



**Comhairle Cathrach
na Gaillimhe**
Galway City Council

Dréachtphlean Oidhreachta Chathair na Gaillimhe 2024-2029

Draft Galway City Heritage Plan 2024 – 2029





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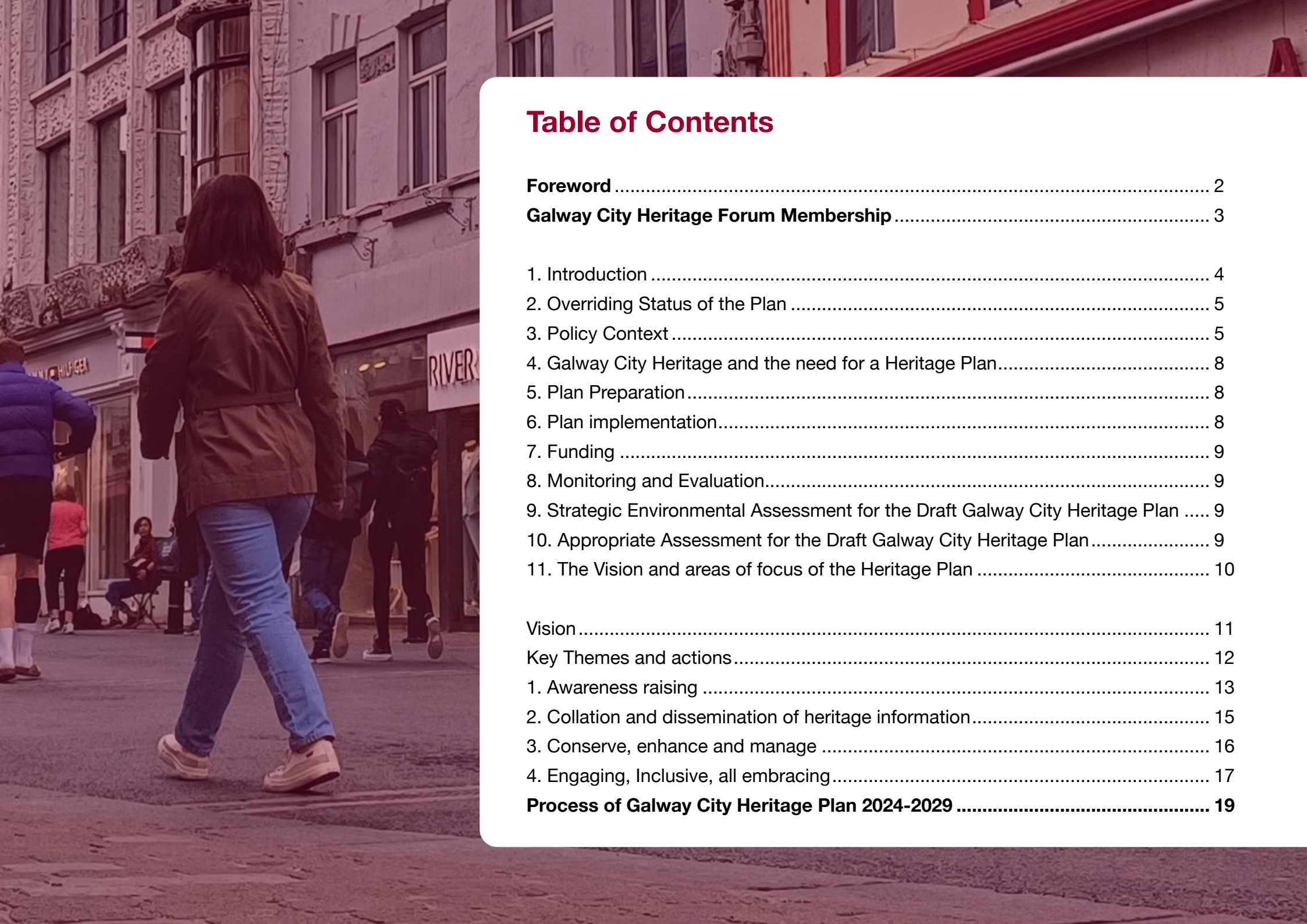


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Foreword

Galway City has a unique natural, built and cultural heritage which defines our identity and gives us a strong sense of pride and ownership. This is the third Galway City Heritage Plan, and it sets out the overall framework for identifying, raising awareness of and promoting the conservation of the heritage of Galway city.

