well underway and these include; pavement construction, ramps construction, completion of handrails and decking, masonry wall construction, public lighting, services and landscaping. The project is on programme and is scheduled to be open to the public before Summer 2023.

The works require that Newtownsmith Road is closed up to the 31st of March 2023.

Photo below shows current progress as of 24.02.2023:



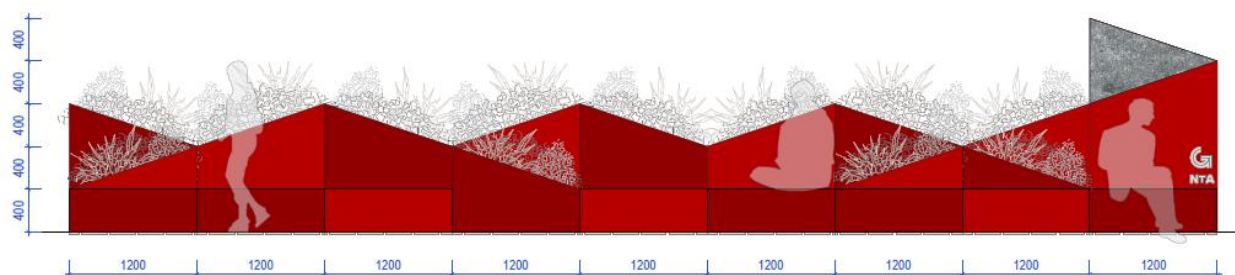
1.13 Parklets

Galway City Council (GCC) in conjunction with the National Transport Authority (NTA) is proposing to install 2no. parklet prototypes at the following locations:

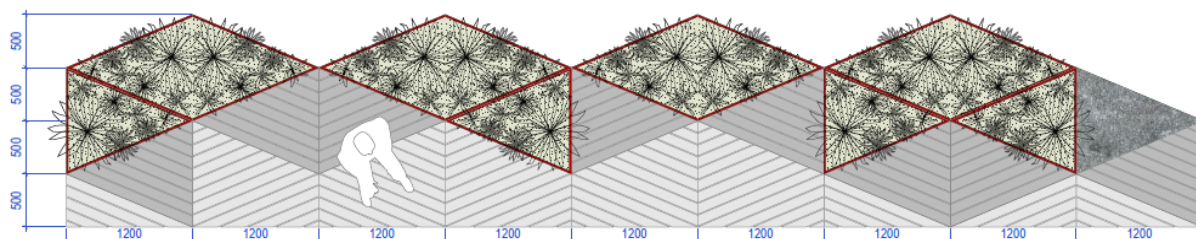
- 1no. parklet prototype on Middle Street
- 1no. parklet prototype on Dominic Street

Following the development of an innovative design tender process, a designer / Architect was awarded the contract to develop a design for the prototype units. GCC appointed a steel fabricator to manufacture and install the prototype units and the units are proposed to be installed late March '23. All works will be funded by the NTA.

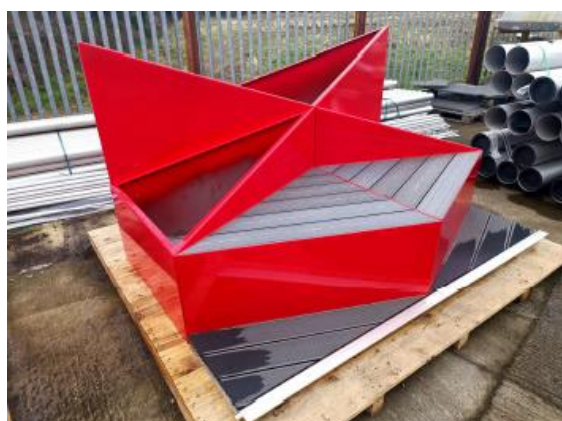
The parklets will be made of robust, high quality, durable materials. Materials such as stainless steel, recycled composite plastic decking and limestone cladding have been proposed to ensure longevity. A number of the units will be planted with greenery which will create a unique and welcoming environment. The parklet prototypes will be modular structures which can be dismantled and relocated to other locations if required. Each parklet will take up 2 parking spaces and will be accessible to a wide range of users, including those with mobility challenges.



Proposed Footpath Elevation



Proposed Plan



Parklet Prototype Samples

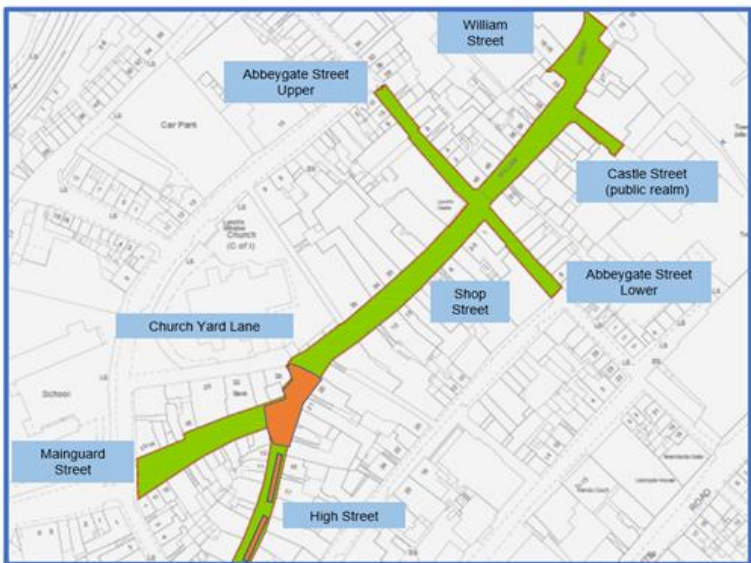
To develop the project and gauge public opinion GCC will be initially progressing with 2 No. Parklet Prototypes at the locations identified above. If the feedback is positive GCC will be proposing to install further parklets across the city centre and Salthill area and will be engaging with the public to identify future locations.

1.14 Fr. Griffin Road / The Crescent

The Fr. Griffin Road / The Crescent Upgrade scheme is currently in the internal consultation phase within Galway City Council and subject to approvals it is envisaged to go out to Statutory Part 8 planning in Quarter 2 of 2023.

1.15 Update on proposals for reinstatement of final phases of Shop Street, High Street, Quay Street

City Centre Pedestrian Area Rehabilitation

Street Rehabilitation and Drainage upgrade works, Shop Street / High Street – Contract No. 9 – Phase 7	
Galway City Council Transportation Section are proceeding with the next phase of the City Centre Pedestrian Area Rehabilitation. Tenders issued to the market in early February have been returned and are currently under review. Local businesses and stakeholders in the immediate vicinity of the works area have been informed of the planned works and engagement will continue throughout this project. Details including scope of works and location are included hereunder.	
 Works Location: Shop Street/High Street	
Contract Details:	Scope of the works:
Contractors Tenders: Currently under assessment Commencement date: Monday March 20th, 2023 Duration of Contract 10 weeks	Remove existing pavement. Remove soft ground where necessary. Drainage upgrade Underground services upgrade Subgrade pavement replacement Temporary surfacing

Design is progressing on the remaining phases, with further works to commence in Q4 2023 and remainder of works to commence in early 2024.

1.16 Footpaths and permeability infrastructure

Scope currently being developed to compile a brief for consultants, to provide recommendations on infrastructure required to improve permeability, encourage active travel and support development on residentially zoned sites. This would include footpaths, public lighting, and cycleways where deemed feasible. The scope will also include targeted existing residential development that lacks adequate infrastructure. It is planned to have a brief finalised by the end of Q2 2023.

1.17 Electric Vehicle's (EV) and Charging Infrastructure

1.17.1 Public EV Chargers

GCC procured Arup as a consultant to aid in the development of a Public EV Charger Policy Document. A presentation was delivered to both Transportation & Infrastructure and Climate Action, Environment, Recreation and Amenity SPC's in February to engage with the members at the outset of the Policy development, to take any comments or questions that need to be investigated and considered as part of the Policy development. It is planned to have a draft Policy in place over the coming months.

1.17.2 GCC EV Fleet

Following the successful introduction of 8no electric vehicles to our fleet in 2021, the Fleet Management Unit have purchased a further 12no Peugeot e-Expert electric vehicles through the OGP framework. The transition of our fleet away from fossil fuel energy sources to greener alternatives forms part of the Galway City Council Climate Action Plan and highlights our commitment to supporting climate change mitigation and improving air quality. Our EV charging infrastructure is being upgraded to facilitate the transition. We expect to see the new vehicles on Galway City streets in March 2023.

1.18 Operations & Maintenance

1.18.1 2023 Regional and Local Roads Grants - Department of Transport

The Department of Transport grant allocations in respect of maintenance and improvement of regional and local roads for 2023 issued on 14th February 2023. The total 2023 grant allocation for Galway City Council is **€3,176,540**.

The total allocation is made under eight grant categories with the Restoration Improvement programme continuing to be the primary focus with a grant allocation of €1,791,000.

1.18.2 2023 National Road Grant Allocations – Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII)

The 2023 TII grant allocations in respect of national roads issued on 16th February 2023 with a total allocation to Galway City Council of **€647,989**.

The allocation is made under two headings:

- Capital Investment – Protection & Renewal & Active Travel (Allocation of €450,000)
- Current Maintenance - Protection & Renewal (Allocation of €197,989)
Separate allocations for national primary and national secondary routes, and further sub-division across ordinary maintenance, route lighting, and winter maintenance.

1.18.3 Speed Limit Review

Notice was issued to the Commissioner, An Garda Síochána in accordance with section 9(3)(b) of the Road Traffic Act 2004 in respect of the Draft Galway City Council Special Speed Limits Bye-Laws No. 1, 2023.

The R338 Coast Road has been removed from the Second Schedule of the Draft Bye-Laws which prescribes the roads with a special speed limit of 80 km/h. This is in accordance with the motion approved by Council at the Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on 9th January 2023.

A public notice in respect of the Draft Bye-Laws was published on 2nd March 2023 in the Galway Advertiser, Irish Independent & Irish Times.

The notice and the Draft Bye-Laws Schedules and Map may also be downloaded from the Galway City Council website www.galwaycity.ie

A copy of the Draft Bye-Laws documentation is also available for inspection at Reception in City Hall.

Objections to the Draft Bye-Laws may be made by email to roads@galwaycity.ie or in writing to Patrick Greene, Director of Service by any person not later than 4.00 p.m. on Monday, the 3rd April, 2023 and any such objections shall be considered by the council prior to making the Bye-Laws.

1.18.4 Road Surfacing Repair Works

Road surfacing repairs have been completed at the following locations:

- College Road
- Ragoon Road

Pothole repairs are also being carried out across the city in addition to the above.

1.18.5 Mobility Improvement Works

Mobility improvement works and footpath repairs are being carried out at the following locations:

- McDermott Avenue
- Ballymoneen Road
- Seacrest Road
- Shangort Road
- Connolly Avenue

1.18.6 Footpaths

Footpath reconstruction works commenced on Forster Street on 30th January 2023 and works are still ongoing.

1.18.7 Proactive Drainage Maintenance

Proactive drainage maintenance is being carried across the city throughout the year to combat any potential risk of flooding.

1.18.8 Flood Protection & Storm Preparedness

Operations and Maintenance are prepared for any storm forecast over the remainder of the winter/ storm season with flood barriers in place and sandbags at the ready. We are continually monitoring any potential flooding risks across the city.

1.18.9 Winter Maintenance

Salting and Gritting continues across the city's priority national, regional & local routes. This is continuously monitored during the winter season with salt stocks monitored and crews prepared in the event of predicted low temperatures.

1.18.10 Bridge Maintenance Works

Tender documents were issued for the appointment of a contractor to undertake bridge maintenance/rehabilitation works.

1.19 Climate Action

1.19.1 NetZeroCities Pilot Cities programme

Galway City Council Secures €1 million grant as part of European Union NetZeroCities Pilot Cities programme.



Galway City Council is delighted to announce that we have been successful in securing a €1 million grant as part of the European Union NetZeroCities Pilot Cities programme. Pilot Cities will implement systemic and locally-designed, innovative actions across multiple areas, including buildings, waste, and levers of change such as governance, finance and policy. Galway is the only Irish city participating in the programme. NetZeroCities funding will support Galway City Council to achieve Climate Action targets, through a focus on the built environment, specifically on addressing system barriers to the retrofit of buildings. Galway City Council will now lead out on the process of grant preparation, to finalise the grant funding by May 2023.

Galway City Council is supported in this ambitious application by Atlantic Technological University, University of Galway, Galway Chamber, Galway Harbour Company, Northern and Western Regional Assembly, Westside Resource Centre, Westside Sustainable Energy Community-Galway Energy Co-operative, Western Development Commission and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

Galway City Council would like to thank all stakeholders for their support, collaboration and co-ordination in preparing a robust, successful, application. We welcome the opportunity to engage and learn with our stakeholders, over the course of the pilot.

Read more about NetZeroPilotCities at Pilot-Cities-Announcement-Press-Release-Mar-2023-Final.pdf , <https://tinyurl.com/mr45beek> or <https://netzerocities.eu/>

1.19.2 Local Authority Climate Action Plan

Pursuant to the provisions the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 to 2021, and Section 14B(2)(a) thereof, Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications

Eamon Ryan TD has requested that all Local Authorities make its first Local Authority Climate Action Plan (LACAP) which must be completed within 12 months of the receipt of this request. The LACAP will address mitigation and adaptation in an integrated way and strengthen the alignment between national and international climate policy and the delivery of effective climate action at local and community levels. Further, it will play a significant role in reinforcing the commitment by the local government sector to lead out on climate action at local and national levels.

Three specialist climate action resources have been approved namely, Climate Action Coordinator, Climate Action Officer and a Community Climate Action Officer

1.19.3 Energy Team

The 11th meeting of Galway City Council Energy team took place where all attendees were introduced to the Regional Energy Bureau team. The 2023 work programme was discussed with all departments.

1.19.4 Climate Action Training

The Local Authority Climate Action Training Programme continues to assist Local Authorities continue their key role in supporting and coordinating efforts across the network of Local Authorities to build capacity and expertise, and to improve climate literacy and local government's contribution to Irelands climate ambition.

1.20 2023 Grant Allocations to Local Authorities for National Roads, Active Travel and Greenways

The Allocations are made by Transport Infrastructure (TII) having regard to the priorities set out in the National Development Plan 2021-2030 (the “NDP”), the objectives of the Climate Action Plan 2023, other national policies, and the terms and conditions set by the Minister for Transport (the “Minister”) pursuant to the Roads Acts 1993 to 2015. TII is focussed on delivering its statutory duty to secure a safe and efficient network of national roads having regard to the needs of all users. TII is also responsible for overseeing the delivery of a programme of national and regional greenways, pursuant to an agreement between the Minister and the Board of TII.

TII has the function, under the Transport (Railway Infrastructure) Act 2001, to provide, or secure the provision, of light railway and metro infrastructure, on behalf of the National Transport Authority (NTA) or otherwise on behalf of the Minister. To that end, the NTA allocates capital funding to TII for the delivery of Luas projects and the MetroLink project. TII’s light railway and metro functions are not within the scope of coverage of this booklet.

