



**Comhairle Cathrach  
na Gaillimhe**  
Galway City Council

# **Annual Report 2023**

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# 1. Foreword

**From the Mayor of the City of Galway, Councillor Eddie Hoare and Interim Chief Executive, Ms. Patricia Philbin:**

Is ábhar mórtais do Chomhairle Cathrach na Gaillimhe a Thuarascáil Bhliantúil 2023 a sheoladh. This Annual Report details the Council's progress on delivering the strategic goals of our Corporate Plan 2020 – 2024 and highlights the essential work and achievements of the Council in the past year in all our business areas.

It was a productive year on many fronts -

**Arts, Culture and Creativity** continue to thrive in Galway, with highlights including diverse Town Hall Theatre and Galway City Museum programmes; high profile festivals and events, such as St Patrick's Day, Galway International Arts Festival, the Macnas Halloween Parade – which returned for the first time in four years, and the Christmas Markets as well as supports such as workshops, networking and funding continuing to support our thriving cultural scene.

**Environment, Community, Recreation and Amenity** – with continued investment in facilities and supports for the people of Galway - from Healthy Ireland to Leisureland, to benches, pitches, playgrounds, markets, planting, biodiversity, cemeteries, Greening the Laneways, the garden competition, hedge trimming, dog wardens, beach and litter maintenance and Blue Flags, to name just a few. The Ukrainian Response also continued through 2023.

**Finance and Economic Development** – with Galway City securing €1million as part of the EU Net Zero Cities programme, outdoor dining continuing during the summer months, the appointment of a Night Time Economy Officer, the introduction of the MyCoCo.ie platform for Galway City customers, and continued support of the Local Enterprise Office as a shared service with Galway County Council, among other highlights.

**Planning and Housing** - the Galway Charter was launched, as part of the high-profile Academy of Urbanism and Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland 'Reimagining the Irish City' event in April, with the 'Green Spaces Strategy' development in 2023 also bringing opportunities to rethink how we use the space in our city. Works started on the refurbishment of the Circular Road Halting Site replacing the bays with 5 of culturally appropriate Traveller accommodation homes. Works were completed on housing schemes in both East and West of the city and over 220 households were allocated a home.

The **Mayor's Awards** were once again a snapshot of the exemplar work of the people of Galway on behalf of their community – the volunteer spirit remains alive and well in Galway City.

**Transport** – Special Speed Limits Byelaws were introduced in 2023, with a 30km zone in the city centre, the annual Christmas Park and Ride continued, as did the on-going programme of roads and footpaths maintenance and upgrades.

The High Court orders quashing the decision of An Bord Pleanála to grant approval for the N6 Galway City Ring Road (GCRR) Scheme in January 2023 was unwelcome news, as Galway City and its environs have critical transport issues that require urgent resolution. The N6 GCRR is a vital component of the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS). The benefits of the overall GTS are already visible on the ground, with the Salmon Weir Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge, Martin Junction, and Millers Lane opening in 2023. An application for planning consent for BusConnects Galway: Cross-City Link (University Road to Dublin Road) remains with An Bord Pleanála. BusConnects Galway: Dublin Road was submitted to An Bord Pleanála in summer 2023. Galway County Council and Galway City Council welcome the opportunity to engage with An Bord Pleanála further on this project and remain committed to the delivery of the Galway Transport Strategy, and the N6 GCRR.

On the world stage, challenging events and ongoing conflicts continue to impact. Nonetheless, Galway City Council staff, Elected Members, and the people of Galway continue to work together to make our city a great place to live, study, visit or do business.

The Emergency Management Team and crews in Environment, Recreation and Amenity and Roads continued to monitor and respond to severe weather events, protecting people,

homes and businesses in the city, in collaboration with agencies including An Garda Síochána, the Civil Defence, the HSE and the Fire Service.

We would like to recognise the resilience and positivity of the people of Galway and thank them for their engagement with their local authority over 2023.

Thank you also to our Elected Members and to the staff of Galway City Council for their continued public service.

Our congratulations to the staff of Galway City Council who retired or progressed in their careers in 2023 – whether joining Galway City Council, or moving on to new roles elsewhere. In particular, former Chief Executive of Galway City Council, Mr Brendan McGrath, who retired in June 2023, after 47 years of public service. 10 of these were at the helm of Galway City Council.

You can listen to the insights of some of our wonderful staff on the ‘Galway City – Your Council’ podcast, which was launched in summer 2023, wherever you get your podcasts.

The staff and Elected Members of Galway City Council look forward to continuing to work on behalf of the people of the city in 2024 and beyond. Ar scáth a chéile a mhaireann na daoine.



**Mayor of the City of Galway,  
Councillor Eddie Hoare**



**Interim Chief Executive, Ms.  
Patricia Philbin**



## 2. Our Mission Statement

To make Galway the best city in which to live, work, study, visit and invest through delivering services in an equal, inclusive and sustainable manner.



### **3. Core Values**

#### **Respect**

We respect and value our Councillors and staff in delivering services for the people of the city taking into account the many different needs of our modern society

#### **Accountability**

We will carry out our work with honesty and integrity to the highest professional standards across all our services, ensuring decisions are made in the best public interest.

#### **Partnership**

We will work in partnership with the public, private, community and voluntary sectors to deliver our corporate objectives and statutory responsibilities.

#### **Equality**

We will ensure equal treatment of all and embrace and foster the city's diversity and strive for equal outcomes for all groups

