



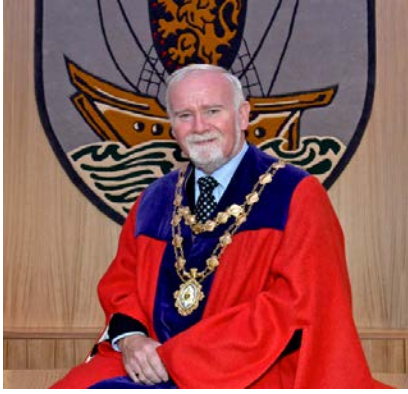
Comhairle Cathrach na Gaillimhe
Galway City Council



CORPORATE PLAN 2014 –2019

Approved by the members of Galway City Council on 8th December 2014

FOREWORD



Cllr. Donal Lyons:

Mayor of the City of Galway

We are pleased to present Galway City Council's Corporate Plan for the period 2014-2019 which coincides with the five-year term of the recently elected Council. This Plan, which was prepared by a Joint Committee comprised of the members of the Corporate Policy Group and City Council officials, sets out the City Council's core values, principal objectives and the strategies for the achievement of these objectives over the lifetime of the Plan. It also provides a strategic framework within which the combined efforts of the elected members and staff can work together to achieve these objectives having regard to the mission statement and core values of our organisation.

Galway City Council provides a wide range of services to the citizens, visitors and businesses of Galway and will strive to improve the delivery of these services within the confines of national and local budgetary constraints. There are challenges ahead. Against a backdrop of reduced human and financial resources, the Corporate Plan highlights the need for a co-ordinated response to service areas and the identification of efficiency improvements to ensure cost effective delivery of services within the resources available.

For our achievements to date, which this year included the awarding of both Europe's Micro City of the year and the designation of Galway as a UNESCO City of Film, we wish to thank the Elected Members for their support and the staff of Galway Local Authorities for their continuing dedicated work efforts. It is through this successful ongoing co-operation that we can endeavour to meet the challenges ahead and deliver our services to the citizens of the city in the best possible manner that meets our Corporate Plan commitments.



Brendan McGrath:

Chief Executive, Galway City Council

As a council we are committed to an interagency approach to maximise the effective delivery of services and we will use all our resources to empower and develop the potential of Galway City as an excellent place to live, work and invest. We believe that the objectives set out in the Plan are both reasonable and achievable and that both Council members and staff are committed to meeting these challenges in an efficient, inclusive and democratic manner. To underpin these objectives, annual operational plans for each area of activity will be prepared which will in turn, monitor and measure our progress in achieving these objectives.

We wish to express our thanks to all who have contributed to the formulation of this Plan and we look forward to working with all concerned in its implementation.

Cllr. Donal Lyons: Mayor of the City of Galway

Brendan McGrath: Chief Executive, Galway City Council

INTRODUCTION

Galway city is the City of the Tribes and the gateway city for the West of Ireland.

Located on the shores of Galway Bay, within sight of the Atlantic Ocean, the city is surrounded by the phenomenal landscape of Connemara to the West and Lough Corrib to the north. The city is bisected by the river whose stony bed (Gaill Aimh) gives it its name, and the city centre is interwoven with canals, streams and millraces which have their origins in the commercial heritage of earlier centuries.

The permanent population of the city continues to grow, from just over 47,000 in 1986 to 75,529 in 2011, and this is supplemented by upwards of 20,000 visitors and third-level students. This growth reflects not only a national and international trend of increased urbanisation but more specifically the attractiveness of Galway as a city to study in, to work in, to visit and to live in. It also reflects Galway's role as the primary city and service centre for the West Region. Through recent decades, employment in the city has increased with areas such as bio-technology, medical devices, and ITC services combining with strong public service, retail, health, education and commercial and hospitality sectors in providing work opportunities for the people of the region. The City's location on Galway Bay, at the mid-point of the Wild Atlantic Way and surrounded by the outstanding landscape and natural beauty of Connemara, Lough Corrib and the Burren, points to the pivotal role of tourism in the local economy, and highlights the imperative of further exploiting the potential of these wonderful assets in a sustainable way.

Galway is a young and vibrant city.

It is a learning city, with 38,000 pupils and students in primary, secondary, further and third level schools and colleges across the city.

Education and learning is part of the past, the present and the future of the city, and learning and the knowledge society will sustain and develop our city into the twenty first century. The City Council is working with other stakeholders to ensure that the networks, infrastructure and other foundations for the knowledge economy are in place.