The delivery of the national roads New Roads programme is important for TII’s stakeholders, especially the Local Authorities because it safeguards and improves the performance, reliability and safety of the overall network enabling the mobility of people and goods across the country. Generally, City and County Development Plans, which are statutory plans made by Local Authorities, have key strategic dependencies on the delivery of infrastructure, including national roads New Roads, and Protection and Renewal. For instance, in cities, towns and villages, the reallocation of road space for active travel and Town Centres First improvements, depends on the delivery of bypasses for national roads that currently traverse urban areas.

The Minister has notified TII that the Exchequer Capital Allocation for national roads for 2023 will be €254 million for Asset Protection and Renewal, and €237 million for New Roads. An Exchequer Current Allocation is being provided for national roads maintenance of €34.85 million. A separate Exchequer Capital Allocation is being provided for Greenways of €63 million. TII supplements Exchequer grants through income received from public tolling on the M50 and through revenue share arrangements from PPPs.

The indicative Exchequer Capital Allocation for New Roads in 2024, notified by the Minister to TII, is approximately €145 million. The amount of the Exchequer Capital Allocation for any given year of the NDP is a key factor in determining the timing of delivery and rate of progress of national roads programmes and projects.

1.21 Department of Transport Circular RW 02/2023 Regional and Local Road Grant Allocations 2023

The Department of Transport issued a circular regarding grant allocations to Galway City Council in respect of the maintenance and improvement of regional and local roads. The total grant allocation in 2023 under this Circular is €626 million.

2. Housing

2.1 Local Authority Home Loan changes to take effect from 1 March 2023

The Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh O'Brien TD, announced on the 7th of February 2023, the prices of homes eligible for a Local Authority Home Loan and income limits of those eligible to apply for a loan are being increased.

The following changes to the Local Authority Home Loan will come into effect on 01 March 2023:

- increase from €320,000 to €360,000 – Dun Laoghaire Rathdown, South Dublin, Dublin City, Fingal, Wicklow, Kildare
- ***increase from €320,000 to €330,000 – Galway City, Cork City, Louth, Meath, Galway County, Cork County***
- increase from €250,000 to €300,000 – Limerick, Waterford, Clare, Wexford, Westmeath, Kilkenny
- increase from €250,000 to €275,000 – Offaly, Laois, Monaghan, Cavan, Donegal, Tipperary, Kerry, Mayo, Roscommon, Sligo, Leitrim, Longford, Carlow

Increased income limits for all applicants in each local authority area

- increase from €50,000 and €65,000 to €70,000 for all single applicants nationwide.
- increase from €75,000 to €85,000 for all joint applicants nationwide.

2.2 Traveller Accommodation Plan Update

A mid-term review of the Traveller Accommodation Plan 2019- 2024 was completed in June 2022 as per circular letter issued by the Department in July 2022 to have the mid-term review completed no later than 31st August, 2022. At that point Delivery of accommodation supports over the 3 year period of the Programme to June 2022 has been **134** housing supports against an overall target for that period of 163 individual accommodation supports representing a delivery against target of 82%. After year 3 of the programme, 55% of overall targets have been achieved. It should be noted that the delivery of standard Local Authority and Approved Housing Body homes is more than what was initially planned and by year 3 of the 5-year programme the overall target for those two categories has been exceeded combined figures show the targets were set at 80 and by June 2022 the number of allocations stood at 98. This trend will continue and by the end of the lifetime of TAP, Galway City Council will have more than exceeded this target. While delivery is robust regarding standard social housing, the delivery of Culturally Specific Traveller Accommodation and Group Housing Scheme (LA and AHB) homes has been delayed and Galway City Council will not achieve its target of 40 units. The delivery of the accommodation

plan has been further impeded by the refusal of by An Bord Pleanála for planning applications under Part X of the Planning Acts on the Headford Road and Keeraun sites, which would have delivered 11 Culturally Appropriate units. Refurbishment works will begin on the Circular Road Halting site in Quarter 2/3 of this year and it will deliver 5 Culturally Appropriate Units.

2.3 Cúl Trá Halting Site

In December 2022, members of the Housing Senior Management Team met with the Galway Diocesan Office regarding Cúl Trá Halting site to consider a further extension of the licence. In advance of any decision, the Diocese requested surveys to be carried on the Fire Safety and Environmental matters and reports are awaited on same. Some works have been carried out on site including the rebuilding of a wall and removal of listing trees. The Council's Environment Department are following through on issuing information on the burning of material onsite.

2.4 Westside Day Centre and Temporary Homeless Accommodation, Seamus Quirke Road, Galway

The proposed development aims to provide a much-needed upgrade in the existing day centre facilities, along with additional resources. It will also accommodate temporary homeless accommodation year-round, with the focus on identifying and progressing routes out of rough sleeping and homelessness on a regular basis while also adapting during the winter months to increase the intake of vulnerable rough sleepers. The Stage 2 Application for the above was submitted to the Department on Friday 22nd July 2022. Stage 2 approval with a recommended budget of €4,215,073 was received in October 2022. Part 8 planning notification was published on the 8th of December 2022. Upon completion of the submissions period a Chief Executives Report will be presented to the elected members in Q2 2023.

2.5 Cold Weather Response

It is intended that the rough sleeper's initiative for winter 2022/23 will end on 31st March 2023. Work is ongoing with between Galway City Council and COPE Galway to have a care and case management intervention in place for service users who have established a local connection with the City and where services can be provided. The Street Outreach service will continue to engage with those who have refused services and non-HRC/migrants in offering information and support together with access to medical services to individuals who rough sleep.

2.6 Current Status of Capital Schemes:

Garraí Caol, Coast Road: Approval was received to acquire 53 units on the Merlin/Coast Road and contracts were signed in 2020. Construction works continued on site throughout 2022 and handover of phase 1 (27 Units) took place in Q4 of 2022 with phase 2 (26 units) projected for Q1 2023.

Garraí Beag, Ballybaan: This scheme will provide 58 social housing units. The procurement process commenced in September 2022 to procure a replacement contractor to complete the development. It is estimated that a replacement contractor will be appointed in Q2 2023 followed by a 12 to 14 month construction period with deliver expected in Q2 2024.

An Cliathán, Old Monivea Road: A scheme to provide 15 units for older people and families with disability needs has been designed for this site. Part 8 planning was approved in December 2020. Construction commenced in Q1 2022 with completion is still on target for mid-2023.

Keeraun, Ballymoneen Road: Stage 2 approval for this scheme was secured in July 2021. The scheme includes 8 units of Traveller Specific accommodation in an overall 71-unit scheme. An application for Part X planning was submitted to An Bord Pleanála in September 2021 and a decision to refuse planning was received from An Bord Pleanála in January 2023.

Headford Road: Stage 2 approval was granted in April 2022 for a development consisting of 24 no. dwellings. The development proposes the inclusion of 3 units of culturally appropriate Traveller specific accommodation with delivery in Q4 2024. The Part X planning publication was submitted in June 2022. A decision by ABP to refuse was received in November 2022.

Merlin Woods: DHPLG approval has been secured for a combined affordable/social housing scheme at lands adjacent to Coillte Mhuirlinne estate. Service Sites Funding approval has been secured in respect of this site which will provide sufficient funding to facilitate affordable sale. Part 8 planning was approved in late 2021. The Merlin Woods Project is a mixed social and affordable housing project of 103 residential units, 5 commercial units and a Crèche. Stage 2 approval for the 18 social housing units was received in October 2022 and an application for funding the 85 Affordable Houses was submitted to the DHLGH in December 2022. This scheme will be advanced through 2023 with delivery possible late 2024 or early 2025.

Merchant's Road Development: The Merchant's Road proposal comprises a mix of cultural space on the ground floor and residential accommodation on three floors above. Above the ground floor level cultural space, 11 no. social housing units are proposed, to be accessed by stairs and a lift. These units are 3 no. one bedroom and 8 no. two bedroom. This would be considered an appropriate type of development in the city centre location. A combined Stage 1 and 2 proposals for the social housing units was submitted to the Department of Housing in August 2021. Part X planning notices were published in February 2022. Pending An Bord Pleanála approval this development will advance to construction in Q2 2023.

Circular Road: The scheme proposes 5 units of culturally appropriate Traveller accommodation. The scheme will require the decanting of the site during the duration of the works. Part 8 planning approval was received in June 2022 with works to commence in 2023. The Stage 3 submission was sent to the DHLGH on 9th September 2022 and approval with a recommended overall budget of €2,127,422.16 was received in November 2022. This scheme will be tendered in Q1 2023 and advanced to construction after procurement of a contractor with a completion date in Q3 2024.

Castlegar Lands and Merlin Lane Lands: A masterplan for these lands will be explored, depending on sufficient resources to do so.

Clybaun Road: The proposal is for a 57-unit housing project comprising of 28 Social and 29 Affordable units. Stage 1 Approval for the 28 social housing units was received in January 2022. The site is currently being designed and assessed in order to lodge a stage 2 application in Q1 2023 with a Part 8 publication when the Stage 2 approval is received.

Bóthar Na Choiste: The proposal is for a mixed social/affordable housing project of 65 units comprising 25 Social and 40 Affordable units. Access to this site is currently being resolved via a CPO. Galway City Council on 23rd May 2022, made a Confirmation Order confirming, without modification, the Compulsory Purchase Order. Further to this, the above Compulsory Purchase Order has become operative on 24th June 2022, being 3 weeks from when the decision of Galway City Council to confirm the Compulsory Purchase Order was first published. The purpose of the CPO is to facilitate the construction and widening of approximately 0.516Km of public road in the townland of Castlegar, together with all associated ancillary works.

Ballyburke: Site investigations have concluded on the northern section of the 'McHale Lands' in Ballyburke and pre-planning assessment is currently under review

for 84 social houses. A Stage 2 application will be submitted to the DHLGH in Q1 2023 and thereafter the Part 8 will be published.

Munster Avenue: This project looks at a high-quality urban infill housing in central locations. It will provide passive surveillance to entrance to Fr. Burke Park and Improve/ rationalize immediate edge conditions. The existing house will be renovated with 4 No: new urban 1 Bed units. This is currently at the pre-planning stage.

2.7 Croí na Cónaithe (Towns) Fund

Since December 2022, Galway City Council have commenced accepting applications for the **Croí Cónaithe (Towns) Fund: Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant Scheme**. The scheme is exclusively available to individuals or households for which the property will be their principal private residence. Properties considered for inclusion must be vacant for two years or more and built before 1993. The grants available are up to €30,000 for vacant properties and up to €50,000 for derelict properties. To date five applications have been submitted and are being progressed in line with the criteria of the Scheme.

3. Recreation & Amenity

SPORTS CAPITAL

3.1 Large Scale Sport Infrastructure Fund (LSSIF) – Galway Regional & Aquatic Fitness Centre

Following the December 2022 Council Meeting, a discussion was held with the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media regarding the grant awarded for the Galway Regional & Aquatic Fitness Centre from the LSSIF.

The Department confirmed that they will accept an updated proposal and feasibility study for a new location. The grant amount will remain unchanged at the lower of €8,003,415 or 52.5% of the total estimated cost of the proposed project.

3.2 Corrib Park Grass Pitch

The contractor has commenced site clearance works and is due to fully mobilise in early March. Grass seeding and demobilisation are targeted to be completed by June 2023.

3.3 Refurbishment of Glen Oaks/Drom Chaoín MUGA

The contractor commenced works in February, beginning with site clearance and demolition of existing MUGAs. It is envisaged that construction of the new MUGA will be completed by mid-April.

The landscaping of the top area is being progressed as a separate project. The initial design has been completed and the next step is to engage with the local community..

3.4 Corrib Park MUGA

Consultancy services have been awarded and the preliminary design phase of the project is near completion. It is the intention to issue tender documents for construction before the end of Q1 2023.

3.5 Woodquay Park Development

Consultants have been appointed and the concept design stage has commenced. Initial deliverables will entail a range of surveys and site investigative works being undertaken, design development and engagement with various stakeholders.

3.6 Salthill Tidal Pool Feasibility Study

A request for tender of multi-disciplinary consultancy services has been advertised on eTenders with a deadline for tender submissions set for late-February. The contract will involve scheme design and feasibility assessment for the refurbishment of the dis-used tidal pool at Ladies Beach and, additionally the alternative option of developing a new tidal pool facility. It is envisaged that this contract shall be awarded in early March following tender assessment.

3.7 Cemeteries

New machinery storage shed has been erected in Bohermore Cemetery. Fit out works are underway and are due for completion by mid-March. Once works are complete the existing storage containers will be removed from site.



A tender competition is underway for supply of new welfare unit / office unit in Bohermore Cemetery. The existing canteen and offices have been removed from site.

On Dublin Road Cemetery site the Consultant is progressing with site layout options and identifying what additional survey works will be required. There may be restrictions within certain sections of the site to type of burial plots that can be

provided. Within the site they are looking at accommodating grave plots, urn plots, structure for interment of remains, memorial garden, parking, staff welfare building and access roads, both internal and off the Dublin Road.

3.8 Operations

3.8.1 Beach Works

The below regrading works to the end of a wheelchair ramp at Silverstrand beach were recently completed. A new handrail was also installed at the end of this ramp to protect users from slips trips and falls.

Before Photos



After Photos



A boundary fence to a picnic area in Silverstrand was badly damaged during recent high winds. This is now repaired. Photos of the damage before and after are shown below.



Repairs to fencing photo.



3.9 Playgrounds

South Park playground refurbishment is nearing completion. This playground is aimed at children of all abilities and includes a mural on its boundary walls. A lot of compliments have been received by R&A on the works to date.



3.10 Community Centres and Outdoor Playing Facilities

3.10.1 Renmore Community Centre

Since our Community Centres reopened after COVID-19 closures, our facilities are now being used for a wider variety of services including HSE Clinics and Community Services. This has resulted in customers that have a wider variety of health & mobility issues being present in our centres. Feedback from these groups has allowed us to identify required upgrade works to facilitate the new users in the centres. One such upgrade is the installation of new wall mounted infrared heaters in the Practice Hall in Renmore Community Centre. The Practice Hall has existing convection heaters and traditionally this room was used for physical activities such as Judo, Dancing and Yoga. The addition of these new wall mounted infrared heaters supplements the existing convection heaters and will allow the room to be more comfortable for the more static type functions that are now being undertaken in this space.



Recently, one of our regular customers, Galway Judo Club, made a surprise presentation to one of our Caretakers in Renmore Community Centre, Tom Kennedy. The presentation to Tom was for his years of help to the Judo Club. This is an example of the excellent work being done by our Caretakers in all our facilities.



3.11 Knocknacarra Community Centre

Recently our all-weather facility at Knocknacarra Community Centre hosted some matches in the Harding Cup. The Harding Cup is a third level football competition for first years & freshers and is organised by The Irish Universities Football Union. The competition was won by UCD who beat UCC in the final which was held in Knocknacarra.



3.12 Westside Dressing Rooms

Following the successful installation of water dispensers last year at different locations in our parks and playgrounds, a new water dispenser was installed and is now operational in Westside Park adjacent to the dressing rooms and playground. Members of the public can now refill by activating the infra-red sensor on the lefthand side of the station. This water station helps reduce waste and single-use plastics leading to a more sustainable solution for the environment.