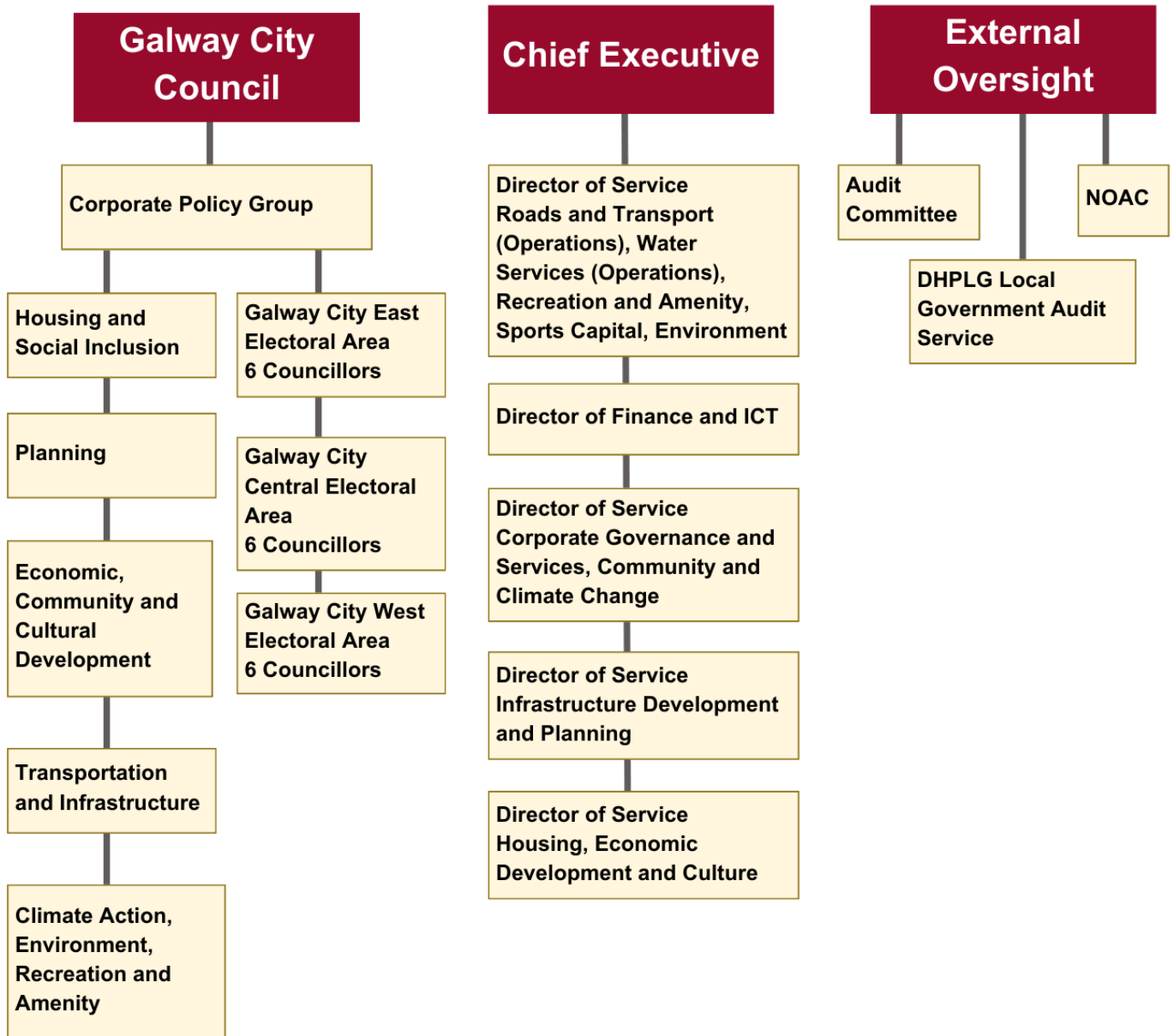
#### **Sustainability**

We will carry out our work with honesty and integrity to the highest professional standards across all our services, ensuring decisions are made in the best public interest.

#### **Democracy**

We support our Councillors by providing widest open transparent engagement with participation from all in the democratic process

## 4. Governance Structure





## 5. Galway City Council Corporate Plan 2020-2024

The Corporate Plan for Galway City Council 2020-2024 as adopted by the Elected Members of Galway City Council, sets out the strategic direction for the City Council for this five-year period.

A wide range of services and facilities are provided by Galway City Council to the residents, visitors and organisations of Galway. The City Council executive commits to continually improving the delivery of these services to our residents, working side by side with our Councillors.

Details of our performance against the national performance indicators is included under the Performance Indicators heading.

Please refer to Galway City Council's Annual Budget for additional information on the Progress Report by Directorate on the Galway City Council Corporate Plan 2020–2024. This document is available on the [Galway City Council website](#).



## 6. Galway City

Galway City is a vibrant, youthful, culturally diverse city, surrounded by the breath-taking vistas of Connemara to the west, Lough Corrib to the north, and the roar of the Atlantic Ocean to the south.

Since the 1980s, Galway City has transformed from a large provincial town to a lively modern city, with a population of over 83,400, over two million visitors every year, and one of the top five internationally recognised med tech clusters.

We have one of the highest rates of third level education in the world and are the most multi-cultural city in Ireland - over 18% of our population come from overseas, to live, work, study, raise families, or retire.

Galway is unique in being the only city in Ireland located in a Gaeltacht area. The Irish language forms an integral part of the cultural identity and social experience of the city.

Our diverse population has made Galway a city that thrives on entrepreneurial spirit, creativity, and pride of place.



The people, the place, the excellent quality of life - all make Galway City a place that's magnetic to visit – and hard to leave.

The City Council recognises that Galway is a city that is constantly changing and evolving to meet the needs of the current generation, while also respecting the historical legacy of the past. The city has a unique identity, heritage and ecology.

The role of the local authority continues to change and develop, and to respond when called on.

### **Accolades**

- 2013 - Great Town of the Year Award
- 2014 - Best Overall Microcity in Europe
- 2014 - UNESCO City of Film
- 2015 - Purple Flag Accreditation
- 2016 - Galway City gains Official Bilingual Status
- 2017 - European Green Leaf
- 2018 - European Region of Gastronomy
- 2020 - European Capital of Culture
- 2022 – 6th European City for raising children (Preply)
- 7th best city in Europe for Air Quality (IQAIR)
- Blue Flag and National Green Coasts Awards for city beaches at Salthill and Silverstrand
- 2023 –Purple Flag – Internationally Renowned Safe City- Interim Renewal accreditation for Galway and Salthill
- 3rd in fDi Intelligence's European Cities and Regions of the Future 2023 (Micro-city) category

## 7. Galway City Council Elected Members

### Galway City East

Cllr Alan Cheevers (Fianna Fáil); Cllr Michael Crowe (Fianna Fáil); Cllr Alan Curran (Social Democrats); Cllr Noel Larkin (No Party); Cllr Declan McDonnell (No Party); Cllr Terry O’Flaherty (No Party).

### Galway City Central

Cllr Imelda Byrne (Fianna Fáil); Cllr Colette Connolly (No Party); Cllr Mike Cubbard (No Party); Cllr Frank Fahy (Fine Gael); Cllr Eddie Hoare (Fine Gael); Cllr Martina O’Connor (Green Party).

### Galway City West

Cllr John Connolly (Fianna Fáil); Cllr Clodagh Higgins (Fine Gael); Cllr Peter Keane (Fianna Fáil); Cllr Donal Lyons (No Party); Cllr Niall McNelis (Labour); Cllr Niall Murphy (Green Party).