The heritage of the City needs to be protected, managed and nurtured in a manner that will promote increased awareness and sustainable enjoyment by all. The preparation and implementation of the City Heritage Plan 2024 - 2029 is a key part in this process. It will, following the lead of the previous Heritage Plans, continue to define Heritage in how we think and feel about our City.

Chief Executive of Galway City Council

Tribute must be paid to all those involved in the preparation of the plan, particularly Dr. Jim Higgins, Heritage officer, for his expertise and commitment in producing the Draft Heritage Plan, together with the planning staff, SPC members and the Heritage Forum which represents a wide range of community interests. Credit must also be given to those who participated in the public consultation process.

Looking forward to the next five years we are both proud and confident that the implementation of this Heritage Plan will encourage greater awareness and appreciation of the unique, educational, economic and cultural value of heritage to the life of the City.

Galway City Heritage Forum



Galway City Heritage Forum Membership

Mary Clancy	History Department, National University of Galway
Derrick Hambleton	An Taisce Galway Association
Meave Williams	Community Heritage Interest
Paula Kearney	Biodiversity Officer, Recreation & Amenity, Galway City Council
John Olney	Archaeologist, National Monuments Service
Micheál Mac Aoidh	The Bruach Thoir Language Planning Committee
Christy Kelly	Former Chief Technician of Galway City Council
Cllr John Connolly	Galway City West
Cllr Frank Fahy	Galway City Central
James Reynolds	Conservator, Galway City Museum
Brendan Smith	The Galway National Park City, Tuatha of Terryland Forest Park



1. Introduction

The Heritage Act 1995 states that the national heritage includes monuments, archaeological objects, heritage objects, architectural heritage, flora, fauna, wildlife habitats, landscapes, seascapes, heritage parks and gardens, wrecks, geology and inland waterways. However, our common understanding and appreciation of Heritage now extends beyond this interpretation.

In 2003, UNESCO adopted the inclusion of intangible cultural heritage into the meaning of heritage. The Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (The Faro Convention) promotes a wider understanding of heritage and its relationship to communities

and society. The Convention encourages us to recognize that objects and places are not, in themselves, what is important about cultural heritage. They are important because of the meanings and uses that people attach to them and the values they represent.

Heritage plays an important role in how we think and feel about where we live as it can give us our sense of place. Heritage can contribute to our social, cultural and economic well-being. It is important that we preserve and protect this resource now, so that future generations can continue to enjoy the wide diversity of benefits our unique cultural, natural and built heritage provides.



2. Overriding Status of the Plan



Implementing this Plan will involve Galway City Council helping to facilitate, promote, support and coordinate stakeholders in their activities in a way that is consistent with existing and emerging plans setting out public policy for sustainable development, including that relating to land use developments, land use activities and environmental protection and environmental management.

This Plan is situated alongside this hierarchy of statutory documents that has been subject to environmental assessment/screening for environmental assessment, as appropriate, and forms the decision-making and consent-granting framework. The Plan does not provide consent or establish a framework for granting consent and will not be binding on any decisions relating to the granting of consent.

The Plan fully aligns with the provisions of documents including the existing National Planning Framework, National Climate Action Plan, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy and associated Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan, the Galway City Council Climate Action Plan and the City Development Plan, all of which have been subject to legislative requirements relating to public consultation and environmental

assessment/screening for environmental assessment. As such, the Plan is wholly subject to the requirements of the provisions set out in these documents, including provisions relating to sustainable development, environmental protection and environmental management that have been integrated into these documents, including through SEA and AA processes, and does not introduce any alterations or additions to those provisions.

In order to be realised, projects included in this Plan (in a similar way to other projects from any other sectors) will have to comply, as relevant, with various legislation, policies, plans and programmes (including requirements for lower-tier Appropriate Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment and other licencing requirements as appropriate) that form the statutory decision-making and consent-granting framework. It is a specific provision of this Plan to ensure that all of the provisions from the City Development Plan identified in the accompanying Screening for SEA and AA reports shall be complied with throughout the implementation of this Plan.