3.13 Rosshill Wood Carpark

Following the recent resurfacing of the Carpark at Rosshill Woods, new line marking has been installed for standard and disabled parking spaces. Before and after pictures are shown below.





3.14 Chainsaw Training Course

See below photos of a City and Guilds chainsaw training course recently done by R&A outdoor operations crews.



3.15 Biodiversity & Pollinator Plan Updates

3.15.1 Green Spaces Strategy

The Parks Department continue to work closely with Arup Ireland to progress Stage 1 of the Green Spaces Strategy. The first presentation to the SPC was delivered in February and the initial engagement with the Steering Group is now completed. The Baseline Information gathering, and Gap Analysis stages are now well advanced.

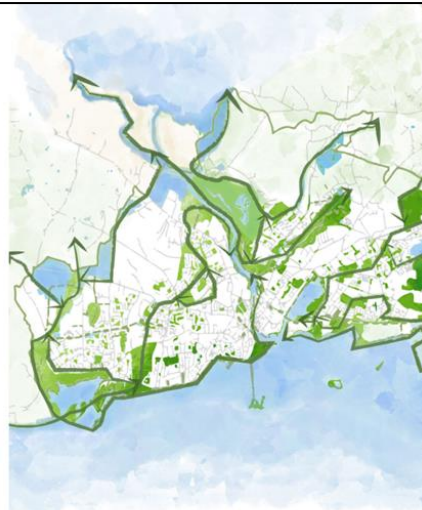
1. The Green Space Strategy

Brief Description

Galway City Council's Green Space Strategy will be a critical and influential piece of work that will provide a coordinated framework for the planning and management of natural and recreation facilities, networks and interventions across the city. It will build on the 2008 RANS study and will include the consideration of projected impacts of population growth, climate change and biodiversity action.

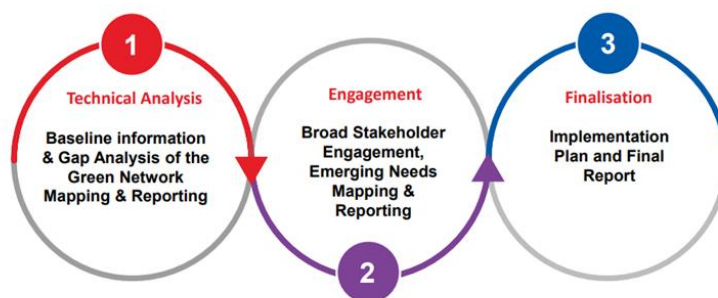
Draft City Development Plan 2023-2029

- Policy 5.1 Green Network and Biodiversity



Project Stages & Outputs

ARUP



Stage 3 : Outputs
Final Masterplan and Implementation Plan

Slides from Arup's presentation to the SPC on 22nd February 2023

3.15.2 Local Biodiversity Action Fund Progress

Local Biodiversity Action Fund 2023 Announcement

Minister of State for Heritage and Electoral Reform, Malcolm Noonan launched the 2023 Local Biodiversity Action Fund on Tuesday 24th January 2023, with €3 million in funding available to local authorities. The fund administered by the National Parks and Wildlife Service aims to provide funding to assist biodiversity officers, and heritage officers in local authorities without a biodiversity officer, with the implementation of projects that promote actions contained in the National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021.

Under the new GCC will look to further delivery of projects commenced in 2022 in addition to other priority projects. The proposed projects are summarised below:

3.15.3 Galway City Council Invasive Alien Species Strategy

To date, the management of IAS in Galway City has been a reactionary one. Although the treatment approach to date on 25no. stands of Japanese Knotweed has been largely successful, a more proactive and sustainable approach is needed for all known invasives within the City.

In many areas, ecosystems are weakened by pollution, climate change and fragmentation. IAS are a growing pressure on the natural world, which are extremely difficult to reverse. IAS can also cause significant harm to human health and infrastructure. Nationally, the annual cost of invasive and non-native species is estimated to be €261 million.

The aim of the strategy will be to eradicate the 12 known priority IAS species from within the city boundaries over a period of ten years. To ensure the effective delivery over a 10-year period, the Strategy will include a phased and time-lined programme of implementation, which includes a standardisation of treatment protocols, based on evidence-based best practice, with in-built monitoring.

Dr. Giaquinto delivered the first webinar on IAS to GCC staff in December. Subject to funding, GCC aim to roll out this webinar to stakeholders and members of the public.



3.15.4 Barna Woods - Conservation Project 2023

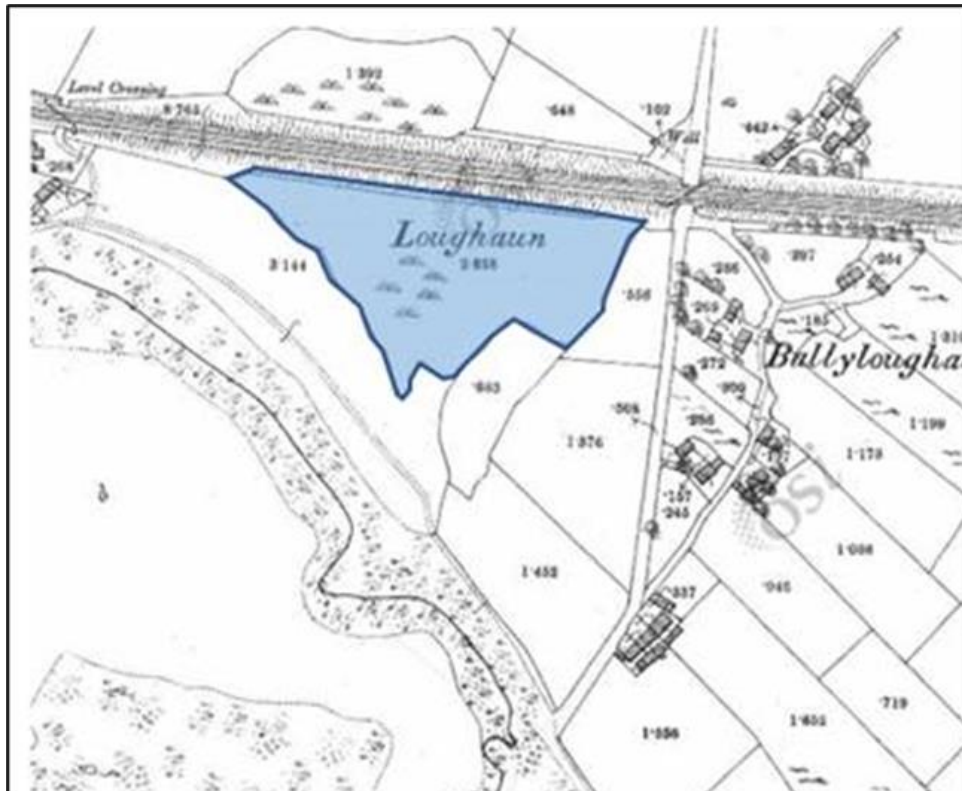
GCC with woodland management and ecological experts are working on the completion of the Neighborwood/Native Woodland Scheme Conservation Form and the Natura Impact Statement to accompany the application. *Leave no Trace Ireland* were the successful tenderers procured to manage the stakeholder engagement in 2023.

A stakeholder survey to elicit individuals' connection to Barna, what they believe are the main issues and what actions they feel would benefit the woodland. This information will inform the development of the management plan and workshops to be held in 2023.



3.15.5 Ballyloughane Beach Wetland Restoration Feasibility Study

The botanical survey and wetland feasibility studies of potential for wetland restoration/creation options at Ballyloughane, for the purpose of providing a nature-based solution for stormwater treatment and enhancement of biodiversity, have been completed. Through collaboration with water services we have identified a feasible project to restore the wetland to the south of the railway line for biodiversity and stormwater storage from the local catchment. Further investigation and engineering design will be required to deliver this project in 2023. Stakeholder engagement to commence prior to the consultation process to inform the scope of the tender.

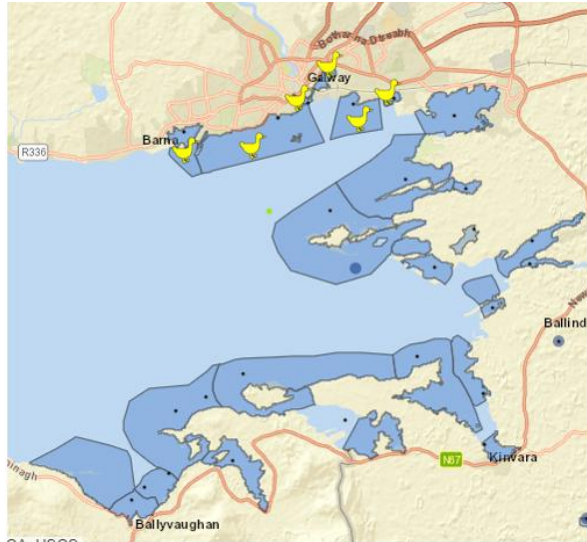


3.15.6 Bird Survey Support

Annual monitoring of wintering waterbirds is carried out in the Republic of Ireland by the Irish Wetland Bird Survey (I-WeBS). I-WeBS provides the principal tools used in the conservation of wintering waterbird populations in Ireland and the wetlands upon which they rely.

I-WeBS relies primarily on a network of volunteer counters. However, some large SPA sites lack the necessary volunteer base to adequately count the sites over the required months each winter. Funding is therefore sought to identify, explore and implement novel ways to recruit volunteers and support the counter volunteer network around Galway Bay.

Galway City Council in partnership with Birdwatch Ireland and Galway County Council are seeking funding to provide support to increase the monitoring team in Galway Bay, including training and upskilling local birdwatchers and graduates. The aim is that this will lead to a higher level of skill in the workforce also.



3.16 Allotments

The allotments in Shantalla and Merlin Woods are beginning to get busy again after the winter as the plot holders uncover the plots and prepare the soil for the spring season.

Placename signage design has been approved for both allotments and will be installed during March.



4. Economic & Culture & Community & Sports Partnership

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

4.1 EU Funding Guide

The EU Funds and Information publication is produced by the Northern and Western Regional Assembly. It is aimed at public and private sector entities, NGO's and communities to provide concise and up to date information on funding opportunities available through Competitive Programmes of the European Union. The period covered is the EU programming period 2021 – 2027. The main objective of the guide is to provide an overview of how EU funding and EU programmes operate, describing the main programmes of interest to the region. It also outlines how to develop a project proposal and the application process. The guide is designed to support project development with information on forming project partnerships, monitoring calls for projects, developing strong applications and it provides tips and sources for further information and support. The guide is available to view and download from the website <https://www.nwra.ie/>

4.2 Expleo opens Galway innovation hub, announces €5M investment and 70 new jobs

Expleo, a global technology engineering and consulting service provider has announced the opening of a Galway innovation hub and a €5M investment in the expansion of its life sciences and engineering research & development (ERD) teams, which will be headquartered there. The Galway base will be critical to bolstering Expleo's presence in other key industries, including software and automotive. It is part of a wider plan to establish a network of regional hubs to support the company's rapid growth across the island of Ireland.

The new hub, located in the Galway Technology Centre, Mervue is forecast to have a significant impact on Expleo's growing revenues in Ireland, supported by the expansion of its life sciences and ERD teams. By year-end 2024, the company will invest €5M in 70 jobs across the two teams. Team members will work across Expleo's client sites and its network of offices in Dublin, Cork, Galway and Belfast. On top of the 200 jobs announced in June last year, these latest jobs will see Expleo grow its island-wide team of over 1,000 by the end of 2024.

The new Galway office represents a long-term commitment from Expleo to both current and future customers located in Galway and the surrounding areas. Teams located there, and those working in client sites located in the West of Ireland, will be carrying out work on behalf of international clients who are based in Ireland. The hub will provide flexibility for Expleo staff located in the West, while giving Expleo access to a larger talent pool to support its rapid growth.

The opening of the Galway hub follows Expleo's announcement last year that it was establishing a network of regional office hubs. The first hub in Mahon, Co. Cork, opened in June 2022.

4.3 The Innovation Exchange Goes West: Call for local businesses to join innovation marketplace

At the recent Digital West Conference, [Galway Technology Centre](#) was named as the first regional channel partner of The Innovation Exchange. The partnership will offer SMEs located in the West of Ireland, and operating in the digital transformation space, the unique opportunity to pitch to, and collaborate with, large corporates looking to access innovation.

As part of this partnership, Galway Technology Centre, which supports innovative, globally trading companies in the ICT sector, will bring both corporates and scale-ups based in the west of Ireland on board as The Innovation Exchange members. Furthermore, it will bring benefits of The Innovation Exchange to enterprise hubs across the west of Ireland. [The Innovation Exchange](#), is Ireland's first innovation marketplace. It connects large companies facing digital transformation challenges with technology companies that can fast track the solutions. The initiative is funded by Skillnet Ireland.

As a follow up to this, the Local Enterprise Office Galway are offering one to one advisory session with experienced business consultants, you can choose to speak to consultants in the areas of Lean, Green, Exporting, Digital who will also recommend relevant [training](#), [mentoring](#) or any other relevant LEO Support depending on what stage your venture is at.



4.4 Local Enterprise Week Aims to Help Firms 'Make It Happen'

Small businesses and budding entrepreneurs will have the opportunity to sample hundreds of events helping them to start or grow their business as part of this year's Local Enterprise Week. The initiative of the Local Enterprise Offices, supported by Enterprise Ireland and the local authorities, takes place from the 6th-10th March this year across the country. While there are hundreds of events taking place, there are 5 National Spotlight events that are available for free online, with one taking place each day of Local Enterprise Week. These events will focus on Exporting with Enterprise Ireland, Digital Skills with Google, Sustainability and Cost Saving with top green and lean consultants and how to innovate within your business. Details for all the events taking place in Galway during Local Enterprise Week are available at [Local Enterprise Week 2023 - Local Enterprise Office - Galway](https://localenterprise.ie/Galway)



Galway EVENTS GUIDE
Find out what supports and programmes are the best fit for your business.
Book your place at an event today at localenterprise.ie/Galway

LOCAL ENTERPRISE WEEK 2023
6-10 MARCH

Monday March 6th
9.30am - 11.30am **Spotlight Event: First Steps to Export Success Webinar**
10am - 2.45pm Business Advisory Clinic Gort - Lady Gregory Hotel
12pm - 12.30pm Launch: The Strategic Growth Program for Female Founders

Tuesday March 7th
9.30am - 1pm **Spotlight Event: You're the Business @ LEW**
10am - 1pm How to Start a Podcast - Online Workshop [two days, 7 & 14th March]
10am - 2.45pm Business Advisory Clinic - Clifden Station House Hotel
2pm - 4pm Doing Business in Northern Ireland - Your Closest Export Market [Online]

Wednesday March 8th
10am - 2.45pm Business Advisory Clinic - Loughrea Council Office
10.30am - 12.30pm **Accelerate Your Growth: Lean, Green, Export & Digital supports followed by networking lunch, Salthill Hotel**
1.30pm - 3.30pm Meet the Experts - Lean, Green, Exporting and Digital, Salthill Hotel
11am - 12.30pm **Spotlight Event: The Green Panel**

Thursday March 9th
9.30am - 12.30pm Trading Online Voucher Webinar
10am - 2.45pm Business Advisory Clinics - Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre
10am - 1pm Assertive Communication - Online Workshop
2.30 - 3.30pm **Spotlight Event: Drive Cost Savings with LEAN**

Friday March 10th
10am - 11.30am **Spotlight Event: Innovation for Business Success**
10am - 2.45pm Business Advisory Clinics Tuam - Beechtree Enterprise Centre
12pm - 1pm Attention Management Webinar

✉ info@leo.galwaycoco.ie
☎ 091-509090

Book your place now at
localenterprise.ie/Galway

Óifig Fiontar Áitiúil Bailíne
Local Enterprise Office Galway

Enterprise Ireland
Galway City Council
Galway County Council
In partnership with
ENTERPRISE IRELAND
Galway Atlantic Campus

4.5 Accelerate Your Growth - Lean, Green, Export, Digital and Innovation supports for your business - Salthill Hotel, Salthill, Galway – 8th March 2023

A panel of expert speakers aims to inform, inspire, and engage owner managers and their key staff on how they can implement technologies, processes and products to their business in order to be more competitive. These include Valerie Kelly, Acting Head of Enterprise, LEO Galway, Robert Hernan, Enterprise Ireland, Danielle Roche, Stitches (Eyre Street), James Hogan, Clean Technology Centre, Stephanie Colombani, LEO Galway, Karagh Kelly IMS Marketing and Noreen Conway, Galway Technology Centre. This in-person event takes place in the Salthill Hotel, Salthill, Galway which will be followed by a networking lunch. Booking for this in person event is via <https://bit.ly/3IZiCDO>

4.6 Export Programmes

The Local Enterprise Office Galway are currently running two separate Export Initiatives that started in December 2022 and plan to run two more starting in Autumn 2023. 'Begin to Export – Get Ready for Export Success' is a 12-week programme that will provide participants with an export plan they can start implementing straight away. Sales & Export Accelerator Programme is a 6 month programme of workshops focussing on sales diagnostic, skills development, bespoke mentoring support, impact assessment, value proposition with a trade mission and business meetings arranged at the end.