## 8. Housing and Social Inclusion

The objective of the Housing and Social Inclusion Department is to accelerate the delivery of good quality social and affordable housing in an equitable manner, and in appropriate locations, in order to develop sustainable balanced communities.

### 8.1 Social Housing Support Programme

A range of accommodation options for housing applicants include standard Local Authority housing, the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS), Housing Assistance Payment (HAP), Long Term Leasing (LTL), Approved Housing Body housing and Traveller specific accommodation.

### 8.2 Social Housing Needs Assessment 2023

The purpose of the annual Social Housing Needs Assessment is to capture the total number of households qualified for social housing support, whose need for support was not being met, at a particular date in the calendar year.

Table 1 - 2023 Social Housing Needs Assessment

<b>Basis of Need</b>	<b>Galway City</b>
Requires Rent Supplement to Provide for Accommodation Needs	172
Homeless, Institution, Emergency Accommodation or Hostel	90
Disability Requirement - Physical	29
Disability Requirement - Sensory	7
Disability Requirement - Mental Health	27
Disability Requirement - Intellectual	18
Exceptional Medical or Compassionate Grounds	4
Unfit	2
Overcrowded Accommodation	13

Involuntary Sharing	164
	526

The annual Summary of Social Housing Assessments (SSHA) was scheduled for 1 November 2023, with submission to the Department on 29 November 2023.

Those in receipt of social housing support, for example, households in receipt of Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) or accommodated under the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS)/Long Term Leasing Scheme (LTL) and transfer applicants were excluded from the SSHA.

526 applications were re-assessed with 114 applications closed in total. 73 were closed due to non-response to various forms of contact made by Galway City Council. Other reasons for closure included closure requested by applicant due to changed circumstances, ineligibility, or applicant no longer living in administrative area.

Table 1 above shows the outcome of those assessed as part of the 2023 Assessment. 556 additional households qualified for housing support in 2023 and were placed on the housing waiting list.

### **8.3 Social Housing Allocations**

202 social housing allocations were made to applicants on the waiting list in 2023, comprising:

- 55 Approved Housing Body tenancies,
- 147 Local Authority Tenancies, and
- 2 Long term leasing tenancies. (The 2 LTL are not in the overall figure of 202)

There were 35 refusals of offers in 2023.

#### **8.3.1 Choice Based Letting**

Choice Based Letting (CBL) is a method of allocation whereby approved housing applicants can 'register an interest' in available social housing stock in their area of preference in accordance with their housing needs. CBL allows households qualified for

social housing supports to exercise greater choice and involvement in selecting a new home. It is also a means of reducing refusals of tenancy offers.

In 2023, 96 properties were advertised on CBL with a total of 10,956 Expressions of Interest received. There were 5 refusals of CBL offers in 2023.

### **8.3.2 Housing Assistance Payment (HAP)**

The HAP Scheme is part of the social housing options offered to those seeking accommodation. HAP enables Galway City Council to provide immediate housing assistance for households who live in the private rented sector who qualify for social housing support.

There are four main cohorts of households eligible for HAP:

- New social housing applicants who require social housing support;
- Existing households on the housing waiting list who wish to avail of HAP;
- Long term rent supplement recipients – these are being transferred to HAP on a phased and agreed basis with the Department of Social Protection, and;
- Rent Supplement recipients changing tenancies.

254 HAP tenancies were established in 2023 including the transfer of 10 households on long term rent supplement over to HAP.

Overall, 3,419 households have been accommodated under HAP since its inception in Galway City Council in 2016. The HAP Unit set up approximately 5 HAP tenancies on a weekly basis in 2023.

Following a review, the Government signed new regulations in July 2022 increasing the HAP discretionary rate to a maximum of 35% for all new and existing HAP tenancies. Additional flexibility was also introduced which permits the couple rate to be applied to a single person household for new tenancies only.

The HAP Unit assisted 247 HAP tenants by applying increased discretionary rental payments to them of up to 35% over the HAP maximum rental limits in 2023.

### **8.3.3 RAS and Leasing**

The number of properties in the private rented sector under the Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) was 126 at the end of 2023. A further 250 tenancies were supported under RAS in the Voluntary Housing Sector. The number of properties on RAS type Availability Agreements (Short Term Leasing) was 66 at year end.

Rental inflation and affordability challenges coupled with severe shortages of supply in the private rented market in Galway city persisted in 2023. Despite record high rents, the exodus of private landlords from the rented sector continued apace in 2023 and this exodus was mirrored in the social rented sector with an increase in the number of landlords exiting RAS/Leasing and HAP.

Most of the Notices of Termination issued by landlords generally are for the purposes of sale and this factor is driving many tenants into homelessness.

## **8.4 Homeless Services and Supports**

Galway City Council Housing Department continued to work closely with a variety of agencies in the city in the provision of homeless services throughout 2023.

Households continue to present for homeless services, which resulted in service providers having to source alternative temporary private emergency homeless accommodation throughout the city.

A number of measures were introduced by Government in Spring 2023 in an effort to address the issue of Notices of Termination and to prevent homelessness.

The Tenant in Situ scheme was introduced in March 2023, where a property could potentially be purchased by the local authority subject to certain conditions and immediately meeting the long-term housing needs of households on notices of termination.

40 units were acquired in 2023 (22 have tenants-in-situ and 18 vacant units), with 37 units additional units at conveyancing stage.

Presentations were as a result of:



- Notices to quit in the private rented market;
- Landlords retaining properties for their own use, selling up and leaving the private rented market;
- Increases in rents pushing affordable homes beyond the reach of many;
- Rent caps not matching current market rates;
- Unavailability of private rented accommodation within the city; and
- Landlords not availing of for RAS/LTL schemes.

Other factors are family breakdown and complex issues which lead families into homelessness.

Section 10 Homeless Expenditure in 2023 for the West Region amounted to circa €14.2m. At the end of 2023, there were 242 persons availing of homeless services provided for and on behalf of Galway City Council.

HAP Homeless Placefinder Service was established in 2018.

- 488 Homeless HAP tenancies have been created since the service was introduced.
- 78 Homeless HAP tenancies were created in 2023.
- 51 of these households were families and the remaining 27 were singles.

#### **8.4.1 Cold Weather Response**

The Cold Weather Response (CWR) service for the winter of 2023-24 became operational from 1 December 2023 until 31 March 2024. The service has been operated from a property leased by Galway City Council on the East side of the City.