3. Policy Context

This Heritage Plan is created in a context where the value of Heritage is acknowledged and woven throughout the statutory and non-statutory plans and strategies that influence the development and management of the City. These include the following:

- The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted by all United Nations member states in 2015, as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which set out a 15- year plan to achieve the goals, which are a blueprint to realise a better and more sustainable future for all.
- Ireland's Programme for Government Our Shared Future makes significant commitments to Ireland's national heritage and biodiversity. These commitments include continued support for Heritage Officers in the areas of heritage education, health and well-being and citizen science and strengthening the number of biodiversity and conservation officers within local authorities.
- Heritage Ireland 2030, Ireland's national Heritage Plan, was launched in February 2022. It is built around a vision of our heritage, in all its forms, being at very centre of local and national discourse, valued by all and cared for and protected for future generations.
- The National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021 highlights a key role for local authorities in biodiversity conservation.
- The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021 – 2025 seeks to strengthen pollinator friendly management of public parks and green spaces, integrate the Pollinator Plan into future county/city development or biodiversity plans, and raise awareness of pollinators and existing initiatives at local authority level.
- Our Place in Time, the Heritage Council Strategic Plan 2023-2028, launched in February 2023, seeks to celebrate and promote Ireland's heritage, while also identifying the challenges to be overcome to secure it into the future.
- The underlying principles of the Greater Galway Charter for Sustainable Urbanism include the "special identity and heritage of Galway as an international, Atlantic-facing, bilingual Irish city with deep roots in the Gaeltacht and many facets of Irish culture."
- Galway Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) 2020-2032, identifies the key infrastructure, services and facilities that will be required to support compact growth and regeneration.
- Galway City Council's Corporate Plan 2020-2024 sets out the council's goals and objectives for the city. It aims to make Galway the best city in which to Live, Work, Study, Visit & Invest through delivering services in an equal, inclusive and sustainable manner.
- The Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029 provides a policy framework to guide the future growth of the City to 2029 and into the longer term.
- Galway City Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2024 – 2029 sets out, for a six-year period, the objectives and actions needed to promote and support the economic development and the local and community development of Galway City both by Galway City Council directly, and in partnership with other economic and community development stakeholders.
- Galway City Biodiversity Plan 2014-2024 provides an invaluable opportunity for people and organisations to work together to halt the loss of biodiversity in the city.

- Galway City Culture & Creativity Strategy 2023-2027, which vision is for Galway in 2027 is of a city where creativity and cultural rights of everyone matters.
- Galway City Council Climate Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024, sets out Galway City Council's short and medium term objectives for the adaptation to climate change. The strategy is based on four main themes: critical infrastructure and buildings, natural and cultural capital, water resources and flood risk management and community services and sets out specific actions under each.
- Galway City Council Local Authority Climate Action Plan 2024-2029 sets out how Galway City Council will be responsible for enhancing climate resilience, increasing energy efficiency, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, across its own assets, services, and infrastructure, for which it is fully accountable, whilst also demonstrating a broader role of influencing, advocating, and facilitating other sectors, to meet their own climate targets and ambitions.



4. Galway City Heritage and the need for a Heritage Plan

Galway has exceptionally strong links with its past and its Heritage is woven throughout the natural and built environment, and the cultural vibrancy of the city. There is a wealth of local community work in Galway City preserving and promoting its natural, built and cultural heritage, with many events taking place each year. Heritage projects can be dependent on volunteerism and commitment on the part of the individual, but also collectively as part of community, clubs and societies.

The Heritage of Galway City therefore needs to be protected, managed and nurtured in a manner that will promote increased awareness and sustainable enjoyment by all. This also has to be carefully achieved while noting climate change and biodiversity loss. The changing climate, together with biodiversity loss, poses a substantial threat not only to the way of life of the people of Galway City but also to our heritage, due to the physical impacts of climate change like flooding from rising sea levels, coastal erosion and increased weathering of our built heritage. Both climate and biodiversity awareness are now a key theme of international and national heritage policy and there is an increased focus on working collectively to adapt and meet the challenges posed by climate change and biodiversity loss. The response to both Climate and Biodiversity challenges need to be incorporated through each and every action of this Heritage Plan.

5. Plan Preparation

This is the third Galway City Heritage Plan, and it sets out the overall framework for identifying, raising awareness of and promoting the conservation of the heritage of Galway city. The plan is the result of engagement and discussions with the Public, the Heritage Forum, the City Council and critical stakeholders.