4.7 Local Enterprise Office Galway clients created more than 220 jobs in 2022

Companies supported by the Local Enterprise Office Galway created 221 jobs in 2022. The net jobs created by the Local Enterprise Office Galway supported clients in 2022 was 43, which takes into account companies that amalgamated, ceased trading and those that transferred on to Enterprise Ireland.

The new figures show that the LEO Galway financially supported 268 small businesses in their portfolio across the city and county, and these companies in turn employ 1,192 people. The total national figures for the Local Enterprise Offices across the country were announced with the LEOs now supporting 37,863 jobs across 7,221 companies. In 2022 there were 7,870 new jobs created by LEO clients companies with a net jobs creation figure of 3,447. This was up 10% nationally in 2021. From the jobs created, 84% were outside of the Dublin region.

As the remit of the Local Enterprise Offices has now broadened to companies up to 50 employees, even more SMEs will be able to avail of their supports. The LEOs also provide substantial funded supports to thousands of other small businesses across the country with programmes such as the Trading Online Voucher, Lean for

Micro and Green for Micro along with training and mentoring. The Local Enterprise Office Galway works closely with Enterprise Ireland and Galway City Council to ensure small businesses in the City get the best possible supports there are.

4.8 New Data on Regional Inequalities in Ireland

New disposable income figures from the CSO show the gap between the Northern and Western Region and the national average has progressively widened over the past decade, with the difference in disposable income per person increasing from just over €1,400 in 2011 to €3,973 in 2021. The corresponding gap in 2020 was €3,207 per person. Furthermore, all eight counties based in the northern and western region of Ireland recorded disposable income levels that were below the state average, with Donegal recording the lowest average disposable income in the region at an estimated €18,579 per person in 2021. In 2009, Ireland had one of the lowest levels of regional inequality in Europe in 2009, in line with the Nordic countries but latest data for 2021 indicates that regional inequality in Ireland has increased to the point we now have regional inequalities in line with Greece, Portugal and Croatia.

This worrying trend has been attributed to a lack of investment in infrastructure assets, a weak urban structure in the region, a below average proportion of high valued jobs and an underinvestment in research and development assets. The Northern & Western Regional Assembly is calling on the government to deliver a range of high-level priorities, including providing a sizeable regional stimulus package for the region's economy in order to provide a platform for the region to regain its previously held status as a "More Developed Region" – and developing a policy of "Positive Discrimination" for the region in terms of capital investment in order to stimulate the region's economy, improve the region's skills base, enhance the region's innovation and research capabilities and deliver the vision and objectives of Project Ireland 2040.

4.9 Social Enterprise Policy Update and Development of New Policy

A significant level of progress has been made in the implementation of the National Social Enterprise Policy 2019-2022. At a national level the data gathering exercise of Social Enterprise in Ireland is nearing completion. For the first time we will know the key information about social enterprises, including the numbers of social enterprises, the areas they operate in and the impact they have on the Irish economy. The OECD are close to completing their in-depth review of the implementation of social enterprise policy in Ireland. Both pieces of work will be integral to the completion of the next National Social Enterprise Policy which is currently being prepared. Policy Consultation events have already taken place, including one held in Tuam, Galway

at the end of February 2023. The draft policy will be made available for observations within the next couple of months and the policy launch is planned for later this year.

4.10 Social entrepreneurs to benefit from new Google-backed accelerator programme

A new Google-backed programme to support underserved social entrepreneurs has been launched by Social Entrepreneurs Ireland (SEI). The Changing Ireland Accelerator, which has received funding from Google's philanthropic arm Google.org is a 12-month programme that will select four leaders across the island of Ireland who have identified a social or environmental issue and developed a clear solution and business model to solve it. The programme is focusing on supporting those from under-represented or marginalised communities.

Participants will get personalised supports and €60,000 in funding each. First announced in December, the Changing Ireland Accelerator Programme is a 12-month initiative aimed at underserved social entrepreneurs needing support to accelerate their impact. This programme will accelerate the social impact that is being delivered by social entrepreneurs across the island of Ireland, reaching some of our most underserved communities.

Applications are now open for the Changing Ireland Accelerator Programme, which will commence in June and run for 12 months thereafter. Further information is available on <https://www.socialentrepreneurs.ie/our-programmes/changing-ireland-accelerator/>

4.11 Funding to mark Ireland's 50th anniversary of joining the European Union

The Minister of State for European Affairs, Peter Burke T.D., recently announced a small funding amount being made available to local authorities for projects which take place on around Europe Day (9th May 2023) or Europe Week (8-12 May 2023). A total of €150,000 is available with maximum funding of €7,500 per local authority. The funding will support events led by local authorities, that promote a positive image of the EU, providing for reflection and celebration on Ireland in the EU and the significant progress in our economic, social and cultural development enhanced through our membership. EU50 is a whole of Government programme led by the Department of Foreign Affairs along with the Department of the Taoiseach and involving local communities, industry, academia, cultural institutions and civil society. It is hoped that the EU50 programme will provide for reflection, celebration, debate and exchange on Ireland in the European Union. You can learn more about EU50 and the programme so far here www.ireland.ie/EU50

TOURISM

4.12 Seachtain na Gaeilge

The Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media announced funding of €200,000 for An Ciste Spreagtha 2023. The €200,000 fund will be administered by Conradh na Gaeilge's Seachtain na Gaeilge team to enable community groups to organise Irish-language events in their own locality as part of Seachtain na Gaeilge le Energia 2023 celebrations. Seachtain na Gaeilge is the largest Irish language festival in the world. The festival first started in 1902 and sees up to one million people joining in each year.

The Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media awarded funding for An Ciste Spreagtha for the first time last year. The project was a great success and provided an incentive for community groups to return to organising in-person events after the pandemic. The aim of the fund is to encourage the organisation of Irish language and Gaeltacht events at local and community level. Efforts will be made to have events take place in local communities in all corners of Ireland. It is hoped that these events will attract new groups of people to the language and give them an opportunity to practice their Irish in their own locality.

In Gaeltacht areas and in places that the Irish Language has a stronger presence, groups are being asked to give people social opportunities to use Irish and to bring the community together to celebrate the language.

4.13 The Today Show

March 8th will see the RTÉ Today coming live from Galway City. Maura Derrane will broadcast live from Salthill & the Galway City Museum. The broadcast will feature local community groups, arts organisations, food producers and highlight the Museum and the new development planned.

4.14 Fáilte Ireland's Virtual Industry Briefing 2023 – Driving Sustainable Recovery'

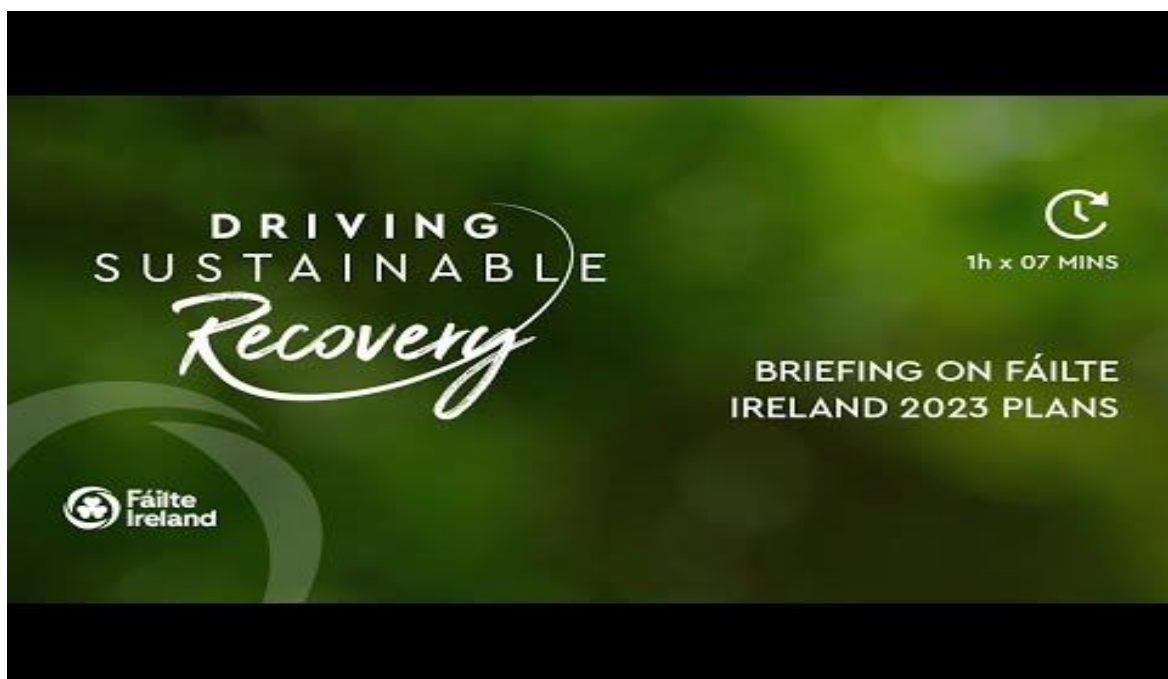
Fáilte Ireland's launched its annual plans in a virtual meeting followed by a regional in person event which took place in Galway City on the 22nd of February.

The national plans dealt with a number of topics including:

- Positive Domestic 2023 Outlook (On par with 2019)
- Tourism Business Outlook (83% of business expect 2023 to be better than 2022)
- Supply Side Challenges including Accommodation, Car Hire (approximately 50-60% of 2019), Operating Costs, Staffing, Value for Money
- Sustainability Targets – Sector target is a 35% reduction in emissions by 2030

- Industry Recovery Strategy
 - Accelerate Domestic Tourism
 - Opening the Outdoors
 - Digital that Delivers.
 - Destination Development including a DEDP for Galway City
 - Distribution Development
 - Driving Climate Action including new certification programme for businesses
 - New Short Term Tourism Letting Register

The National Event can be watched back on [Fáilte Ireland's Virtual Industry Briefing 2023 – Driving Sustainable Recovery](#)



The Galway City regional event highlighted the Destination Experience Delivery Plan (DEDP) which will be developed in 2023 by Fáilte Ireland and will set a plan for Tourism Development in the city for the next 5 years.

Galway City Council spoke at the event on the projects being delivered by the Council in the coming years with the support of Fáilte Ireland:

- Outdoor Waterways Museum (Sept 23)
- Watersport Hubs (Design Team appointed)
- Woodquay Park Redevelopment (Design Team appointed)
- Galway City Museum (Construction due to begin in late 2023)

4.15 Lá Fhéile Pádraig 2023

St Patricks Day 2023 will see a 3 day festival take place across the City.

Parade – The main event will be the St Patricks Day parade. The parade will see over 1,500 participants and a crowd of approximately 30,000 is expected to line the streets. The parade will commence at 11.30am from the University of Galway and will finish at approximately at 1.30pm at Eyre Square. Rolling road closures will be managed by An Garda Síochána and road closures will be implemented from the time crowds begin to gather (approximately 10.00 - 10.30am)

Some of the participants include 1st Port of Galway Sea Scouts, Scoil San Phroinsias, St. Nicholas NS - Claddagh School Band, St. Pats Brass Band, Salthill Devon Football Club, Ragoon Newcastle GAA Club, Galway Filipino - Irish Community, Liam Mellows GAA Hurling and Camogie Club, Ability West, Malachy Flaherty, GCS Judo, Pedal Power Galway, Galway Gallowglass, Fr. Griffin's Éire Óg Gaelic Football, Star Wars Fans for Diversity, Funky Drums School, Kildare Irish Figure Dancers and many more.

The parade will include Krewe of Europa that will be travelling to the event from Tampa Florida. Over 60 participants will be travelling to Galway to participate in the parade and their trip will be covered on local ABC news.

The ITV This Morning Show will be filming live at the St Patricks Day parade with presenter Craig Doyle soaking up the atmosphere across the city.

Grand Marshall – Andy Friend, Connacht Rugby's Director of Rugby will be one of the grand Marshalls for the St. Patricks Day parade. Since joining Connacht Rugby in 2018, Andy has made a huge impact on the City and the Mayor would like to thank him for his contribution before he moves on at the end of the season. The co Grand Marshall will be named shortly.

Green Mile – The Green Mile will make its return in 2023 and will see athletes compete over a 1-mile race before the commencement of the race. A new sprint race will also be included in 2023.

Music – 3 Days of live music will take place in Eyre Square. Starting at 3pm on the 17th of March and 2pm on the 18th and 19th. Each day will start with a local youth band that is working with our partners Music Generation. Bands will play until 7pm each evening in the festival village in Eyre Square. All the music events will be free to the public. A full line up of acts will be announced closer to the date.

Greenings – The Bádóirí an Chladaigh will lead our line-up of Greenings in the Claddagh Basin with other landmarks across the city going green including Tirellan Castle, City Hall, Brownes Door.

Family Fun Day – Salthill Park will once again play host to the family fun day in partnership with the Galway Sports Partnership. Sports that will feature on the day include Tug of war, Athletics, Volleyball, Pilates, Yoga, Tai Chi, Dance, Facepainting, Corn Hole, Activator poles (older adults), Tag Rugby and more to added. The events

will take place with Salthill Park and along the Promenade and beaches. All the activities will be free to the public.