Galway is an increasingly multi-cultural city.

According to the 2011 census, one in five of the population of the city was born outside Ireland. This diversity presents everyone in the city with opportunities and challenges. The opportunity exists to integrate people from different ethnic and national origins in a sustainable intercultural way into the life of the city. The challenge is to build communities which acknowledge diversity and at the same time work together. These challenges impact on many aspects of the work of the City Council including housing, community development, economic development, and social inclusion.

Galway is a cultural and creative city.

Over the years, our city's reputation in Ireland and overseas has been enhanced by the emergence of world leaders in the arts such as Druid Theatre Company, Galway International Arts Festival and Macnas, and festivals such as the Volvo Ocean Race. Locally based visual artists, writers, musicians, film makers, actors, producers and directors all contribute to the collective gaiety, creative atmosphere, economic mix and cultural identity of the city. There is, however, more to be done in tapping the potential of culture to enrich the lives of all who live and work in the city, and this will be a strategic goal of the Council's over the next five years.

Galway is the region's primary economic driver.

A strong modern and diverse economy is one of the pre-requisites for a successful city. The Government's reform programme, "Putting People First" assigned a lead role to the City Council in achieving this success. In this regard, the City Council will supplement the delivery of the critical physical and social infrastructure which underpins economic activity with a wide collaboration with business, public and community

interests, and in particular with Galway County Council, in analysing the components of the local economy, in directing our efforts where they can deliver the best results and in ensuring that Galway can drive economic growth at local and regional level, and remain competitive in national and international terms.

The recent recession, and the consequent retrenchment in economic activity and investment in public services, has fundamentally changed the landscape in which local authorities such as Galway City Council must operate. Our ability to think strategically, and to make sometimes difficult choices about how we best use the resources available to meet the needs of the city, is of fundamental importance. A shared understanding of what is required will be the cornerstone of our strategy, and we, the members and staff of Galway City Council, are committed to working with other organisations at local and national level to ensure that Galway will be the best city it can be. We will work to ensure the best quality of life for all the people of our city, and we will do so in an open and transparent way which is accountable to the people we serve.

MISSION STATEMENT

“To work in partnership as Elected Members and Staff of Galway City Council in the development and enhancement of the City and to provide efficient services to the people we serve, and in so doing, to continue to make Galway an attractive, vibrant and proud city in which to live, work and visit.”

CORE VALUES

Our core values are derived from the principles of good local government and provide the basis for our objectives and actions as an organisation.

Democratic leadership

To represent all people of the city in an open and transparent fashion and to maintain and develop the City Council’s lead role in meeting the challenges facing the city as we strive for a better quality of life for the people we serve.

Corporate Governance

To sustain a commitment to openness, accountability and a high standard of corporate governance, the maintenance of high standards of conduct and integrity by Members and staff, thereby promoting a culture of trust.

Public Service to the Highest Standards

To deliver high quality public services to the people of the city through a committed, dedicated and innovative staff.

Efficiency

To provide all services in an efficient and cost-effective manner is of critical importance. The City Council is committed to the optimum use of its resources and to sound financial management having regard to prevailing economic circumstances and the necessity to prioritise core services.

Partnership

To foster and develop partnership with public and private organisations and communities in the development and advancement of initiatives and to maximise resources and investments for the city.

Inclusiveness

To reach out to all of the people of the city, to respect all members of the community and to promote an inclusive and accessible city.

Sustainability

To lead the way in the sustainable development of the city, to enhance the unique character and environment of the city and to continually improve the quality of life of its citizens having regard to the challenges that exist including climate change, and the requirements of future generations.

Accountability

To accept that, in making and implementing public policy, we, the members and staff of the City Council, are accountable for our decisions and actions.

Equality

To strive for equal treatment of all with whom we come into contact, except where otherwise provided for by law, and to foster equality of opportunity through our policies and programmes.

Valuing our staff

To encourage and recognise a culture of performance, commitment and loyalty among our staff, to support our workforce during this time of change through training, development and assistance programmes and at all times to maintain a workplace environment that encourages and supports the right of dignity at work.

OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

Galway City Council is the local authority for Galway City. It provides a range of services, it regulates certain activities, and it also fulfils a representational role through the democratic process.