The Heritage Forum is a non-statutory advisory group established by the City Council to provide advice on the preparation and implementation of the Heritage Plan. The Forum which works in a voluntary capacity is a significant asset in the preparation of the Plan. The development of the Draft

Heritage Plan has been subject of targeted consultation process which involved the general public, interested bodies and the Heritage Council. After consultation all submissions and observations received were brought back to the Heritage Forum and subsequently resulted in a number of further inclusions in the plan. It has also been presented to the Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) and to the Members of Galway City Council for discussion and adoption.

6. Plan implementation

The Heritage Plan will be implemented through the delivery of the key actions identified in this plan. The Heritage Office, the various stakeholders and partners, and relevant sections of Galway City Council will endeavour to implement the Plan over the five years,

with direct support in particular from the Heritage Council. The Heritage Forum will also be a mechanism to assist in the delivery of the associated actions.

7. Funding

A key function of the Heritage Officer at Galway City Council is to provide support for community initiatives by providing advice and guidance on funding opportunities available to progress local heritage initiatives. Galway City Council is committed to identifying and accessing heritage funding opportunities during this five-year plan period. Key actions are also funded by the Heritage Council annually, under a grants system for implementation of actions of local heritage plans.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

The outcomes of the actions will be monitored throughout the life of the plan and if deemed necessary, changes will be incorporated into the plan. This evaluation will not only measure the plan's success, but also inform the design of subsequent strategies and initiatives, ensuring Galway City stays on course for heritage preservation. The Heritage Forum will also be an important mechanism for monitoring and evaluation and will be in a position to prioritise actions and respond, reflecting where opportunities arise.

9. Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Draft Galway City Heritage Plan

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process is the formal systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a plan or programme before a decision is made to finalise the plan or programme. Screening is the process for determining whether a particular plan, other than those for which SEA is mandatory, would be likely to have significant environmental effects, and would thus warrant SEA. The Heritage Plan is being screened for the need to undertake full SEA and the emerging conclusion is that full SEA is not required.

10. Appropriate Assessment for the Draft Galway City Heritage Plan

Appropriate Assessment (AA) is an impact assessment process concerning Natura 2000, or European, sites - these sites have been designated or proposed for designation by virtue of their ecological importance. The Habitats Directive¹ and the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) provide the requirement to screen for likely significant effects on European Sites. If the effects are deemed to be significant, potentially significant or uncertain then Stage 2 AA must be undertaken.

¹ Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora

The Plan is being subject to a screening for AA process in order to establish whether or not AA must be undertaken. The accompanying Screening for AA Report identifies that the Plan is not foreseen to have any likelihood for significant effects on any European sites, alone or in combination with other plans or projects – and therefore any potential for a significant effect to any European site as a result of implementing the Plan can be ruled out.

11. The Vision and areas of focus of the Heritage Plan:

The Galway City Heritage Plan is a non-statutory document, and it establishes a framework for coordinated heritage management and programming for the next 5 years based on:

- A Vision – To inspire, motivate and give direction in what we want to achieve for heritage in Galway City
- Key themes - What we will focus on
- Actions - What we can do.



Vision

To conserve, enhance and promote Galway City's rich Heritage through community engagement, sustainable practices, and innovative initiatives, fostering a vibrant cultural tapestry, that honours our past while shaping a thriving future for generations to come.

To conserve and to promote awareness of Galway city's unique built natural and cultural Heritage to benefit the wellbeing of all those who live, work and visit the city.



Key themes and actions

The plan includes a legacy of actions from the previous plan in addition to a number of amended and new actions relevant for this plan period. The strategies of the Heritage Plan include delivery of actions under a range of themes. The general themes of the Heritage Plan are as follows and all listed actions are grouped accordingly. Some actions may relate to a number of themes but have been placed in the section where they are considered to have the most impact.

The themes are:

1. Awareness raising

This theme relates to raising awareness of heritage through community engagement, educational programs and interactive initiatives. It includes fostering appreciation of our cultural legacy, for future generations to cherish and enjoy. It also includes encouraging stewardship and participation in safeguarding cherished landmarks and traditions.

2. Collation and dissemination of heritage information

This theme relates to the collation and dissemination of heritage information. This can be done through various print, digital and media platforms. This will provide improved accessibility to knowledge of heritage, while fostering greater appreciation by all.



3. Conserve, enhance and manage

This theme relates to the conservation, enhancement and management of heritage sites, while supporting sustainable practices and community involvement. This enables the safeguarding of cultural identity, ensuring the preservation of all aspects of Heritage.