City of Film – New to St Patrick Day 2023 will be a series of film events to celebrate Galway's status as a Unesco City of Film. These events will take place 5 days after Ireland will hopefully be winning a number of Oscars. Ardan will showcase a series of short films on a big screen in the Fish Market on the 17th of March. This event will be free to the public. The Cinephile Paradiso will also host a 2 day walk-in exhibition of the early silent films of Ireland and most of these films focus on life in the West of Ireland. The films will be shown at the Pálás cinema bar and the silent cinema on Dominick Street. The silent cinema will also show a short documentary on the importance of these films that was produced by the IFI. All these events will be free of charge to the public.

4.16 Blas Na Gaillimhe

Galway City Council is delighted to be supporting a new initiative called Blas Na Gaillimhe/A Taste of Galway. This is a new food network that celebrates the magical hospitality that Galway offers throughout the year. It showcases the best places to eat, drink and stay when visiting Galway as well as its best producers who supply the restaurants, cafés, and bars.

Each May *Blas Na Gaillimhe/A Taste of Galway* will celebrate all Galway has to offer. Galway's food and drink scene will host a various events and experiences around the city. *Blas Na Bealtaine/A Taste of May* will take place throughout the month of May and features a programme of events and initiatives to allow locals and visitors to sample the best of our food and drink offerings. The festival will have something for everyone from food enthusiasts to all the family. Expect amazing meals, oyster tastings, farm visits, cheese making demonstrations, seafood trails, distillery visits, foraging, beer masterclasses, coffee cupping, wine pairings, theatre, music, and much more.

The content created, the website listings and the information provided will leave a legacy that provides year-round information for visitors on the Galway food and drink scene. We believe this food network can grow in future years and make the food scene a crucial component of the promotion of Galway as a tourism destination.

ARTS & CULTURE

4.17 Arts Grants

The Arts Office, with assistance from colleagues across community and culture, IT and communications, launched the Arts Grant for 2023 on January 26th. The deadline for submissions was February 16th and over 60 organisations from professional, community, voluntary, and amateur organisations have applied. The arts team has begun the assessment process and is carefully examining

applications. The annual budget of €400,000 supports arts organisations across the city to deliver high-quality cultural programming and resources to the people of Galway City. The 2023 Arts Grant is open earlier than previous years to allow organisations sufficient time to plan for financial and programming commitments. With a view to ensuring sufficient time is allowed annually, the Arts Grant for 2024 will be launched in September 2023 and the grant will continue on this schedule annually.

4.18 Arts Funding

The annual Band Grant, Creative Practitioner Bursary (formerly the Individual Artist Bursary) and Tyrone Guthrie Regional Bursary are due to open for applications at the end of February. These awards are typically launched later in the year however the Arts Office is keen to allow sufficient time for artists and bands to prepare for their year ahead. The application process has been streamlined to ensure applications are accessible, use plain English and are user-friendly.

The revised applications include detailed guidelines as to how applications are assessed to ensure the process is clear and transparent. Our applications for Creative Practitioners and the Tyrone Guthrie Bursary now include questions to map our social reach. These include questions about the applicant's gender, ethnicity, age, disability status and education. Collecting this data will enable the Arts Office to evaluate the diversity of applications and help us identify groups we need to target with advertising and application support in the future.

The Creative Practitioner Bursary for 2023 will feature two funding bands. Band one for funding up to €500 and Band 2 for funding from €501 to €3,000. Previously the award had been capped at €1,500 however the arts office is keen to support creative practitioners working on ambitious projects as well developing capacity within the sector. Over €20,000 is available for the bursary this year, ensuring the growing application numbers can be met with adequate resources.

4.19 Audience Agency

GCC Arts Office, Galway County Council Arts Office and Galway Culture Company in consultation with the Audience Agency are working towards the development of a suite of monitoring and evaluation templates which will ensure organisations and individuals who receive funding can return robust and targeted data which will map our social, financial and cultural reach. An agreed schedule of work has been completed for 2023. It will more broadly assist the development of the arts sector, ascertain the full investment toward arts and culture in the region, and identify gaps and opportunities. This will be shared with Cultural Partners in Q2 of 2023.

CREATIVE IRELAND

4.20 Launch of Culture and Creativity Strategy for Galway City 2023–2027 by Minister Catherine Martin

On Thursday 23rd February Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media Catherine Martin TD and Minister of State with responsibility for Local Government and Planning Kieran O'Donnell TD announced the roll out of 31 new Local Authority Creative Ireland Culture and Creativity Strategies (2023-2027) at an event at Farmleigh in the Phoenix Park. The Culture and Creativity Strategy for Galway City was among the documents launched and the event was attended by the Mayor of Galway, Cllr. Clodagh Higgins accompanied by Chief Executive Brendan McGrath and Galway City Creative Ireland Coordinator Gary McMahon.



Mayor of Galway, Cllr. Clodagh Higgins accompanied by Chief Executive Brendan McGrath
at the launch of the new Culture & Creativity Strategy 2023 –2027

The vision of this new Culture & Creativity Strategy for the next 5 years looks to Galway in 2027 as a city where creativity and cultural rights of everyone matters. Imagination and innovation are supported through creative and cultural expression fostered in a sustainable manner. The Culture and Creativity team in Galway City Council will take the lead to build on the relationships they have already developed and identify how best to ensure that the key aims within this vision embracing sustainability, imagination, inclusion, creativity and innovation continue to be reflected in actions on the ground, and in the processes which accompany those actions. This is supported by a budget in 2023 of €161,000 plus an additional budget of €30,000 to realise Cruinniu na nÓg in the city on 10th June. An open call under the

Creative Communities strand of the programme will go out for creativity and cultural projects in the first weeks of March.

The new strategies reflect the creative ambitions of communities around the country which will be supported by the Creative Ireland Programme 2023-2027. There will be a greater focus on health and wellbeing, creative industries, climate action, the development of the Irish language and social sustainability. Priority will also be given to develop creative opportunities for marginalised communities and those at risk of disadvantage.

Last year the Culture and Creativity team reviewed the original strategies that were devised in 2017 and made changes that reflected the evolving priorities of their communities. Each team incorporated contributions from community stakeholders that will encourage people to engage, participate and enable their creative potential.

The new strategy was devised by the cross-departmental Culture and Creativity team led by the Director of Services for Housing, Social Inclusion, Ukraine Refugee Response, Economic Development, Community & Culture and the membership of the Culture and Creativity Team for Galway City Council includes the Head of Economic Development, Tourism & Culture, Recreation & Amenity, Climate Change & Environment staff, Arts Officer, Arts Development Officer, Head of Programme, Galway Culture Company, Chief Officer, LCDC, Healthy Ireland Coordinator, Communications Officer, Museum Director, Theatre Manager, Heritage Officer, Tourism Officer, Senior Executive Librarian, Local Enterprise Office staff, Economic Development Officer and Environmental Education Officer. The roll-out of the strategy is led by the Creative Ireland Coordinator.

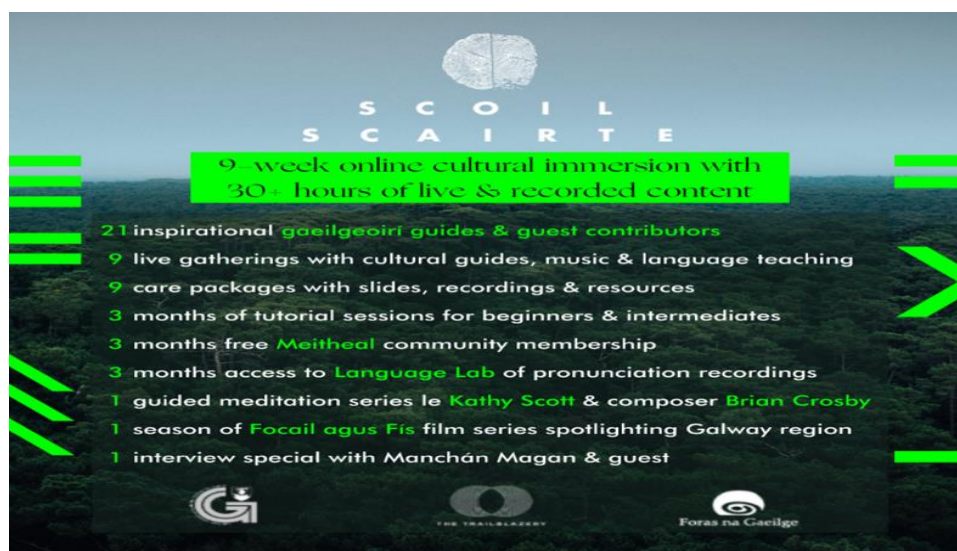
Commenting on the work undertaken by the 31 local authority Culture and Creativity teams Minister Catherine Martin said: *“Your teams are the key strength of the Creative Communities initiative and the engine that drives our collective efforts. The agility of the local authority teams has facilitated a collaborative and flexible approach to reshaping how creativity and culture is valued within and across local authorities. Through the Creative Ireland Programme, my Department will continue to work with collaborators across Government to activate the power of creativity in every community.”*

Minister of State Kieran O'Donnell TD said: *“I would like to sincerely thank all of the Culture and Creativity teams in our Local Authorities who have been working hard in recent months to drive the key ambitions in the Creative Ireland programme. The power of culture cannot be overestimated; arts and culture can open our minds, enliven our communities and enrich everyone's lives,” he concluded.*



Creative Ireland Coordinator, Gary McMahon, Minister for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media Catherine Martin TD, Mayor of Galway, Cllr. Clodagh Higgins and Minister of State with responsibility for Local Government and Planning Kieran O'Donnell TD at Farmleigh for launch of Galway City Culture and Creativity Strategy 2023 - 2027

4.21 Scoil Scairte #4 - Language & Culture Programme supported by Galway City Council Culture Section and Creative Ireland



Galway City Arts Office through its Creative Ireland Programme is delighted to part-fund the participation of Galway City-based Artists in Scoil Scairte #4, created by The Trailblazery in collaboration with Manchán Magan. Scoil Scairte is the Irish School you always dreamed of guided by a host of inspiring bilingual multidisciplinary artists, activists, creatives, educators, culture makers and indigenous language keepers. This 9-week voyage of discovery invites people to

gather together online to explore, experience and learn the Irish language in a global learning community - with this edition shining a light on the Galway region, culture and language. Spaces were made available to the general public to take part in the 9-week program of discovery at no cost supported by Galway City Council Arts Office through Creative Ireland.

4.22 Communications Infrastructure

The Arts Office has worked with Pure Design, to create a visual identity and suite of digital assets for use on our website, publications, and across social media. These new design elements will feature strongly in our Instagram, set to be launched in early March.

4.23 VAI Galway 2023 Programming

In response to the Artists Needs analysis session and survey, the Arts Office, in collaboration with the Galway Culture Company and Galway County Council will host several artist support workshops to build capacity. This will include financial, application and wellbeing guidance. An in-person networking event will be held in the Portershed for artists to meet and engage with organisations based in the city and county, the two Arts Office teams, and the Galway Culture Company.

4.24 Advice and Information

The Arts Office continues to meet with Cultural Partners as a source of information and advice on a wide range of arts and cultural topics and opportunities both locally and nationally.

4.25 TOWN HALL & BLACK BOX THEATRE

The Town Hall Theatre had a busy February, with events by many leading local and national companies and performers. Our February 2023 line up included theatre by Blue Raincoat Theatre Company, Mikel Murfi, Niamh Mc Grath, Patrick Cullivan, Hysteria Theatre Company and SamePage Theatre Company; music by The Fureys, Patrick Feeney and Finbar Wright; a special event remembering Joe Dolan, featuring the Dolan Family Band; a musical presented by Galway University Musical Society and comedy from Joe Rooney, star of Fr Ted.

Events for children and young people included performances by The Speks and Cyclone Rep; the annual Coirm Gael Linn competition for schools from across the city and county; and the world premiere of The Table by Galway's Branar Téatar do Pháistí. This new play written by Christian O'Reilly sensitively explored the impact of

the Civil War and opened in Galway before transferring to the Peacock Theatre at the Abbey for a 3-week run.

4.26 GALWAY CITY MUSEUM

4.26.1 Temporary Outdoor Exhibition Space



Borderland – Ukraine 2022 is a series of images taken by award-winning documentary photographer, Karen Cox. As the war continues across Ukraine, families are being torn apart. These photographs offer an insight into the reality of displaced people crossing from Ukraine into Poland in the hope of finding safety. These images, from both sides of the border were taken in April 2022 at the border crossing in Medyka - Shehyni. This project was funded from Creative Ireland.

4.26.2 Unite with Ukraine, 24 February 2023

Organised by the Ukrainian community in Galway, 'Unite with Ukraine' featured a number of activities at Galway City Museum, which included an exhibition of children's drawings and a gathering in support of Ukraine in the Museum courtyard on 24th February 2023.



4.26.3 Ukrainian Children's Drawings

An exhibition of children's drawings, organized by volunteers of the Ukrainian community in Galway with the support of the Galway City Museum and Galway City Partnership in which more than 40 Ukrainian children took part. The creative workshop brought together young artists from all over Ukraine. The resulting artwork is on display in the Museum (across from reception). The theme of the exhibition illuminates the echo of frightening experiences in the hearts of young Ukrainians, and at the same time – new hopes and dreams that the Emerald Isle gives. The exhibition is designed in the form of the Great Family Tree – a symbol of the preservation of the memory of generations and the living power of tradition, the Celtic Tree of Life symbol and the Galway City Museum itself. The organisers painted the Tree with the colours of the flag of the Republic of Ireland to express respect and gratitude to the people who so generously and hospitably sheltered thousands of Ukrainian families. In the middle of the tree there is a Ukrainian beating heart with a dove as a symbol of peace. Deeply rooted in its blessed land, the great Tree of Ireland breathes new life into the Ukrainian Soul. Under maternal care, our children's hearts grow with gratitude – each branch is full of young leaves, and each leaf opens with a picture – a small friendly gift, a sign of sincere childhood admiration, friendship and new dreams for the future.

“Although the dark shadow of the war still worries all Ukrainians, we are convinced that the exhibition of children's drawings will become a bright ray for many, a small but bold step towards the clear joy of a peaceful life, full of the values of friendship, support, prosperity, and gratitude to the generous people of Ireland and their wonderful land.” Iryna Pososhyna, Ukrainian Support Worker.

4.26.4 Museum Outreach

On 23rd February 2023, the Museum Education Officer delivered a talk to Renmore Active Retirement Association on the subject of Pádraic Ó Conaire, the man and the statue, which was attended by upwards of 40 people.



4.26.5 New Traveller Culture Model on Display

A brand new model depicting Traveller culture has been installed at Galway City Museum thanks to funding received from Galway City Council and Creative Ireland. Irish Travellers, or Mincéirí, are a traditionally nomadic ethnic minority indigenous to the island of Ireland. The barrel-top wagon was the traditional home of nomadic Traveller families and is now a symbol of Traveller culture. The structure consisted of a waterproof canvas, drawn over hooped timber-sheeted frame, and secured to a flat timber base. At the front of the wagons, shafts were used to attach horses, with a rack on the back to hold items while travelling. The interior of the wagons generally contained beds, dressers, and a stove, although at times cooking was done outside. Yellow, red and green were among the popular colours found on barrel-top wagons, and each wagon was decoratively engraved and carved. Though beds were a feature of the interior, if there was no room within for larger families, members often slept outside in tents. These tents usually consisted of tarpaulin or canvas sheets draped over hooped iron wire or willow branches and held down at the edges by large stones. The floor of the tent was usually taken up by mattresses made up of hay, straw, or bracken.