The target cohort for the CWR core service is people who sleep rough. This service was provided for Galway City Council by COPE Galway. Weekly interagency meetings were established to facilitate case management and resource allocation.

Street Outreach and Day Centre Services continued to operate throughout the year to rough sleepers. There was sufficient capacity in existing emergency accommodation to meet the need of rough sleepers where there were extreme weather warnings, such as extended freezing conditions in December 2023.

#### **8.4.2 Homeless Emergency Accommodation**

Osterley Lodge, which has provision for up to 13 bedrooms, was consistently full throughout 2023. The Fairgreen Hostel which has a total of 26 bed spaces was also at full capacity during 2023.

Corrib Haven Family Hub commenced operations in 2019 and is operated for Galway City Council by COPE Galway, providing up to 12 family units. The service continued throughout 2023 with a number of families accommodated at the facility during the year.

At the end of November, Peter Mc Verry Trust (PMVT) notified Galway City Council of their intention not to renew the lease on the homeless emergency accommodation at Garraí an tSionnagh, Seamus Quirke Road (Westside Hub), which is due to expire in February 2024. At the year end, Galway City Council was liaising with PMVT regarding the families availing of emergency accommodation in the Hub and seeking solutions to their housing needs. The Hub will be retained in homeless services to continue to meet emergency accommodation needs of households in the city.

#### **8.4.3 Seamus Quirke Road Day Centre and Temporary Homeless Accommodation**

This proposed development aims to provide a much-needed upgrade in the existing day centre facilities, along with additional resources. It will also provide temporary emergency 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 22 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 8 December 2022. A design team was appointed in Q4 2023, led by Simon J Kelly Architects to bring the scheme through detailed design, tender and construction. It is anticipated works will commence in 2024. An alternative temporary location for the Day Centre will be sought in 2024.

## **8.5 Housing First**

The Implementation Plan for Housing First 2022 – 2026 was launched in late December 2022. The aim of the plan is to continue to work with the single homeless people who are deemed long term homeless with often complex mental health needs. The council has a target of 30 over the lifetime of the plan.

### 8.5.1 Tenancy Sustainment Service

The Galway City Council Tenancy Sustainment service continues to operate since it was launched in November 2020 and has dealt with 632 notices of terminations of to date. Outlined hereunder was the status at the end of 2023:

- 111 are current and ongoing.
- 493 household have outcomes.
- 175 - received an allocation
- 121 – found alternative HAP properties
- 28 – Acquired and/or going through the acquisition process
- 12 – placed in Long Term Leasing
- 67 - were placed in Emergency accommodation
- 27 - went to stay with family or friends
- 19 – Notice to Quits (NTQs) were rescinded
- 21 – found private rented accommodation
- 18 - Closed applications
- 5 – are going through the transboundary process



## **8.6 Traveller Accommodation Programme and Supports**

Allocations continued to Traveller families throughout 2023 comprising local authority, AHB, and Traveller specific accommodation including halting sites. In addition, 4 families secured accommodation through Homeless HAP.

The Annual Count of Traveller Families and their Accommodation position was submitted to the Department through eReturns. This Annual Traveller census is a snapshot of the number of Traveller families in the local authority area on that date. The number of Traveller families returned was 615, the most notable increase was in families sharing and those in emergency homeless services.

The current Traveller Accommodation Programme was adopted by Galway City Council in July 2019, covering the period from 2019 to 2024. A year four progress report was presented to the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee in December 2023 highlighting progress to date since its adoption, in line with the requirements of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act, 1998.

### **8.6.1 Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee (LTACC)**

The LTACC held four meetings in 2023. Two subgroups, an Estate Management Subgroup, and an Operational Subgroup, continued to meet in 2023. Both groups comprise of elected members, officials, and Traveller Representatives.

### **8.6.2 TAP Annual Target Analysis**

The target for year one of 50 units of accommodation were exceeded, as 61 supports were provided. However, the target of 74 units of accommodation was not achieved in year two, with 44 units of accommodation provided. Year three targets were not achieved.

In all categories, it is notable that targets for allocation of social housing units were exceeded. Year 4 targets are noted in Table 2 below.

Table 2 – TAP Annual Target Analysis: Year 4: The targets below refer to the period from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023

Accommodation Type	2023 Target	Total Achieved
Standard Local Authority (including Transfers)	10	19
AHB standard housing	5	4
Extensions to Standard Local Authority	1	0
Group Housing Scheme (LA and AHB)	0	0
Culturally Specific Traveller Accommodation	0	0
Permanent Residential Halting Site	1	0
Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS)*	1	0
Long-Term Leasing Scheme	1	0
Housing Assistance Payment	20	0
Total	39	23

## 8.7 TAP Capital Programme

The table below provides an overview of progress in relation to the capital schemes noted in TAP 2019 – 2024.

Table 3: Capital Schemes TAB 2019-2024

Scheme	Location	Update	Housing Body
8 Culturally Specific Traveller Units	Keeraun	Part 10 REFUSAL by ABP in January 2023.	GCC (Galway City Council) €3,794,980 approved at Stage 1
4 Culturally Specific Traveller Units	Doughiska	CAS/CALF Funding approved. Part 8 publication delayed pending clarity on timeframes for knotweed removal.	Respond €1,278,376 approved at Stage 1

5 Culturally Specific Traveller Units**	Doughiska (redesign of St. Nicholas Halting Site)	No Progress. Preliminary proposals to be considered for the redevelopment of the existing halting site and replacement with group / Traveller specific homes. Potential for 5 units (similar to Circular Road) to be included in next TAP for delivery.	GCC
5 Culturally Specific Traveller Units	Circular Road (redesign of existing halting site)	Part 8 approval in June 2022 and Stage 3 approval in December 2022, project to advance to stage 3 and 4 in 2023. Decanting of site will be required.	GCC / CENA €1,340,000 approved at Stage 1
3 Culturally Specific Traveller Units	Headford Road	Part 10 planning REFUSAL in November 2022.	GCC
8 Culturally Specific Traveller Units	Merlin Lands	Prelim design stage. Stage 1 application pending. Agreement to acquire additional adjacent lands approved subject to legal due diligence	GCC
8 Unit Group Scheme	Fána Glas, Ballybane	No progress. Wider housing proposal for the area being considered.	GCC

The programme of works to upgrade the existing stock of Traveller group housing schemes across the city continued in 2023. Funding provision was secured in the 2023 budget to commence a cycle of such planned works over the next 3 years. Work was prioritised based on need identified following of review the units.