Internal Environment

The Council comprises the elected Councillors and the staff of the Council. Local Government law divides the functions of the City Council into those policy making functions reserved to Councillors known as “reserved functions”, and functions relating to administration and to policy implementation performed by the Chief Executive (or officials delegated by him) and known as “executive functions”. The Chief Executive must have regard to the policies made by the elected Council in making his decisions.

While policy making is the role of the elected Council, the five Strategic Policy Committees (S.P.Cs) of the Council consider policy development in areas aligned to Council services, and make recommendations on policy to the full Council for consideration and decision. The S.P.C. membership comprises elected Councillors and sectoral interests including the social partners, nominees of the Public Participation Network and other relevant interests at local level. The Chair of each SPC must be a Council member and the five Chairs, together with the Mayor, form the Corporate Policy Group (C.P.G).

Certain functional responsibilities of the Council are overseen by structures such as the Audit Committee, the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee, and the Local Community Development Committee, whose members comprise Councillors and other local interests. Councillors also represent the Council on a number of external committees including Galway Roscommon Education and Training Board and the Joint Policing Committee.

The Council’s services are delivered through a number of functional Departments (e.g. Housing, Planning), which are supported and resourced by the Corporate Services, HR, ICT and Finance Departments. The principal point of contact between the citizens and the Council is the Customer Services Centre.

The Council develops and implements its own policies but it also has a significant role in implementing national policy, as outlined and communicated by Government or other State authorities. In this regard, the Council is required to take account of a wide range of strategies, plans, guidelines and circulars which outline how national policy is to be implemented at local level.

The severe economic downturn from 2008 onward had a significant impact on the capacity of the Council to deliver on its mandate, as funding and staffing levels declined. The Council addressed this situation by ensuring that its core services were maintained, by realigning its work processes and structures in line with current priorities, by flexible work practices and by achieving greater efficiencies. While the economic environment is now more favourable, the embargo on recruitment remains in place and the Government’s programme for Local Government Reform has placed a number of additional responsibilities on local authorities. The Council must therefore maintain its focus on ensuring that it has the capacity to deliver on the objectives which are outlined in this Plan and which are no less than the city and its people deserve. To this end, there will be an increased focus on the need for, and implementation of, organisational change during the period covered by this plan.

External Environment

The economic downturn has brought into sharp focus the need for Galway City Council and others to adopt a proactive approach to strengthening the local economy. While the diverse nature of economic activity and the strong services sectors in the city have enabled Galway to remain economically strong and competitive, this resilience has been tested by the consequences of the downturn, in particular, the severe

decline in domestic demand and the reduction in capital investment. The central role assigned to the City Council in planning for, and driving the economic development of the city is therefore opportune, and our focus will be on ensuring that the economic potential of the city is fully realised, and that policy and investment is directed to where it will yield the greatest benefit.

The city's role as a national gateway and the capital of the West Region will require a continuation of the national and international investment in high value employment in areas such as medical technology, biotechnology, and ITC, and other areas such as tourism where the city may have a competitive advantage. It will also require the support of national Government for the required investment in regional infrastructure. Of equal importance will be the work of the Local Enterprise Office in supporting the establishment and growth of small enterprises, and the delivery of policies and actions which will generate and facilitate more opportunities for local employment.

The presence of two strong third level education colleges in the City is also a significant resource, both in its own right in identifying Galway as a learning city, and as an asset to be utilised in meeting the needs of the city. Our approach to achieving the objectives outlined in this plan will include further collaboration between these colleges and the Council.

The city's national and international reputation as a centre for the arts is both a cause for celebration and something which cannot be taken for granted. The proposal to designate an Irish city as European Capital of Culture can be the catalyst for the development and implementation of a strategy to broaden and enhance opportunities for participation in arts and culture, and to fully exploit the potential of the arts and culture to contribute to the local economy.

The lack of investment in housing in the city since the downturn has also given rise to a shortage of housing supply, manifested in rising rents and an increase in the number of households seeking social housing supports. The Council has ensured that suitably zoned land is available, and we will work with Government and other stakeholders in implementing any additional measures to increase housing supply.

Investment in other infrastructure is also required; not least the provision of another crossing of the River, and increased investment in water and waste water services, and important decisions will be made regarding the future of Galway Harbour. In this regard, the over-riding objective is to ensure that the city can grow and develop in a manner which is sustainable and which best meets the need of the city and the wider region.

A central element in Galway's success to date has been the willingness and capacity of all of the local stakeholders to work together. In this regard, and notwithstanding the demise of the co-ordinating structures of the City Development Board, the Council is fully committed to taking the lead in bringing all of the key players in the economic, social and community life of the city on board in realising the vision for a successful city.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Housing

Objective:

To provide suitable housing accommodation and a responsive and supportive service for those in need of housing support.