4.26.6 Fr Griffin Collection

Galway City Museum has recently acquired very complete collection of objects associated with Fr Griffin including some of his clerical vestments, his personal effects such as his driving licence and grooming kit, correspondence with family and his library of books, most of which are signed by him. The collection also includes an interesting series of telegrams dated during his disappearance and the aftermath when his body was discovered as many people offered condolences to the family. The collection is interesting from a political point of view as it includes his Sinn Fein membership card and a Fáinne showing his dedication to the Irish language and culture. Also includes family memorabilia after his death and commemorations afterwards.



4.27 LEISURELAND

4.27.1 Amusement Site

Curry's Amusements move back into the Amusement site next week and hope to open the Fun Park on St Patrick's Day, 17th March 2023 for the summer season. Discussions are to take place regarding the site for the following winter season.

4.27.2 Event Hall

March 2023: We have a full series of events with The Big Gig on Saturday 25th February 2023, supporting earthquake victims in Turkey & Syria followed by Miniature World exhibition, Jehovah Witness Conference, Bingo Loco, Mario Rosenstock and The Marty Party. All other groups including Baby Sensory and Phoenix Stage School are still operating their classes daily and weekly.

4.27.3 Pool Hall

The Leisureland Swim Academy this term now has 1,677 children learning to swim each week, the highest number again since the Academy started in 2015. The pools are very heavily booked and schools etc. have already booked up the pools until June 2023, which was never the case before. Due to this we are now changing our September schools pool timetable in order to facilitate more schools that want to enter our swimming program. We also have The Future Challenger Swimming Gala taking place on 12th March 2023. Irish Water Safety Beach Lifeguard exams are taking place on Saturday 25th March 2023. We have restarted our pool inflatable fun

session every Saturday and Sunday with a new pool inflatable. Works will be carried out in the coming weeks to reinstall the Leisure pool water features and waterslide usage.

4.27.4 Potential Works

From an Energy team point of view, we are currently having a new upgrade to our Building Management system installed. This should increase (along with meter attachments) all our monitoring and controls of energy usage. Along with this, we are investigating peer review of other possible maintenance and installations that would enhance our ability to achieve 2030 energy targets, e.g. new pool and event hall air handling units that may achieve a 40% reduction in energy usage if used correctly, along with the BMS control upgrade.

We are currently assessing further Asset management works comprising of the foyer area re-roofing, air handling units and renovating the Event hall facilities. Following tender a new contractor took over the internal vending in Leisureland, and installed all new machines and a Hydration station in the foyer. The new car barrier system is now working smoothly, and we have effective control for our members and customers.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

4.28 A Guide for Inclusive Community Engagement in Local Planning and Decision Making

On the 2nd February, the Department of Rural and Community Development launched *A Guide for Inclusive Community Engagement in Local Planning and Decision Making*. This resource guide was collaboratively developed by the Department, working with Pobal and the community and voluntary sector as part of a Dormant Accounts Funded project on the engagement of marginalised communities at local level, particularly in the context of the LECP process.

This guide, which is available [here](#), is aimed at ensuring that the most marginalised and disadvantaged communities have opportunities to engage and participate in local planning and decision making. Such inclusive engagement will ensure that their perspectives are reflected in the decisions which affect them and will facilitate more inclusive measures to support sustainable development at a local level. Written in plain English and designed to be user friendly with quick reference checklists and tips, the guide is intended to condense best practice and statutory obligations into a handy 'how-to'.

Whilst the overall project concentrates on the LECP process, the guide is designed to be of benefit in all local engagement processes. Those involved in developing policy, leading consultations or making decisions that affect communities may use

this guide. This initiative is just one of a number of actions being delivered under [Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Communities a five-year strategy to support the community and voluntary sector in Ireland 2019-2024](#) which seeks to support not just the community and voluntary sector, but also the supporting structures which enable it, and indeed communities and individuals themselves.

4.29 LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (LCDC)

The Galway City LCDC met on Wednesday 1st March 2023. Items discussed included the approvals under the Community Support Fund, the Community Recognition Fun, the LECP process. Members also received updates on the SICAP Annual Plan 2023 & Annual Performance Review of SICAP 2022 & SICAP Annual Progress Report 2022, in addition to discussing the draft LCDC Annual Report 2022.

4.30 Local Economic & Community Plan 2023 – 2029

The purpose of an LECP is to set out for a six-year period, the objectives and actions needed to promote the economic development and the local and community development of a local authority area. These objectives and actions are those delivered both by the Local Authority, directly itself and in partnership with other economic and community development stakeholders. In 2015, the first Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) for Galway City was adopted by Galway City Council. This contained the following high-level goals which were to be pursued using a programme of actions contained within the Plan.

1. A world-class, creative city region
2. An innovative city
3. An equal and inclusive city
4. A sustainable, resilient urban environment that is the regional capital of the West.
5. A city that promotes the health and well-being of all its people

In the intervening years a significant level of progress under these goals has been delivered.

The LECP process will consist of two parts, a) the development of an overall LECP framework detailing the High-Level Goals and Sustainable Community and Economic Objectives as well as consideration of outcomes and high-level indicators for the 6-year LECP period. Consideration of any potential actions will form part of the development of the High-Level Goals and Objectives in the LECP framework but the detailing of prioritised actions as well as specific performance indicators and commitment to their implementation is a function of the implementation plan. b) The development of Implementation Plans to detail the inputs, actions and resources required for that implementation plan period as well as relevant specific key performance indicators to facilitate evaluation. The initial LECP Implementation Plan will be presented for approval along with the LECP framework.

Galway City Council and the Local Community Development Committee are now considering what to do in the next 6 years to continue to make progress towards the achievement of these goals.

An Issues Paper was developed and issued for consultation in 2022 and a report on same was presented to the LCDC. Assessing the issues raised in the consultation process is ongoing. An LECP Advisory Group has been established and will meet again in March to agree the broad format of the next LECP and an initial draft of the LECP framework document will be prepared for the April meeting of the LCDC. The draft framework document and implementation plan will be developed further over the summer and a final draft presented to the LCDC, Economic SPC and local Area Committees in Q3/4 in advance of consideration by full Council by the end of 2023.

On the 21st of February LCDC members attended a workshop organised by Pobal on Inclusive Community Engagement in Local Planning and Decision Making. Topics covered included: The rationale for and benefits of collaboration and engagement for Local Authorities, LCDCs and the communities that they serve; Core principles that underpin collaborative and engagement processes; How to put principles into practice in planning and implementation of community engagement, including for stakeholder identification, identification of barriers, supports and outreach, creating an inclusive environment, information, communication and relationship building, feedback and reflection.



4.31 GALWAY CITY COMMUNITY NETWORK (GCCN)

GCCN offers ongoing support to its representatives and continues to hold monthly Secretariat meetings. The first Plenary meeting of 2023 is scheduled to be held in March at the Menlo Park Hotel. The election for a GCCN representative on the Economic SPC will be held on this occasion. A GCCN Representative seat is also currently vacant on the Galway City Planning SPC. The GCCN convened several Linkage Group/Thematic Group meetings prior to the scheduled SPC, LCDC, LECP, and JPC meetings scheduled for this period. The review of the GCCN Policies and Positions is now at its final stages.

GCCN continues to support new and existing members and provides targeted information to its membership. GCCN strives to engage groups who are the most marginalised and seek their participation. Additionally, in collaboration with the Galway County PPN, GCCN continues to hold *Active Travel* meetings, with the fifth meeting of this series planned for early 2023.

GCCN held a Public Consultation meeting on *Galway City BusConnect: Dublin Road* in February. A submission on the same was developed in collaboration with GCCN members and submitted. A submission to the National Voluntary Review of SDG Implementation was completed in late February following agreement from the SDG Working Group. A submission to the DRCD Strategy Statement is being developed in consultation with members. GCCN also participates in policy development in local institutions, and recently took part in a focus group intended to contribute to the development of a race, equality and inclusion strategy for the University of Galway.

GCCN supports and promotes the engagement of its membership with relevant training opportunities that will build their capacity to work in their communities. GCCN met with staff of Galway City Partnership and GRETB to look at a shared schedule of training for 2023. Galway Volunteer also are discussing collaborative training opportunities for this year with GCCN. So far, GCCN delivered two workshops around the Sustainable Development Goals in early February. Governance Training will also be provided in 2023. Two Induction sessions for GCCN members will be scheduled in the coming weeks.

GCCN attended *Re-Registration on Salesforce Training* delivered by Dublin Volunteer in late February. This year, GCCN will undertake the re-registration process for all members who joined before 2022. GCCN actively collaborates with several groups, agencies and organisations such as Healthy Galway, Communities Against Racism, the LGBTI+ Interagency Group, Galway Age Friendly Forum, #EqualityVotesGalway, Access for All and Galway Environmental Network, and Community Work Ireland. Opportunities for future collaboration that aligns with our mission are always sought.

GCCN is collaborating with Galway Traveller Movement and Galway Bay FM to develop a practical guide to promote Fair and Impartial Media Representation of Travellers. GCCN is in active collaboration with communities against racism, to develop positive messages and actions that will promote community cohesion in the vibrant and diverse context of our city. GCCN attended the first in-person National PPN Resource Worker Network meeting of 2023 at the end of January in Sligo and further meetings around PPN Members' Re-Registration. GCCN continues to offer support to and exchange information with other PPNs.

GCCN is a member of the National Communications Subgroup established by the Department of Rural and Community Development to oversee and input into the development of the National PPN Communications Campaign. The Campaign was launched on 21 February. Two GCCN staff and one GCCN member attended the media launch in Dublin on 21 February. Minister Joe O'Brien and other PPN workers from across the country were also there. The Awareness Campaign for the PPNs will continue in the coming weeks with radio and newspaper releases locally and nationally.

GCCN continues to attend the meetings of the Standing Together Against Direct Provision (STAD) and to work on the Communities Against Racism Initiative. GCCN

are continuing to engage with NASC and the University of Sanctuary in regard to community sponsorship of a refugee to attend University of Galway. GCCN engages in the Community Response Forum which supports Ukrainian refugees arriving in Ireland. Meetings with a Ukrainian community group have been held. A handbook aimed at helping new arrivals navigate accessing services was produced and information on this is available on the GCCN website.

The Pobal Pilot project is moving from consultation to reflection. Six different groups that are marginalised by society have been reached, including the members of the Traveller Community, the Trans + Non-Binary Community, the Deaf Community, Migrant Women, Youth on the Margins and the members of the Civil Society Panel.

In total 28 meetings have been held, 19 of which have been active consultation meetings. 41 individuals have taken part in this initiative, and representation has included members from all communities who must be protected from discrimination under the Equal Status Act (9 + 1 grounds). Outputs are in production pending review. GCCN has presented learning from this Pilot in at the launch of Pobal Guidelines in IHREC on the 2nd of February, and at a recent workshop aimed towards LCDC stakeholders in Galway. GCCN will join the LECP Advisory Group to assist in the methodological development of the forthcoming LECP on the basis of this project.

4.32 Campaign to urge community groups to join Public Participation Networks

A new national public awareness campaign for Public Participation Networks (PPNs) has been launched. The campaign calls for community groups to join PPNs and have a greater voice in local decision-making. 18,000 groups across Ireland already helping to 'Build a better future' through their involvement. Minister of State with responsibility for Community Development, Charities and Integration, Joe O'Brien TD, launched the national awareness campaign on 21st February to encourage community groups to join their local Public Participation Networks (PPN).

Public Participation Networks allow local authorities to connect with community groups around the country and give people a greater say in local government decisions that affect their communities. Each county and city in Ireland has its own PPN and more than 18,000 community and voluntary groups are currently members.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND FUNDING

4.33 Community Support Fund

The Community Support Fund (CSF) is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development to support groups, particularly in disadvantaged areas with: *Current costs* including non-pay running costs such as energy costs (electricity costs, refuse charges, heating charges) or other non-pay operating costs for e.g., rental/lease costs, insurance bills; *Capital costs* - carrying out necessary repairs and

improvements to facilities, purchase equipment for e.g., such as tables and chairs, tools and signage, laptops and printers, lawnmowers, canopies, and training equipment etc.

Following a review and assessment of the Community Support Fund applications on 16th February by the Galway City Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) Grant Sub-Committee, 74 local community and voluntary groups / organisations were recommended to receive funding totalling €278,188. Current costs funding recommended of €135,651, capital costs funding recommended of €139,769 and ringfenced Women's Sheds funding of €2,768.

The Department recommended that LCDC's ring-fence up to 30% funding to provide small grants of €1,000 or less. The LCDC Sub-Committee recommended that 25 groups receive grants of €1,000 or less to a value of €21,542 which is 7.74% of the total CSF available to allocate of **€278,188**. All of the projects receiving funding relate to one or more of the key priority areas as identified in the Galway City Local Economic & Community Plan and the ongoing delivery of these projects during 2023 will support the delivery of many of the collaborative actions which will be of great benefit to local communities in Galway City. The CSF grant recommendations of the LCDC Sub-Committee were discussed at the LCDC meeting on 1st March 2023 and agreed.

4.34 Mayors Awards 2022

The annual Galway City Council Mayor's Awards are now open for nominations and was launched on Thursday 23rd February 2023. The Mayors Awards are the most prestigious annual awards recognising those who make a significant contribution to Galway City. These awards are an annual opportunity to celebrate inspirational local people and groups who go above and beyond to support our community. On this, the twentieth year of the Awards, Galway City Council would like all volunteers to know their contribution is very much appreciated and that volunteering is celebrated for its inherent value to our society, helping to develop vibrant, inclusive and sustainable communities.



Galway City Council invites nominations for individuals or groups who are involved in voluntary activity taking place in the city in one of the following categories:

- Arts, Culture, Heritage and Cúrsaí Gaeilge Award
- Neighbourhood/Community Champion Award
- Community Service and Social Inclusion Award
- Older Person Volunteer of the Year Award
- Environmental Sustainability Award
- Sports Volunteer of the Year Award
- Children and Youth Support Award
- Young Volunteer of the Year Award
- The Galway City Council Volunteer of the Year Award

Online nominations can be completed by filling in the form at www.galwaycity.ie/MayorsAwardsNomination.

Nomination forms are also available from City Hall and the City Libraries. The closing date for online nominations is 4pm on Friday, 24th of March 2023. Each of the award winners will receive a commemorative gift and a payment of €500. All nominees will be presented with an individually designed Mayoral Certificate at the Awards Ceremony which will be held on **Wednesday 24th May 2023** in the Galway Bay Hotel, Salthill, Galway.

UKRAINIAN RESPONSE

4.35 English Language Classes and Supports at Galway City Partnership (GCP)

There are currently 14 classes being delivered in the Boardroom of GCP. These classes take place across 4 days of the week (Tuesday-Friday). Each class is of 90 minutes duration and tutors make themselves available to students to assist with form-filling (job applications etc) and answering general enquiries. In addition to the above, GCP provides a tutor on two mornings a week to deliver a class at Mercy Primary School. This class is for a small group of Ukrainian parents (12 students) who have found it difficult to access appropriate provision elsewhere. The class has been timetabled to coincide with the start of the school day in order that parents can come straight to class after dropping their children to their form rooms.