Fire safety: A comprehensive review of all smoke, heat, carbon alarms, fire blankets, Periodic electrical inspections and fire hose reels in all welfare units situated in halting sites including certification of communal facilities (community buildings) were carried out in 2023 with upgrades works where required at a sum of €61,219.00.

Fire extinguishers were tested in the community centres at Carrowbrowne Transient and Doughiska Halting Sites in February 2023, and missing units were replaced.

A tender process for chimney relining works was undertaken in July 2023 with a contract for maintenance works was agreed in October 2023 with the successful tendering contractor. The works carried out at Doughiska, Cúl Trá and Carrowbrowne sites were completed in Q4 2023.

All Halting sites have designated assembly areas which are identified by fire safety signage. Fire safety training is planned for 2024 in conjunction with the Galway Traveller Movement (GTM). It is planned to have fire safety demonstrations with the halting site communities, using the services of a licensed fire safety company.

Waste Management strategy for all Halting site and Traveller specific accommodation was managed in 2023, including Carrowbrowne Transient site service road cost, total cost of the strategy was €144,297.00.

Carrowbrowne Transient site playground was installed in Q4 2023 funding provided through the dormant account fund, the playground at the site is inspected on a weekly and quarterly basis. The cost of the inspections is €15,000 per annum.

Rodent Riddance programme: riddance works are carried out on six monthly basis at all of the halting sites.

Response maintenance and emergency works continued across all sites during 2023 at a cost of €466,875.00.



## **8.8 Housing Maintenance and Upgrade Programme**

### **8.8.1 COT / Voids**

- Return of Vacant Units – 87 completed for reletting.
- Surrendered Units - 87 Units

### **8.8.2 Planned Programmes**

- Energy Efficiency Retrofit – C. 34 Units Retrofitted
- Window and Doors Replacement –C. 200 Units received Replacements.
- Damp Remediation – C.23 Units received Remediation.
- Boiler Replacements - C. 210 Units received new Boilers.
- Radon Testing and Remediation - C.130 Unit Tests and C.16 Remediations.
- Roof and Guttering Repairs etc.- C.200 Units received repairs.

### **8.8.3 Fire Safety Remediations**

Fire safety work continues across all units and apartments, including Fire alarm and extinguisher management.

### **8.8.4 Response Maintenance**

Response maintenance and emergency works continued in housing stock of C.2680.  
Valid Repairs closed in 2023: 4081

### **8.8.5 Building Control and Inspections**

- Number of valid commencement notices - 200
- Number of valid fire safety certificate applications - 22
- Number of valid disability access certificates – 48
- Number of building control inspections - 30

### **8.8.6 Minimum Standards Inspections**

- Properties inspected – 337
- Properties compliant – 25

- Improvement letters issued - 312
- Improvement Notices issued – 0
- Probation Notices issued - 0

### **8.8.7 Social Inclusion**

Galway City Council received 29 applications under the Social Inclusion Grant Scheme 2023. These applications were considered on 13 September 2023 and a decision issued to applicants on the 21 September 2023. There were 22 successful applications received, and a total of €25,000 grant funding approved. 7 applications were deemed not to meet the criteria of the scheme.

Make Way Day 2023 took place on 22 September. This annual campaign seeks to raise public awareness about the obstacles for people with disabilities in accessing our public spaces. Access for All Galway, in conjunction with Galway City Council Access Office, held an event in Leisureland, Galway, focusing on access to Galway City beaches. This event was well supported by both Elected members and Senior Management of Galway City Council.

## **8.9 Housing Capital Construction and Supply Programme**

### **8.9.1 Galway Social Housing Taskforce**

The Galway Social Housing Taskforce met on four occasions in 2023 with the primary focus at all meetings on Galway City and County Council's social housing delivery programmes, with particular emphasis on new build housing schemes. At each meeting of the Taskforce, both Galway local authorities provided updates on the status of their build, acquisition and leasing programmes delivery pipelines and targets set under Housing for All.

Addressing homelessness in Galway is a key component of the Taskforce's Terms of Reference and this was discussed at each meeting of the Taskforce during the year. The Task Force also considered the planned delivery of Affordable Housing over the coming years. The Taskforce also received presentations from the Land Development Agency and the Housing Agency in addition to detailed updates on Housing for All.

## 8.10 Housing Delivery Action Plan 2022 – 2026

Galway City Council launched an ambitious Housing Delivery Action Plan in July 2022, which will see 2,440 social and affordable homes delivered across the city over the next five years. A copy of the plan is displayed on the Galway City Council website.

The Action Plan sets out how Galway City Council and Approved Housing Bodies will provide new social and affordable housing through direct build as well as through turnkey and Part V arrangements.

The action plan outlines a commitment to deliver:

- 1435 new social housing homes
- 1005 new affordable homes, including for purchase and cost rental.

The Housing Delivery Action Plan details how Galway City Council will achieve the targets set in the national Housing for All policy in partnership with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and Approved Housing Bodies.

The plans set out the proposed details of social and affordable housing delivery over the period 2022-2026, in line with the targets set out under Housing for All. The overall target for delivery across the 'build' categories of LA build, Part V, AHB – CALF and CAS build is 1,235 homes. Delivery will cover a range of housing including mixed-tenure schemes, increase social housing stock and address important issues such as affordability and vacancy.

Table 4

Year	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	Total
<b>Build</b>	305	219	224	241	246	1,235

The proposals contained in the action plan provide for potential delivery of 1,435 social homes up to 2026. Galway City Council proposes to build 477 homes for affordable purchase with a potential additional 204 homes under Local Authority turnkey affordable purchase to be acquired. The total affordable build and purchase delivery anticipated over the period to 2026 is 681 homes.

There is potential for the delivery of 324 cost rental homes by AHBs under the Cost Rental Equity Loan Scheme with the majority of cost rental homes coming on stream from 2024. The combined planned and anticipated delivery by Galway City Council and AHBs under the various affordability measures, including cost rental, is 1,005 homes from 2022–2026.

**Garraí Beag, Ballybane:** This scheme will provide 58 social housing units. Following a procurement process, the replacement contractor commenced on site in September 2023 to complete the development. With a 15-month construction programme, it is estimated that the project will be complete for handover in Q4 2024.

**Keeraun, Ballymoneen Road:** A Part 10 planning publication was submitted in September 2021 with An Bord Pleanála refusal received in January 2023.