4. Engaging, inclusive, all embracing

This theme relates to fostering and engaging an all-embracing approach to heritage, celebrating diverse cultural narratives and perspectives. This will encourage active participation from all communities, advancing a collective sense of ownership and pride in preserving our shared cultural heritage for future generations.



1. Awareness raising

Actions

1. Increase awareness in schools through the circulation of visual information and active participation on heritage buildings, geology, flora, and fauna, monuments, industrial archaeology, wildlife and the city waterways.
2. Support the protection of and create an awareness of sites and centres of geological importance.
3. Promote the use of local stone in walls, boundaries, buildings and other features in new developments in the city.
4. Organise Galway Heritage Conferences themed on topics of local heritage interest with links to the broader context.
5. Research and publish heritage information, including museum catalogues.
6. Raise awareness of the value of the natural heritage particularly in relation key areas in Galway City (e.g. Silver Strand, Barna Woods, Merlin Woods, Terryland Park, Dangan Woods) in accordance with Galway City Councils imminent greenspace strategy and biodiversity plan.
7. Promote the continued and re-use use of historical place names, which reflect the heritage of local areas.
8. Promote the use of the Irish language in Galway which is a designated Bilingual City.
9. Continue to promote the use of the Irish language, particularly in the naming of new residential areas, and also in general usage in the Galway City.

10. Continue to participate and support the aims of the *Walled Towns Friendship Circle* and in the *Irish Walled Towns Network*. Implement Conservation Management Plans for the Town Walls and their contextual setting based on the '*Conservation Management and Interpretation Plan for Galway Walled Town*'(2013).
11. Continue to promote and participate in architectural festival and events and similar significant heritage projects that provide opportunities for the public to view and learn about buildings of interest both in public and private ownership.
12. Organise photographic competitions on the distinctive built and natural heritage of the city.
13. Highlight the value of biodiversity through promotion of the National Biodiversity Plan and the objectives of the Galway City Biodiversity Action Plan (2014-2024).
14. Maximise the use of the Galway City Council's website and social media in dispersing information on heritage.
15. Develop creative initiatives to raise awareness of the importance of Heritage.
16. Organise interactive workshops, art installations, heritage-themed competitions, storytelling events, virtual tours, and partnerships with local artists and schools to raise awareness effectively.



2. Collation and dissemination of heritage information

Actions

1. Support ongoing recording of wildlife surveys and general awareness of habitats in conjunction with NPWS, local/ National Wildlife Organisations and the biodiversity officer.
2. Continue to encourage the publication of the results of Archaeological investigations and survey in the heritage magazine.
3. Complement the recent Audit of Industrial Heritage in the City with more detailed surveys of recorded sites and features.
4. Conduct a survey of the geological mushroom stones in the city and publish information on the findings.
5. Expand the remit of the Ecclesiastical Heritage Trail Booklet, previously published in conjunction with Heritage Section of Galway County Council.
6. Assemble an archive and a photographic database of the archaeological monuments of Galway City for exhibition and record purposes.
7. Promote the recording of place and field names using community input. Publish a placenames Atlas of Galway City.
8. Continue to identify and promote the addition of structures of heritage value onto the Register of Protected Structures and examine the potential for expansion of Architectural Conservation Areas in the city.
9. Continue to carry out surveys of cemeteries in the city, publish information leaflets, upload survey data to the historic graveyard information website and –historicgraves.com, have signage at graveyards that gives plot location using maps with published leaflet.
10. Continue to support promotional guides to Galway’s entire natural heritage, such as those produced to date for the main woodlands.
11. In co-operation with the Recreational and Amenity Section and Biodiversity Officer at Galway City Council, promote biodiversity and environment friendly policies on both private and publicly owned amenity lands.
12. Undertake awareness campaigns regarding Alien Species and the negative impact they can have on existing habitats.
13. Promote Galway litter free campaigns and promote a ‘Golden Mile’ competition for Galway City.
14. Report and make publicly available information on elements of wrecks and maritime artefact finds.
15. Publish an audit of Thatched Buildings in Galway City.
16. Promote the recording, preservation and publication of modern folklore/folk life studies of Galway City.
17. Continue to host joint projects with the local libraries and other institutes such as the Museum of Country Life (Mayo) and National Heritage Institutions.
18. Initiate a Traveller’s Folklore Project to include for the recording of folklore, customs and traditions.
19. Prepare an audit of the built heritage elements in the docks area and a report on the associated maritime heritage.
20. Prepare a Conservation and Management Plan for the Waterways of the city.
21. Promote the recognition of “Intangible Heritage” in The Cultural, Social and Economic Realms.