Galway City Partnership is also providing 4 classes per week at the Glen Oaks Hotel which is currently accommodating a large number of Ukrainian families. These classes are being provided at the hotel especially for parents with very young children (pre-school) who are unable to come to classes in the Partnership. Starting in the first week of March GCP will be providing 2 classes per week at the Ballinfoile Castlegar Neighbourhood Centre, this is in response to an identified need established by GCP Community Development Worker bases in the Area.

GCP also provide one-to-one tuition to a small number of individuals with special or additional needs. This includes a student with an acquired brain injury, a student suffering from cancer, a student who is dyslexic and a couple recently arrived from North Korea who are fearful of joining a group. There are currently students from 13 nationalities attending classes or receiving supports. In total, there are 100 plus individuals attending classes each week, about 75% of whom are Ukrainian. Each student receives a minimum of 3 hours tuition with some individuals attending for up to 12 hours per week. There are classes at all levels from Pre-Beginner to Advanced, with progression through the levels.

4.36 Tús Scheme

The Department of Social Protection has determined that from March 2023, Ukrainian refugees will begin to be eligible for Tús. This will mean that they will be included in random referral selections by the DSP and they will be eligible for self-referral to Tús. The principal condition, in both cases, is that they will have been in receipt of Jobseekers Allowance for 12 months prior to referral. In cases of random selection, Ukrainians will receive notification regarding their selection for Tús from the DSP. Information regarding self-referral to Tús can be obtained by communicating directly with Tús at Galway City Partnership.

4.37 Ukrainian Refugee Health and Wellbeing Support Fund

The Community Response Forum is supporting several initiatives to support the health and wellbeing of Ukrainian refugees. Galway Sports Partnership, Healthy Galway City, the Galway City Council Arts Office, in partnership with Galway City Partnership and Volunteer Galway are collaborating to offer projects based on the

local needs of individuals and families displaced as a result of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. There is a broad range of projects being rolled out to support participation in recreational, physical, creative, social and cultural activities to assist Ukrainian refugees to adapt to their new surroundings while focusing on supporting their general health and wellbeing.

Galway City Council is seeking Expressions of Interest (EOI) from Ukrainian persons living in Galway City who have been displaced due to the Ukrainian Refugee Crisis. Those interested in attending any of these activities or events should complete the EOI form by visiting <https://www.galwaycity.ie/UkrainianWellbeing>. The Ukrainian Refugee Health and Wellbeing Support fund is once-off funding distributed to Local Authorities to fund projects in line with the Healthy Ireland vision.

4.38 Ukrainian Commemorative Events 24th February

A series of events took place on the 24th of February to commemorate the first anniversary of the outbreak of war in Ukraine. Events on the day were planned with the Ukrainian community, Galway City Partnership and Volunteer Centre project workers and included prayers at Holy Family Church, Mervue and a memorial mass at the University of Galway Chapel. The Galway City Museum hosted an installation of drawings by Ukrainian children "War through the eyes of children of Ukraine - Ireland" and the day also included a photo exhibition called "Borderland".

4.39 Offer a Home Scheme

Government has sanctioned a second advertising campaign for the 'Offer a Home' scheme, to run from March 4th to 25th. A national advertising campaign will be managed by the LGMA across national radio, press and on Local Government Ireland social media channels.

The Offer a Home Scheme was launched nationally in November 2022 and focuses on vacant properties suitable for non-shared accommodation for Displaced Ukrainians. A tax-free recognition payment of €800 per month is available for such properties offered through the scheme. Interested parties register their interest on the offer-a-home website, and the Local Authority coordinates the process with the property owner from there – further details are available here: <https://offerahome.ie/?faq=1>.

To date, 14 properties have been registered in Galway City, of which 12 properties qualified as non-shared options. The remaining properties have been referred to the DCEDIY and Irish Red Cross, depending on their status. With the assistance of Galway City Partnership, 36 displaced Ukrainians have so far been accommodated in 9 of the registered properties. 2 properties will be available for allocation in March with a further property coming on-stream in May 2023.



4.40 HEALTHY GALWAY CITY

The Healthy Ireland Fund Local Strategy for Galway City 2023 – 2025 and the Healthy Ireland Round 4 Application were submitted in January 2023. The strategy and application are currently being assessed by Pobal, before being sent to the Department of Health for approval. Final approval is expected by late March 2023. Healthy Galway City will be supporting Galway City Partnership (GCP) BRIDGE team, the GCP Community Development team, Migrant Support Service and Ukrainian support Service to host a Health and Wellbeing Event in Ballybane Community Centre this International Women's Day, Wednesday 8th March.



4.41 COMHAIRLE NA NÓg

The Galway City Comhairle na nÓg committee weekly meetings will be returning to the training room in City Hall from Monday 6th March 2023. New committee roles were elected in January 2023. There are 8/10 schools represented on the committee, with new members from Galway Community College just recently joined and it is hoped to have reps from both the Jes and Bish on the committee soon.

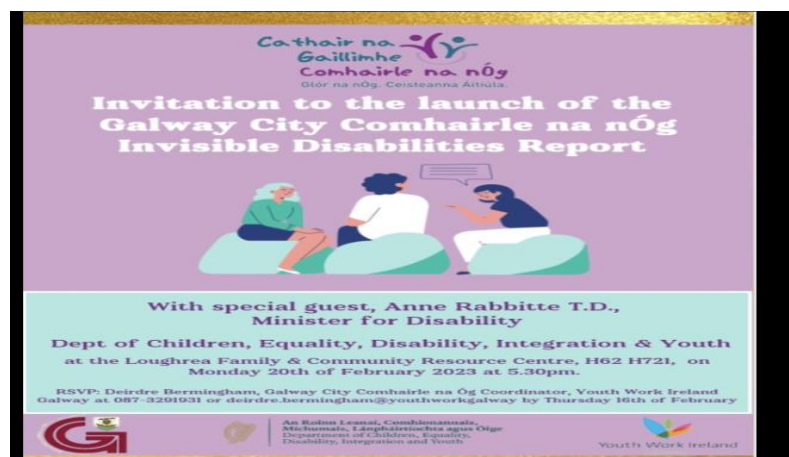
The topic for 2023 is Physical Disabilities and Accessibility. The topic for 2022 was Invisible Disabilities, with completed research through a focus group and a survey. The report on the research was launched by Minister Anne Rabbitte TD in the Loughrea Family Resource Centre on Monday 20th of February at 5.30pm.

The Comhairle na nÓg 2023 Funding Request and the Comhairle na nÓg 2022 Annual Report were submitted to Pobal via the online portal before the deadline of Friday 13th January 2023, awaiting to get notice on the funding awarded for 2023.

For more information on the work of Galway City Comhairle na nÓg, please follow the social media pages.

<https://www.facebook.com/GalwayCityComhairleNanOg>

<https://www.instagram.com/galwaycitycomhairle/>



4.42 GALWAY SPORTS PARTNERSHIP

GSP continues to deliver child protection training through the Safeguarding 1, 2 and 3 courses. GSP linked with Youth Work Ireland Westside to deliver an event for 16 participants as part of a midterm project to explore activities and games.

Activity	Description	Target Group	Partners	Start-Finish dates	Participants
Get Galway Active	Inclusive Community led 6-week activity programme. Weekly community walks led by volunteers with 6 FREE online taster sessions also available to sign ups.	- All Adults +18	N/A	10/01/23 09/03/23	252 SIGN UPS
Activator Poles	Adapted exercise sessions aimed at those with mobility issues or those in	-Older adults	AR Fitness/ COPE	29/11/2022 – Ongoing	15

	rehab from orthopedic procedures	-Limited mobility adults			
Swim sessions	Adult/Toddler swim sessions and adult women swim lessons for residents in Direct Provision	Asylum seekers/refugees in Salthill/Dominic Street locations	Bridge project/ Swim Ireland	28/02/23 – 31/03/2023	38

For further information on programmes and projects see www.galwayactive.ie and our Facebook page, Galway Sports Partnership

5. Environment & Climate Change

5.1 Environmental Awareness

5.1.1 Amenity Grants 2023

The objective of the Amenity Grants Scheme is to provide assistance to Community Gardens/Allotment Schemes and Residents Associations who wish to contribute towards the betterment of their local environment by undertaking improvement works in their local area, including *litter clean-ups and anti-litter measures*.

All applications for the 2023 scheme must be completed electronically by visiting www.galwaycity.ie/amenity-grants Please note: paper application forms will no longer be accepted

Completed applications should be submitted no later than the closing date of **4:00pm Friday 31st March**. For more information email environment@galwaycity.ie or visit www.galwaycity.ie/amenity-grants

5.2 Cabbage lane Greening the laneways

Work is continuing on the laneway with artist Sufek West creating wonderful murals for all the community to enjoy. The laneway had been a space for graffiti, littering and anti-social behaviour in the past. Galway City Councils environment department has had extensive engagement with the local community and a community action day is planned for the 2nd of March to include a clean-up and wall painting. The GCC Biodiversity Officer is also being consulted on appropriate minimal maintenance planting.



5.3 Green-Schools visits

Green-Schools renewal visits are continuing with nine visits planned between now and the end of March 2023. The Schools renewing their Green flags are Scoil Fhursa, Knocknacarra Educate Together NS, Gaelscoil Dara, Scoil San Phroinsas, Scoil Ide, St. Nicholas Parochial, St. James N.S and Claddagh NS. Abalta Special School will be aiming to achieve their first ever green flag for Litter and Waste. More information on the green schools' program can be found here:

<https://greenschoolsireland.org/>

5.4 Automatic Public Convenience

The changing place facility in Ladies Beach is nearing completion with final snags/defects to be closed out.

5.5 Litter Management

There is a significant increase in February in the amount of cardboard being collected by GCC staff in the City Centre. This cardboard originates from Businesses that leave it out for collection overnight. The cardboard bundles are being ripped open and thrown around the streets. GCC will actively engage with Businesses over the coming weeks to discuss and hopefully establish sustainable solutions to the issue.

The roof of the toilet block in Eyre Square is cleared daily of rubbish being stored on top of it. The instances on rubbish being found there have now greatly reduced.

Bin Improvements – 20 no. solar compactor bins will have their solar panel protection covers refurbished as some are in poor condition. This will be freshening up several the bins in the city centre.

Bins continue to be vandalised on a regular basis. This includes graffiti, political posters, advertising posters and damage to the cigarette holders on the sides of the bins. It has been noted that there is a significant increase in the number of Posters been stuck on the bins, which when removed leave glue residue which is difficult to take off. Community wardens are currently investigating any leads to this vandalism.

5.6 Derelict Sites

The number of sites on the current Galway City Council Derelict Site Register is 10. The number of sites currently on file in terms of The Derelict Sites Act, 1990 as amended, is 291. Inspections are ongoing in relation to a number of sites and correspondence to property owners' issues on a regular basis regarding those sites under current investigation.

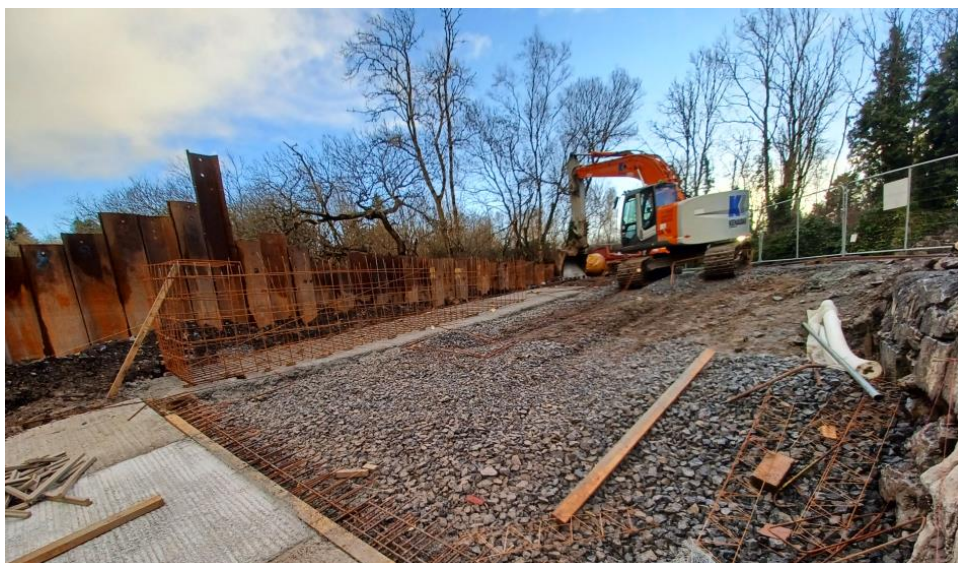
5.7 Dangerous Structures

Dangerous Structures continue to be notified to Galway City Council on a regular basis. The inspection and the follow-on process are on-going for all. Engagement from landowners/homeowners involved in the process is generally poor and as such the process is slow and time consuming.

5.8 Markets & Casual Trading

There have been no complaints from the Warden's weekly inspections to date this year. The Market Trader Committee are happy with the new additional stalls to the St. Nicholas Market on Saturday and Sunday. The Eyre Square North Market has no complaints to report.

5.9 Lough Corrib Navigation Trustees



Works are progressing on the slipway refurbishment at Lisloughrey Pier. To date, approximately 40% of the concrete works are complete. Revised contractor programme is predicting a finish date in Late March.

Maintenance works are underway along the Eglinton Canal and at the LCNT piers. Power washing, pruning and installation of bark mulch to beds along canal have been completed. See photographs below.





LCNT staff continue to issue Marine notices through the Lough Corrib Navigation Facebook page regarding navigation hazards on the lake.

Work is underway to complete a design and refit of selected markers on the Navigation Channel with specific focus on the Corrib River.

LCNT staff continue to monitor the markers on the channel and report any required works to the nominated marine contractor.

6. Financial Report

Work is ongoing on our Annual Financial Statements for 2022 and will be finalised in the coming weeks. Revenue Expenditure and Income has been within budget and we anticipate that there will be a small surplus for the year ended 31st December 2022.

The Local Government Auditor has commenced some preliminary Audit work with regards to 2022 and this continued during February 2023.

Capital Expenditure of €5.6m has been incurred in so far in 2023 and has been across the following areas:

- Housing Construction and Acquisitions,
- Housing Adaption Grants
- Road traffic Improvements

Approval for an overdraft limit of €8m was sanctioned by the Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government for 2023 and Galway City Council had recourse to this facility for 3 days in February 2023 up to a value of €1.2m.

2023 rate demands totaling €39,297,819 were issued on the 19th January to 3,762 customers in Galway City. Receipts to end February amount to €4.76m which is favourable on that collected in the same period previous years.

We continue to offer various payment options and payment plans and promote our direct debit facility, which allows businesses to spread the costs across the year. This year direct debits will be taken over a ten month period instead of 9 months in previous years, thus reducing instalment amounts, so far we have had an increase of 22% opting to pay by Direct Debit. We continue to engage with our rates customers who face difficulties meeting their payments.