**An Cliathán, Monivea Road:** A scheme to provide 15 housing units for older people and families with disability needs was designed for this site. Works on site commenced early in 2022 and were completed in Q4 2023. The An Cliathán scheme has transformed two derelict sites into much needed housing units specifically designed to satisfy the requirements of elderly persons and persons with disabilities in a small-scale, carefully designed and well-integrated community setting.

#### An Cliathán Scheme – Project Completion



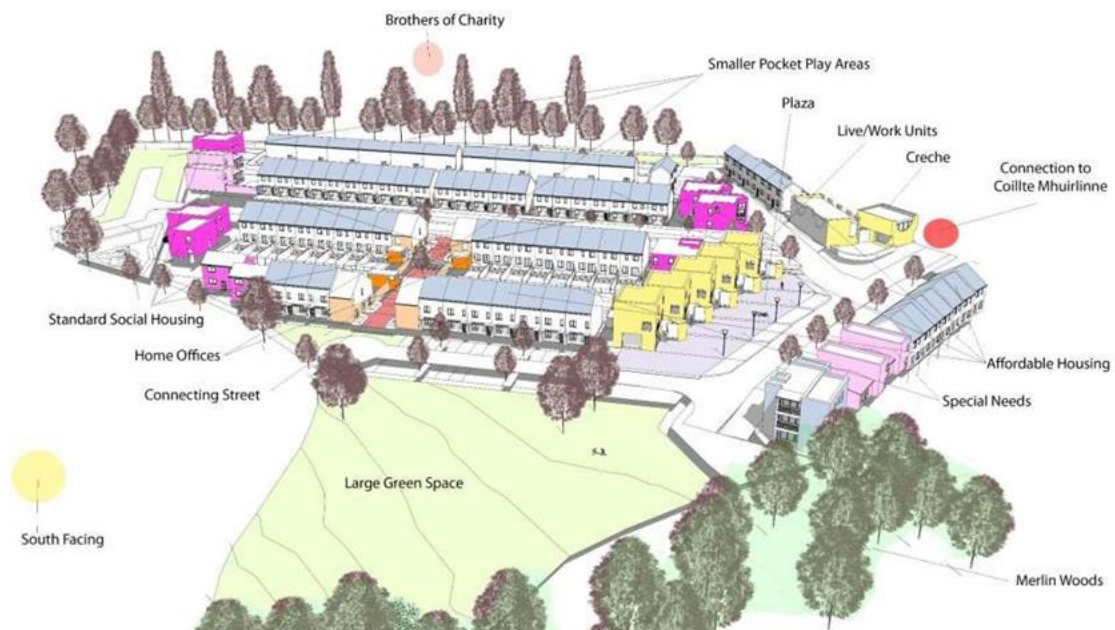
#### 8.10.1 Merlin Woods Scheme:

The Merlin Woods scheme is a mixed tenure social and affordable housing project of 103 residential units, 5 commercial units and a crèche. Part 8 planning was approved in late 2021.

Following on from funding approval for the social homes in 2022, Affordable Housing Funding for the 85 affordable homes was approved by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in June 2023.

Various potential procurement routes were assessed taking into account the particular scale and complexities of the proposed development. Documents inviting re-expressions of interest from suitable delivery partners have been finalised and are to be published in Q1 2024. Our Housing Capital Team is aiming to have a delivery partner in place later in 2024.

### Merlin Woods Scheme



### **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. At the end of 2023, a decision by An Bord Pleanála was still to be made.

**Bóthar na Cóiste:** In order to progress a housing development, it will be a requirement to upgrade the access to the lands by carrying out significant improvement works to the L-5041 Bóthar na Cóiste. A detailed design of the road improvement was carried out identifying the extent of additional land required to facilitate the required works. Acquisition through a Compulsory Purchase Order process was advanced in 2022, to gain control over some of the additional lands needed. Pending conclusion of the CPO process, it is proposed to bring forward a scheme on lands in 2024.

### **Clybaun Road**

The proposal is for a 61-unit housing project comprising of 30 Social and 31 Affordable units.

Stage 1 approval for the 30 social housing units was received in January 2022 and stage 2 received in February 2024 to allow Galway City Council to proceed through the planning process.



### **Ballyburke:**

Site investigations were concluded on the northern section of the 'McHale Lands' in Ballyburke and pre-planning assessment was completed for 85 social houses. Stage 1 application to be submitted in Q1 2023. A Stage 2 application was submitted to the DHLGH in Q1 2023 and thereafter planning to be submitted in Q1 2024.



Part 8 planning process for the scheme commenced in January 2024, and it is intended to bring the scheme before Council in Q2 2024, with commencement on site by year end, subject to planning approval.

**Seamus Quirke Road Day Centre and Temporary Homeless Accommodation:** The proposed development aims to provide a much-needed upgrade in the existing day centre facilities, along with additional resources.

It will also provide temporary emergency 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. Planning was approved by Council under Part 8 in Q2 2023.



Following assessment of procurement options, a request for tender was published for an Architect Led Design Team in Q3. The submission led by Simon J. Kelly Architects in partnership with Coyle Kennedy Consulting Engineers, Varming Consulting Engineers and TC Estimating Services was successful, and the design team were formally appointed in Q4 2023. The team is working to have the facility operational in Q4 2025.

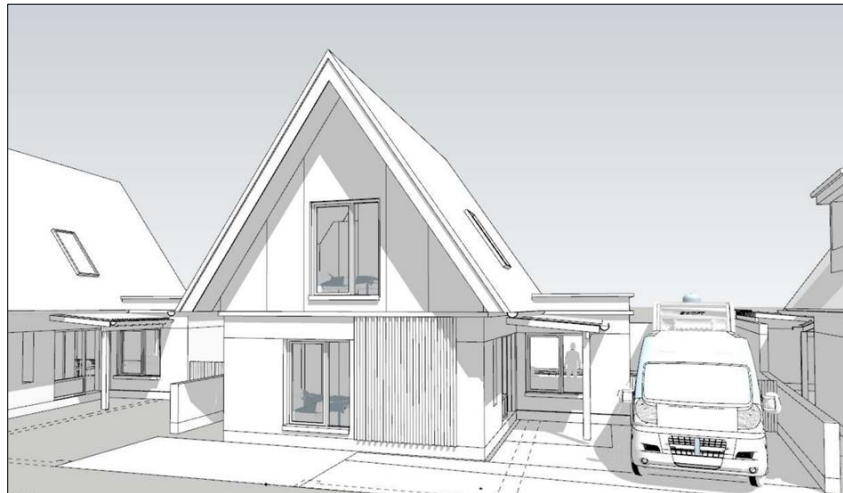
**Munster Avenue:** The Munster Avenue proposal project is a high-quality urban infill housing project in a central city location. It will hopefully be an exemplar on how to provide appropriate housing on infill and vacant urban sites. It will provide passive surveillance to entrance to Fr. Burke Park and improve/ rationalize the immediate edge conditions. The existing vacant dilapidated house will be renovated with a new bookend building containing 3 number new 1 Bed residential units forming a strong urban but familiar form. The project has been submitted for stage 2 Q1 2024.