Priorities:

- Advance Housing Capital Programme in the context of the National Housing Strategy 2014
- Advance Traveller Accommodation Plan
- Implement Housing Assistance Payment Project
- Continue to reduce vacant housing stock across the city
- Finalise and close off on historical housing capital balances
- Undertake Housing Rent Assessment
- Ensure that our housing strategy addresses the needs of the most vulnerable, including homeless people and people with disabilities.

Transportation

Objective:

To provide, manage and maintain, a safe and effective, roads and transportation network and work in partnership with public transport providers and other agencies in developing integrated and sustainable transportation policies.

Priorities:

- Implement traffic management and mobility improvements at priority locations across the city.
- Arrange lowering of Lough Atalia Road
- Appraise standard of the city's bridges, starting with O'Briens Bridge and Salmon Weir Bridge
- Implement additional measures for sustainable transport, inc. Bike Share Scheme, and more Tour Bus parking
- Deliver continuous programme for maintaining and protecting transportation infrastructure
- Review enforcement and other services delivered by Community Wardens
- Maintain the prioritisation of the safety of all road users in managing and developing the city's transport networks.

Water Services

Objective:

To collaborate with Irish Water in providing and maintaining, in a sustainable manner, a water supply system and a drainage collection/treatment system, capable of meeting the needs of all domestic, commercial and industrial consumers in the city.

Priorities:

- Provide water services in accordance with the Service Level agreement with Irish Water
- Manage the implementation of proposed transformation initiatives while protecting the human and financial resources of Galway City Council.
- Ensure that the city's requirement for modern and efficient water infrastructure is reflected in Irish Water service plans.

Planning

Objective:

To have in place a system of physical planning capable of meeting sustainable economic, environmental and social development objectives for the city.

Priorities:

- Provide an efficient development management service and ensure compliance with planning codes and standards.
- Prepare, adopt and implement area plans, inc. Ardaun LAP and Castlegar Area Plan
- Review and adopt a new City Development Plan.
- Preserve and enhance the built and natural heritage, using schemes such as Buildings in State care, Built Heritage Jobs Leverage Scheme, the Council's own protective measures, and publishing the Thatch Building Survey
- Update Record of Protected Structures

Environment

Objective:

To protect, enhance and conserve the natural environment of our city, to develop a culture of no litter and no pollution and to promote sustainable use of our resources.

Priorities:

- Secure compliance with all relevant environmental legislation.
- Ensure that Council's landfill and recycling facilities are compliant with licence requirements.
- Finalise landfill remediation works.
- Secure the efficient and sustainable management and delivery of cleaning and litter management services.
- Review the Council's role in the provision of waste services, including composting.
- Prepare, adopt and implement the Litter Management Plan 2014/2017
- Develop policy on waste management street furniture
- Examine and advance proposals on litter bin collection service
- Provide and promote environmental awareness in schools, workplaces, and communities.
- Advance Silverstrand/Sailin Coastal Protection Project.
- Put in place plan for water quality assessment at the city's beaches as required.
- Continue working with Galway County Council in ensuring effective fire prevention and protection services for the city.

Recreation and Amenity

Objective:

To develop and promote the provision of high quality recreational, leisure and amenity facilities for all age groups and enhance the quality of life for our citizens and visitors alike.

Priorities:

- Support the management regime for parks by developing policy on Parks usage and Bye-Laws.
- Put plans in place for Floral City Contractors.
- Pilot new initiatives for delivery of Park maintenance taking account of value for money.
- Finalise and implement South Park upgrade proposals.
- Tender and deliver Sports Capital Programme
- Put in place sustainable and effective management arrangements for our Community Centres,
- Secure the completion of Ballinfoile Community Centre.
- Advance the process for the acquisition of burial ground site.
- Assess and act on the requirements for renewal of the Salthill Promenade amenity area.

Economic and Community Development

Objectives:

To ensure that Galway has a strong economic base which will support a good quality of life for its citizens, and will drive the sustainable development of the region.

To enable all of our communities to achieve their potential, and to promote and facilitate equality of access and equality of opportunity across all communities.