Our collection on Housing Rents and Loans to end of February is in line with same period in last year.

Commercial Rates Revaluation 2023

Further Proposed Valuation Certs (PVC) were issued on Friday 24th February 2023 to 21 properties in Galway City who did not receive a PVC in September 2022. They relate to properties such as nursing homes and cinemas and others. Those businesses will now have a 40 day period to make representations on their proposed valuation certs.

The Valuation Office have advised that all remaining PVCs will issue on the following dates:

- 13th March for a small no. of Properties (93 in total between all the REVAL counties)

- 27th March (100 between all the REVAL counties)
- 18th May (270 between all the REVAL counties)
- 27th May (3500 in total between all the REVAL counties)

The Valuation Office is merging with the Property Registration Authority and Ordnance Survey Ireland to form a new State entity called Tailte Eireann, which will bring together land and property information services in the State, including registration, valuation, and surveying services. Tailte Eireann was formally launched on 1st March 2023 by Kieran O'Donnell (Minister of State with responsibility for local government and planning) at its new headquarters in the Distillers' Building in Smithfield Square, Dublin. The Valuation Office have advised that the merger will have no impact on services or staffing at the Valuation Office but from 1st March they will no longer be known as the Valuation Office, but rather the valuation division of Tailte Eireann.

7. Other Issues

7.1 Local Government Boundary Arrangements for Galway City Council

In January 2015, the then Minister for Environment, Community & Local Government announced a review of Local Government arrangements in Galway. The Minister appointed an independent statutory committee comprising five persons to carry out the review. The full report from the review and two other subsequent reports relating to the matter are attached herewith as appendices for ease of reference. Appendix 1 from the November 2015 report sets out the full terms of reference of the statutory committee. Other appendices include supporting studies that were undertaken in relation to the work of the committee.

The committee was requested to carry out an objective review of Local Government arrangements in Galway County and in Galway City. The committee was asked to prepare a report making recommendations for improvements in such arrangements with respect to:

- a) whether the boundary of Galway City should be altered and, if so, recommendations with respect to the alteration of the boundary; or
- b) whether Galway City Council and Galway County Council should be unified

The committee's report acknowledged that its terms of reference required it to examine the alternatives of an amalgamation or a boundary extension. The committee also examined a radical shared services option as such an issue was highlighted in many submissions that were received by the committee in response to a public consultation process undertaken by the committee. Therefore, the options thus determined by the committee to be assessed included the following:

- No change
- Boundary extension for Galway City
- Radical shared services
- Full merger

These options were assessed with assistance from the Institute of Public Administration. The Institute undertook a multi-criteria assessment approach in examining the options. Appendix 5 of the 2015 report outlines the assessment that was undertaken by the IPA.

Ultimately, the committee proposed the establishment of a new, unified local authority would best maximise the potential of the region to maintain, secure & to grow a sustainable economic base into the future. The committee outlined a series of supporting commentary surrounding its proposal of the merger of both local authorities.

In December 2016, some thirteen months after the statutory committee's report had been submitted to the Minister, the then Minister for Housing, Planning, Community & Local Government established an expert advisory group to undertake further detailed

examination & planning arising from the November 2015 report. The expert advisory group had the following terms of reference:

- a) Undertake further detailed & rigorous examination, including technical analysis of the implications of the recommendations of the 2015 report.
- b) Provide an assessment of the recommendations of the 2015 report including, costs & benefits, in the context of the technical analysis at no. (a) above.
- c) Provide detailed information & recommendations regarding the implementation of the 2015 report & of any further recommendations at no. (d) which follows, including the arrangements & measures necessary for that purpose & relevant timescale in that regard.
- d) If the expert group considered that the recommendations of the 2015 report should be supplemented or varied, following its technical analysis, the expert group was asked to indicate any reasons for such & to outline such additional relevant recommendations.
- e) A report to the Minister in relation to these matters as required by the Minister, or as the group considered appropriate. The undersigned as Chief Executive of Galway City Council was a member of the expert group. The full terms of reference of the group & the work programme in which it engaged are set out in the attached document no. 2 of the June 2017 report to the Minister of the expert group.

The June 2017 report recommended the early appointment of a dedicated head of economic & physical development, supported by teams dedicated to economic development, spatial planning, enterprise & local development. The expert group recommended that such a unit would require additional financial resources & human capital & that it would operate at the highest strategic level.

The group endorsed the recommendations of the 2015 statutory group. The expert group also indicated to the Minister that it would continue with its work in accordance with its terms of reference.

The expert group submitted its second interim report to the Minister on 26th April 2018. The second report strongly endorsed the amalgamation of the two authorities, subject to adequate human & financial resources being made available. The group recommended that its recommendations would be implemented expeditiously, especially the issue of financial & human resources. The expert group noted that additional work should continue the remainder of its terms of reference, following early decisions in relation to the report of the statutory committee & the two interim reports from the expert group. The second interim report also recommended that the 2019 local elections would take place for both local authorities that then existed & that in 2024 local elections would be held based on unitary authority.

Subsequently the Local Government Bill, 2018 included a provision for the appointment of a single Chief Executive for Galway City Council & Galway County Council. Following a decision in Seanad Éireann in December 2018, not to support this provision, the provision was dropped from the proposed legislation. The Local Government Act 2019, which principally related to Local Government relations between Cork City Council & Cork County Council was subsequently adopted by the

legislature & signed into law without including any provisions in relation to Local Government arrangements in Galway.

I am not aware that there was any subsequent formal announcement on the report of the statutory group from 2015 & on the two interim subsequent reports from the expert group from June 2017 & April 2018. It is my clear understanding & that of the elected members that any proposed amalgamation of Galway City Council & Galway County Council into a unitary authority will not proceed. However, it is also clear that other options were also not considered in the subsequent processes, especially the issue of the boundary between the county and the city was not considered.

Part 8 of the Local Government Act, 2001 contained statutory provisions through sections 55 to 62 inclusive to enable a proposal to be made by a local authority for the alteration of its boundary. The provisions of the 2001 Act relating to boundary alterations were revoked under subsequent provisions of the Local Government Reform Act of 2014. The specific provisions were signed into law upon the signing of the commencement order for the legislation on 1st June 2014. There therefore currently no longer exists a provision in local government law where a local authority can itself formally initiate a request for the revision of its local authority boundary.

In my role as Chief Executive of Galway City Council, underpinned by the work of the expert group relating to local government structures in Galway, it is clear to me that there are issues surrounding the existing local government boundary for Galway City that warrant examination. I believe that the current boundary which was determined almost forty years ago is no longer fit for the purpose for which it was determined at the time. In a context where the amalgamation of the City Council & the County Council will not proceed as a unitary authority, I believe that it is both important and appropriate that Galway City Council should consider the current local government boundary for Galway. Any such consideration should include appropriate consultation & discussions with the elected members & the officials of Galway County Council. Other stakeholders also need to be consulted. As outlined above, in the previous work relating to a review of local government arrangements in Galway there was an acknowledgement that boundary considerations existed at that time. Such considerations acknowledged that any examination of an adjustment to the City boundary could be either radical or localised in nature. I believe that this is the right time to examine Galway city's boundary, particularly as such an exercise will take several years to complete. Any examination of the boundary, in my view, would not have any impact on the proposed local elections of 2024 as I believe such a process of review / examination would require dedicated resources & would take a minimum of 1.5-2 years to complete such a review. As there appears to be no provision in local government law for a local authority to now initiate a boundary review, any such work to be successful would probably require enabling & supporting provision in primary legislation. The Council will have to lobby for either government policy and/or legislation to enable a future boundary revision.

The following are some of the issues that arise from the putting in place of the 1985 boundary i.e., Galway City Council's current administrative & functional boundary. This list is not an exhaustive list:

- Pursuant to the relevant statutory instrument Galway City Council continues to pay €1m euro per annum to Galway County Council to compensate the County Council for income lost from rates at the time on the lands ceded by the County Council to the City. Including 2023 the total amount paid by Galway City Council to the County to date will be €37m euros.
- Growth patterns between the City & County have altered significantly since the 1985 boundary extension / formal coming into existence of the county borough council in 1986.
- Galway City Council has the smallest geographic area of any local authority in the country. The city council is also geographically the smallest LA in the country.
- Based on population the categorisation of local authorities, Galway City Council is classified as a category 5 local authority. This among other issues potentially hinders the allocation of financial resources & human capital to Galway City Council. Galway City Council represents less than 1% of the total geographic area of entirety of county Galway - (the area of the city is 54km² approximately; the area of the county is 1607km²). The city accommodates >25,000 students, a sizeable percentage of which now commute from outside the city. Similarly, approximately 25,000 people commute to work in the city and the city also attracts over 2 million visitors per annum. While this is beneficial from an economic development perspective, the demands that this places on city council resources are not always recognised within the current local authority / boundary configuration that is in Galway city. Public funding allocation models often include metrics such as population, mileage of public road and many similar metrics etc. that are not well reflected in a small geographic entity,
- The functional boundary of Galway City on an east – west axis runs from the west side of Oranmore to the east side of Barna. Both Oranmore & Barna are outside the functional area of the city, though the city provides extensive services for the residents from these areas. The city is approximately 8km in width from its eastern boundary to its western boundary. The city is less than 5km from the southern tip of Lough Corrib to the North Atlantic Ocean.
- The boundary of the MASP area (Municipal Area Strategic Plan) is not co-terminus with the area that is included within the Galway Transport Strategy area. The MASP area was statutorily determined. The MASP area excludes Moycullen but includes an extensive swarth of agricultural land due east & southeast of Oranmore. The Galway Transport Strategy study area stretches from Barna to Moycullen to Claregalway to Athenry & Oranmore. In my opinion, these gaps at least require review and examination, especially in a context of impact on the city council's various strategies.
- The development strategy of Galway City encapsulated within the City Development plan is predicated on compact growth, densification & a sequential approach, principally focusing on existing suburbs & brownfield regeneration. The development plan policies of the adjoining planning authority without co-ordination between the two authorities potentially has severe negative impact on Galway City's development strategy.

- Galway City Council has made a local area plan for the Ardaun area, which now over 4 city development plans has been earmarked as the future growth driver for new development in Galway. Approximately one third of the Ardaun area is located within Galway City Council's functional area. The remainder of the Ardaun area is located within the Galway County Council functional area. There is no planning strategy currently in place for the remainder of the Ardaun corridor lands within county Galway.
- The recent Galway County development plan, in parts, has, in my view, the potential to negatively impact on the development of Ardaun due to some planning provisions that were included in the development plan in the vicinity of Galway city. The National Planning Framework / National Development Plan 2040 has formally recognised the Ardaun corridor & its future importance for Galway City. The Ardaun area has also been designated as a MUHDS area (Major Urban Housing Delivery Site).
- The Parkmore / Ballybrit area is divided by the administrative boundary between the city and the county. A consequence of this is that some FDI companies that have more than one plant must deal with separate planning authority areas. Consequently, such companies end up dealing with two separate planning authorities, two different development plans, two sets of different plan standards, two different development contribution schemes, two different transport authorities, different Rates to different rating authorities etc. Such arrangements can be problematic & confusing for the enterprises themselves, their workforces, transport providers etc.
- There are many other examples of where the existing boundaries impact on services & service users including for example housing services, traveller accommodation, homelessness, HAP, water services, Irish language, economic development & tourism etc.

In the context of the foregoing & the review that was initiated in 2015 to look at local government arrangements for Galway and in the scenario of where it has been determined that two local authorities shall not be unified, it is timely & appropriate that a review of boundaries that were put in place almost forty years ago should now be considered by Galway City Council. This is a course of action that I recommend to Galway City Council. If Galway City Council forms a view that such boundaries should be examined, I believe the City Council should resource the exercise, consult with Galway County Council, consult with the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage and consult with a wide range of other stakeholders and if it is considered appropriate in the future that the existing boundary should be altered that appropriate overtures are made to the government, the Minister of the day & the members of Oireachtas Eireann to facilitate a review and revision. I am aware of the challenges involved in potentially changing boundaries and the consequences from such change, especially the political consequences. Nonetheless, it is my considered opinion that leaving the existing boundary as is will not be to the benefit of Galway, both the city and the city council.

I further recommend that such an issue is placed on a future agenda for a city council meeting for further and detailed consideration and discussion,

7.2 Mayoral Reception – Atlantic Technological University



On Monday 13th February 2023, the Mayor of Galway City, Councillor Clodagh Higgins, hosted a Mayoral reception in honour of Atlantic Technological University, in honour of their achievements at the World Skills 2022 National Finals. 25 apprentices and students from across ATU fought off tough competition to achieve a place in the national final in September 2022. The national competition showcases the best of Ireland's talent pool across a range of highly technical areas of study and work.

Speaking about the achievements of ATU, Mayor Clodagh Higgins congratulated the competitors, commenting that "...25 apprentices and students from ATU demonstrated the best of our region, competing in 10 categories, against over 180 young people. The ATU competitors showed excellent technical skills, teamwork, time management and most importantly, the confidence and ability to work under pressure – no mean feat, with over 15,000 visitors watching them compete. Against stiff opposition, four young people demonstrated outstanding technical skills, and calm heads, to take home the top prizes in four categories at the National Final. There were second and third places achieved also, by this exceptionally talented group."

Mayor Higgins also acknowledged the work of the mentors, tutors and employers, who supported competitors in their endeavours, and shared their passion for their trades and subjects to a new generation.

President of ATU, Dr Orla Flynn, also spoke and acknowledged the achievements of the students, apprentices, and staff.

Mayor Higgins wished competitors well in the global WorldSkills Final in 2023, and in their future careers and studies.

7.3 Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029 – Draft Ministerial Direction

The Minister for Housing Local Government and Heritage in accordance with Section 31 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) issued a Draft Direction in relation to the Galway City Development Plan to Galway City Council on the 13th of January 2023. The Draft Direction sets out a number of steps that the Planning Authority are directed to take with regards to the Development Plan.

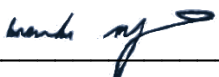
During a statutory public display period of two weeks in relation to the Draft Direction, a total of 60 submissions and observations were received. As required by legislation, a Chief Executive's Report on this consultation process has been prepared. The Chief Executive's Report is required to summarise submissions and observations received and to make recommendations in relation to the best manner in which to give effect to the Draft Direction.

The Chief Executive's Report was furnished to the Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) and the Minister on the 2nd March 2023 for their consideration. It was also separately sent to all City Councillors on that date.

Following receipt of the Chief Executive's Report, the OPR will consider it and all submissions received and consequently will make a recommendation to the Minister regarding whether a final Direction is to be issued and if so with/out any amendments or not issued at all. The Minister will then make a final decision on the Direction.

8. Notable Dates

Date	Time – Meeting
06/03/2023	15:00 – 18:30 Ordinary Council Meeting
09/03/2023	14:00 – 15:00 Economic, Community and Culture SPC
21/03/2023	14:30 – 17:30 Lough Corrib Navigation Trustees
24/03/2023	11:00 – 13:00 Northern & Western Regional Assembly
27/03/2023	11:00 – 12:00 Joint Policing Committee
28/03/2023	Audit Meeting

Signed: 

Brendan McGrath,
Chief Executive

3rd March 2023