**Circular Road: Bóithrín an Saoirse:** A scheme to provide 5 Culturally Specific Traveller Units has been designed for this site. Works on site commenced in Q4 2023 with completion expected in Q4 2024. This development will replace the existing halting site bays and include 3 No. 3-Bed dwellings, a 4-Bed dwelling, and a 2-Bed dwelling.

Circular Road



**Turnkey Schemes:** Approval was received to acquire a development of 53 units on the Merlin/Coast Road with delivery of these units to complete in 2 separate phases projected for 2022 and 2023. Works on this scheme, Garraí Caol, commenced in July 2021 and progressed well during 2022 with delivery of Phase 1, 27 duplexes in December 2022. Phase 2 delivery (26 apartments) were delivered in Q4 2023.

**Part V:** Part V activity further increased in 2023 with 13 units acquired. The Housing Department entered discussions regarding a number of Part Vs for various proposed sites and schemes. Negotiations with Developers and the Housing Delivery Action Plan 2022-2026 indicate another 90 Part V units scheduled for delivery 2022-2026. Formal agreements were signed for 22 units in 2023.

**Acquisitions:** Focus for acquisitions is primarily on preventing homelessness for tenants in situ. Continued engagement with inhouse technical support, allocation teams, together with HAP and RAS departments occur regularly to ensure an aligned approach to purchases. 2023 delivered 40 acquisition closures with 22 properties preventing families for entering into homelessness. A further 148 properties were submitted and reviewed however did not proceed to conveyance for various reasons such as the vendor proceeded with the private market or application withdrawals.

**Croí Conaithe:** 42 Vacant Applications were received in 2023, with 16 of these seeking the full derelict top up amount. 36 of these properties have been inspected and are progressing, 2 applications have been withdrawn and we are waiting on documentation for the remaining 4 before we can proceed to inspection. With there being a 13-month timeframe to complete works, no application has reached the final stage to date, however, this is expected in the coming months. The acquisitions team is managing expectations and ensuring correct procedures are in place.

**Repair and Leasing:** A target of two repair and leasing schemes were required to be completed in 2023. GCC received four enquiries, for this scheme, with one progressing to completion. The completed unit is managed by an AHB and fully occupied. The remaining three submissions are currently being reviewed with a view to progress in 2024.

**Mortgage to Rent:** The Mortgage to Rent scheme is a government initiative to help homeowners who are at risk of losing their home through mortgage arrears. In Galway City, 4 applications were completed in 2023.

**Land Acquisition:** In April 2023, Galway City Council advertised for Expressions of Interests for the supply of Social Housing and Development Land following the establishment of the Housing for All Land Acquisition Fund in November 2022. The Housing Agency is responsible for the management and the operational arrangements for the fund. Galway City Council received approval from the Housing Agency to purchase land in October 2023 at Cappagh Road, Knocknacarra. In December 2023 the Department approved the continuation of the Land Acquisition Fund and also announced the extension of the fund, to include sites for affordable housing, with an additional €64m provided to support the acquisition of sites for social housing delivery and €50m provided to support the funding of sites for affordable housing delivery. Additional land acquisition will be explored in 2024, subject to due diligence.

**Unsold Affordable Housing:** 76 homes acquired in the period to 2009 and intended for sale under previous Affordable Housing Schemes remain unsold. The Schemes under which they were acquired were discontinued in 2011. These homes have been managed by Clúid and Tuath Housing Associations with all units occupied by tenants from the Council's housing waiting list. Council was notified in December 2022 that approval was

received from the Department of Housing to transfer suitable Unsold Affordable Properties (USAs) to permanent social housing stock.

Each local authority with remaining USA units was assigned a proportion of available funding to fund this transfer and 9 units were identified for transfer in Galway City Council including 4 units in Tornóg, 4 units in An Leargán and 1 unit in Woodview to the value of €1,775,003.00. This funding was used to redeem HFA loans associated with the acquisition of the homes and the units transfer into social stock. A working group established by the Department of Housing will continue to work towards a long-term solution for the remainder of the unsold affordable units.

### **8.11 Delivery of Homes by Approved Housing Bodies (AHB)**

New homes were delivered by AHBs in partnership with Galway City Council in 2023 at a variety of locations across the city. The main streams of funding available are the Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) and Capital Advance Leasing Facility (CALF).

### **8.12 Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS)**

CAS project proposals were received from a number of AHBs for the housing needs of applicants under the specific categories (homeless, older people and people with disability).

Peter Triest Housing Association progressed their application for 6 units in Ragoon. Retendering and expiration of the planning permission has delayed progress; however, it is anticipated that CAS construction will commence in 2024.

4 single unit acquisition applications were completed in 2023 with Approved Housing Bodies Galway Simon and Newgrove Housing Association and a further 2 units are in the process of being acquired with completion in early 2024.

Stage 4 approval has been received by Galway Simon for construction of 10 1-bed units in Newcastle Road. Stage 1 CAS approval has been received for 7 units with Respond on a site located in Doughiska. The table below shows CAS Projects initiated, in progress or completed in 2023.

Table 5 – CAS Projects Initiated, In Progress or Completed in 2023

AHB	Location	Category of Tenant	Construction or Acquisition	No. of Units	Status
Peter Triest Housing Association	Cúl Gharrai, Ragoon	Disability	Construction	6	Stage 4 Approval (to commence in 2024)
Galway Simon Community	Upper Newcastle	Homeless	Construction	10	Stage 4 Approval
Tuath Housing Association	Clai Mor, Old Monivea Road	Homeless / Disability / Older Persons / Mental Health	Turnkey	33	Turnkey Funding Approval 20.12.23
Newgrove Housing Association	Clybaun Heights	Disability	Acquisition	3 + 1 unit for support worker	Completed
Galway Simon Community	Manor Court	Homeless	Acquisition	1	Completed
Galway Simon Community	Newcastle Road	Care Leavers	Acquisition	1	Completed
Galway Simon Community	Newcastle Road	Homeless	Acquisition	1	Completed

### 8.13 Capital Advance Leasing Facility (CALF)

The Capital Advance Leasing Facility (CALF) involves an AHB securing a minimum of 70% private funding for the acquisition of units for the provision of social housing, with the Department providing up to 30% of the remaining funding requirement as a Capital

Advance through the local authority. Expressions of interest have been identified by Approved Housing Bodies for potential acquisition and/or construction.