22. Foster Heritage Links and exchanges with Twin Cities and participate in joint cultural events.
23. Promote the use of the Irish language in heritage exhibitions and at social events associated with the Heritage Office.
24. Promote the aims of Gaillimh le Gaeilge, Gaeilge ABC (Gaeltacht of Bearna-Cnoc na Cathrach) and An Bruach Thoir (Gaeltacht of Galway City East) in helping to foster the Irish language.
25. Promote cultural and social diversity and have regard to Galway City Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP).
26. Continue bilingual publication of guide series to the artefacts in the Museum and other similarly produced information documents.
27. Utilize digital platforms, educational programs, exhibitions, cultural events, heritage trails, public talks, and collaborations to promote, enhance and disseminate information on Galway City's heritage effectively.

3. Conserve, enhance and manage

Actions

1. Liaise and co-operate with local and national archaeological and historical societies in promoting an interest in Galway's archaeological heritage.
2. Liaise with National Monument Service (NMS), NUI National Museum of Ireland and professional archaeological bodies in the promotion of best practice in archaeological survey, excavation, monitoring and publication of results.
3. Promote best conservation practice and training with regard to the built heritage in Galway.
4. Implement the "*Conservation Management and Interpretation Plan for Galway City Walls*" 2013.
5. Co-operate with the Recreational & Amenity Department and the Planning Department in promoting Biodiversity and formulating policies for future plans and strategies.
6. Continue to provide information on best practice in clean-ups and recording of all local, historic graveyards.
7. Liaise with national heritage bodies including the Heritage Council, genealogical groups and the National Monuments Service in the provision of advice regarding the heritage aspects of cemeteries.
8. Continue to promote through lectures, talks and Heritage events, an interest in climate change, flora, fauna and biodiversity and in conservation and environment sustainability.
9. Promote best practice in the conservation of natural heritage features in proposed developments in line with the City Development Plan. This includes preservation of field boundaries, streams, natural outcrops of geological interest as well as hedgerows, traditional walls, and natural features.
10. Prepare conservation and management plans and engage on restoration projects for Heritage Buildings in City Council ownership.

11. Continue to promote use of best practice in, the restoration, of local traditional boats.
12. Continue to promote the use of traditional skills, materials & crafts, in particular in relation to thatching, hand painted of signs and lime rendering of walls.
13. Formulate an integrated plan with tourism and commercial interests to promote Galway City as a Heritage Tourism destination and co-operate with the Tourism Officer.
14. Encourage local business and tourism bodies to promote and participate in Heritage Week Events.
15. Seek sponsorship from businesses and individuals for heritage projects, publications and events.
16. Organise a series of seminars for businesses and tourism bodies on 'Making the Most of Galway's Heritage'.
17. Provide information on the City Council website on national and international legislation relating to natural and built heritage.
18. Prepare a summary review on the Galway City Heritage survey of 1983-1984 and update with archaeological survey carried out in 1984.
19. Implement conservation policies, establish heritage sites, fund restoration projects, promote sustainable tourism, and engage communities in preservation efforts for long-term management.
20. Facilitate the learning/sharing of traditional skills in relation to built, maritime and natural heritage.
21. Support projects on the historic paths we tread; boreen walks, neighbourhood walks, and pedestrian links through the urban fabric.
22. Facilitate the learning/sharing of traditional skills in relation to built, maritime and natural heritage.
23. Support sustainable links between parks and castles, fostering sustainability, conservation, and promoting community engagement.
24. Support best practise guide for the maintenance and continued work to preserve and maintain Merlin Castle, Terryland Castle and Menlough Castle.
25. Engage with the Lough Corrib Navigation Trustees; in the conservation and management of the Waterways of the city.