Priorities:

- Prepare and implement the local economic and community plan
- Prepare and implement the economic strategy in tandem with Galway County Council
- Identify, through the strategy, the sectors with significant potential for growth and employment and utilise the resources and policies of the Council and others to realise this potential.
- Maintain Galway's competitive advantage for inward investment and ensure that the benefits of this investment for local enterprises is exploited.
- Impress on, and work with, Government and other State agencies to deliver the necessary infrastructure to support sustainable economic growth.
- Establish Economic Development SPC and LCDC, and ensure that the LEO is successfully established
- Ensure that the Council promotes social inclusion through its policies and activities
- Continue to progress Galway's Age Friendly Programme to ensure older people's engagement in economic, educational, social, cultural, community and family life and foster better solidarity between generations.
- Lead the delivery of initiatives which support the economic development of the city [e.g. Purple Flag].

Culture

Objective:

To maximise the potential of arts and culture to enrich the lives of all who live in, work in, and visit the city.

- Prepare for submission of bid for European Capital of Culture 2020
- Develop and enhance Galway's standing as a bi-lingual city
- Prepare, adopt and implement a new Arts Strategy for the city
- Prepare, adopt and implement a 5 year strategic plan for the Museum
- Improve occupancy levels and upgrade facilities in Town Hall Theatre
- Improve occupancy levels and upgrade facilities in the Council's cultural facilities.

Finance

Objective:

To maximise resources available for infrastructural and service provision and ensure, the efficient and effective use of these resources, the achievement of a balanced budget and the highest standards of accountability and financial probity.

Priorities:

- Maximise income collection levels and explore the potential for other sources of revenue
- Expand on-line payment options available to our customers
- Implement a significant upgrade to our Financial Management System that will enhance information available for budgetary control and decision-making.
- Proactively seek the best value for money for goods & services through effective and collaborative procurement methods.
- Examine and reconfigure current service deliver model to facilitate shared service arrangements and potential for consolidation of functions.

Corporate Services

Objectives:

To provide an effective support service for the elected members and the organisation generally and to assist the members in fulfilling their democratic mandate.

To ensure the efficient delivery of the corporate services and supports required by the Council.

Priorities:

- Undertake strategic review of Councils land/property assets in order to maximise value to the City.
- Assess and maximise the potential for expanding the remit of the Customer Service Unit
- Enhance our capacity to provide services through the Irish language and to promote the use of Irish.
- Agree and implement protocol for efficient management of Council meetings
- Ensure that the health & safety ethos is prevalent throughout the organisation.
- Put in place appropriate responses to the requirements for organisational change.
- Make appropriate arrangements to commemorate the centenary of the 1916 Rising.

Human Resources

Objective:

**To encourage and assist staff to develop their full potential as valued employees of Galway City Council.
To utilise our staff resources to the maximum effect in the context of our changing environment.
To work in partnership with all relevant stakeholders to maintain industrial peace and ensure a consistent high quality service to our customers.**

Priorities:

- Prepare a local outdoor workforce plan appropriate for the needs of the city
- Implement the revised system for performance management and development
- Manage and implement the Gateway Scheme, and other similar initiatives
- Implement the time and attendance management system
- Promote effective delegation consistently across the organisation.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

Objective:

To maximise the benefits of E-technology in delivering a more accessible service to the public and to provide a quality support and developmental information and communications service to staff, elected members, and the service Departments of the Council.

Priorities:

- Develop and enhance systems to meet the Council's current and future technical, informational and communications requirements.
- Advance the provision of online services and interactions
- Secure the delivery of quality data and seamless integration of technologies
- Introduce new document management system for the organisation

IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Corporate Plan was approved on the 8th December 2014. The Plan provides the strategic direction for the work of the Council, and the objectives and priorities herein will be pursued and implemented through the annual service delivery plans, which will be prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Reform Act, 2014 and will set out in greater detail the activities to be undertaken across all Departments and functions in order to deliver on the plan's objectives. The annual service plan will be implemented through a series of annual business plans for each service, which in turn will inform the team plans for each service team, and responsibility for implementing these plans will be assigned to staff in each service. This will ensure that the work of every staff member can be linked to the achievement of the objectives set out in this plan.

The process of monitoring achievement of the actions required to achieve the objectives will be informed by the use of relevant performance indicators. These indicators will be derived from a combination of the national service indicators currently in use in each local authority, any new indicators to be introduced by the National Oversight and Audit Commission [NOAC] and local indicators which will accurately and validly identify progress and performance levels.

The Plan will be reviewed as required in order to take into account any significant change in the environment which would require a re-appraisal of the strategic priorities.