4. Engaging, inclusive, all embracing

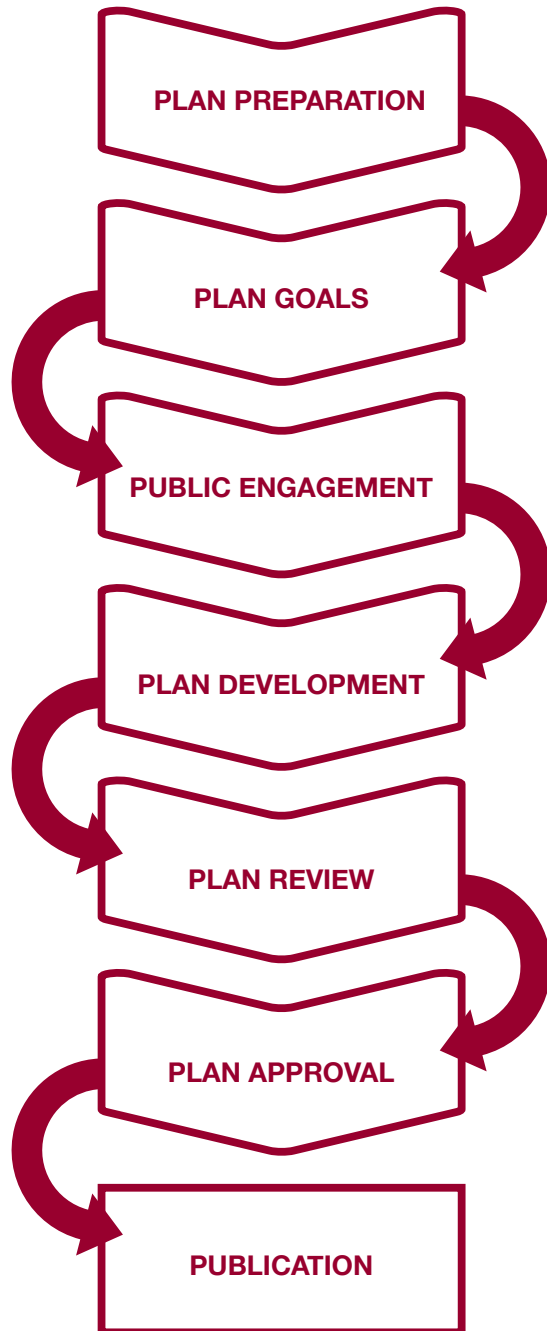
Actions

1. Support and contribute to the Calendar of Events at the Galway City Museum most particularly during the annual Heritage Week.
2. Promote the use of a fully functioning and publicly accessible Archival Service within Galway City Council.
3. Archive and digitise historical photographic records of Structures and Streetscapes of Galway City. Digitise and make available through the City Council website.
4. Prepare a record of the Galway City Civic Regalia, Archives and Civic Records in both hard copy and digital format making the information available to the general public.
5. Engage with ICT in the City Council to ensure the best presentation and access to heritage information on the City Council website and appropriate direction to other relevant links.

6. Promote, through events and publications, the knowledge of the Town Walls and other fortifications and features.
7. Produce a Calendar reflecting the heritage of Galway City.
8. Promote the recording of folk life customs through Heritage Council's 'Heritage in Schools Scheme'.
9. Establish a series of museum talks and workshops in conjunction with the Galway City Museum and the National Museum of Ireland.
10. Continue to promote the community heritage grant scheme specifically to promote the unique heritage of the city.
11. Raise awareness of Maritime Heritage and lighthouses, by supporting initiatives and projects with these groups.
12. Support the restoration/maintenance of the Naomh Eanna hull for display as a heritage item of interest.
13. Support the research into use of technology to create nature-based solutions where applicable to heritage and biodiversity related climate change challenges.
14. Support the implementation of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan.
15. Continue to support the preparation and implementation of Local Biodiversity Action Plans.
16. Work with the Climate Action Regional Office (CARO) and any other relevant stakeholder to input into the implementation of the Local Authority Climate Action Plan.
17. Promote nature-based solutions which support biodiversity for climate change adaptation and mitigation.
18. Support links with Heritage courses at the Atlantic Technological University (ATU) and University of Galway and foster links with the wider school network.
19. To develop a system for providing digital QR codes at sites of heritage significance, with a view to offering instant access to historical insights.
20. Formally enact, with the Heritage Forum, a system to monitor and implement the Heritage Plan, with meetings held throughout the year, to discuss funding streams which may be available.
21. Support the creation of a properly resourced Heritage Office, which would lead in preserving, promoting, and celebrating Galway City's rich history through education, conservation projects, and community engagement initiatives.
22. Link in on a regular basis with the Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) and community development groups to promote heritage.



Process of Galway City Heritage Plan 2024-2029









**Comhairle Cathrach
na Gaillimhe**
Galway City Council

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