The Housing Delivery Action Plan for 2022-2026 proposes up to 541 units will be delivered under CALF which will substantially assist the Council in meeting its overall targets under Housing for All. Galway City Council currently have 621 units on Capital Advance Leasing Facility Payment and Availability Arrangements with the Approved Housing Bodies around the city. The table below shows CALF agreements completed in 2023.

**Table 6 - CALF Agreements Completed in 2023**

Location	Unit Nos	AHB	Total CALF Eligible Capital Outlay	CALF (%)	Payment and Availability Period	Status of Project
Galway City West	16	Clúid Housing Association	€12,352,033.00	28.47 3%	30 Years	Completed 12 June 2023. Phase 4 to be delivered 2024
Galway City East	101	Respond Housing Association	€30,518,373.50	25%	30 Years	3 Phases delivered Q4, 2023
Galway City West	9	Clúid Housing Association	€1,002,000.00	30%	25 Years	Completed 14 December 2022

### **8.13.1 Sliabh Bhán Remedial Scheme**

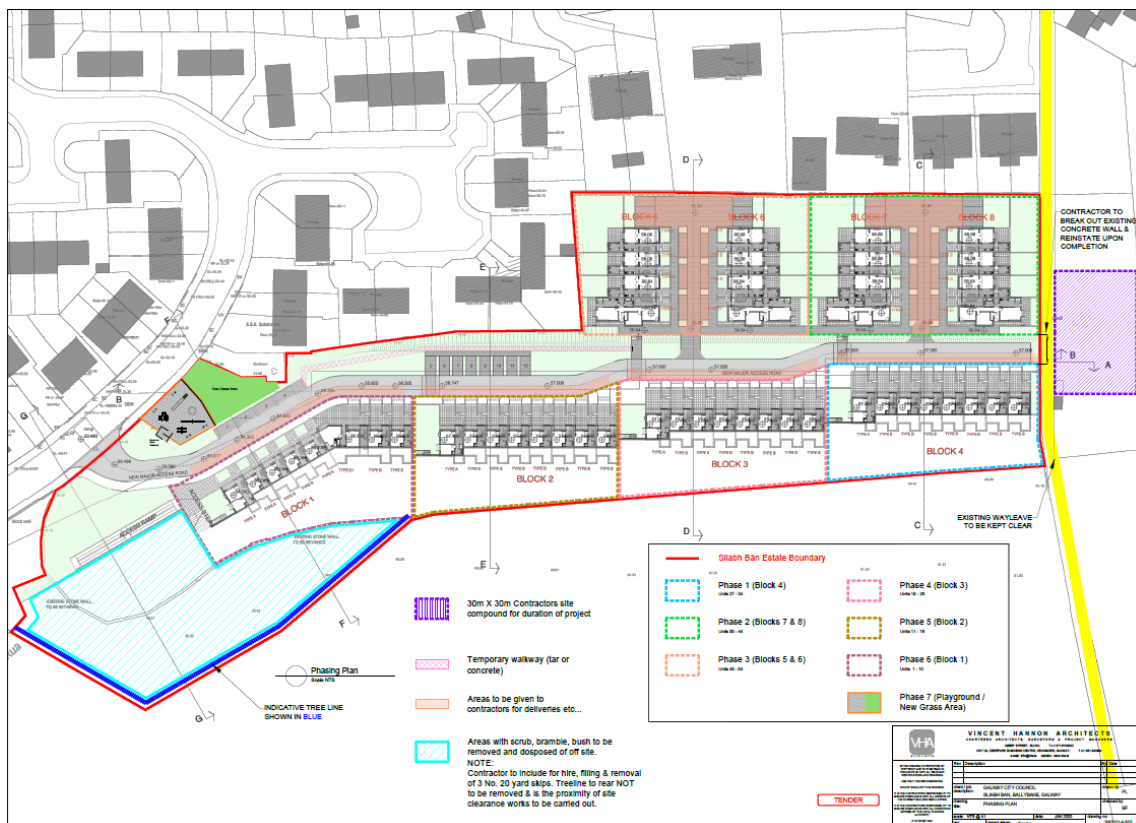
The remedial works scheme to deal with defects which have manifested in the Sliabh Bhán estate (comprising 54 units) in Ballybane progressed and the tender process to engage a contractor to carry out the works was completed.

Works on site commenced in October 2021, with the works programme being carried out over 6 phases with each phase taking 16 weeks to complete. The project involves the temporary decanting of existing tenants (8 units per phase) for the remedial works period.

There has been significant engagement with tenants which will continue throughout the duration of the project. Bulletins providing an update on all matters relating to the scheme are being provided to residents at regular intervals and a liaison officer appointed.

The project is projected to be completed by Q4 2024

### Sliabh Bán Remedial Scheme



### 8.13.2 Caravan Loan Scheme 2022 and 2023.

The Traveller Accommodation Unit, Department of Housing, Dublin, approved the allocation of 4 caravan loans in 2022, and 4 further caravan loans in 2023 to qualified applicants. The maximum loan is €40,000 including VAT and the delivery fee. 6 caravans have been purchased and delivered on site to date. 2 Further caravans have been chosen and are awaiting delivery.

### 8.13.3 Estate Management

Galway City Council owns 2,677 properties. The Council is responsible for the management of these properties and over 2,500 tenancies located throughout 170+ estates the city. Proper management of these tenancies and their associated housing estates is a key aim of the Housing Department.

In 2023, Garraí Caol - a turnkey social housing development of 53 residential units located on the Dublin Road, Galway City - was completed and tenanted. The Housing Estate Liaison Officers (HELOs) organised 2 separate training sessions in the Ballinfolle Community Centre for the new residents prior to their tenancies commencing.

The purpose of the training was to inform tenants of their responsibilities in respect of their City Council Tenancy, and to explain the terms and conditions of their letting agreements. Key personnel from Galway City Council made presentations on Council services, Rent Calculation, Capacity, Community Warden service, Communal Refuse service.

The units comprise of:

- Phase 1 (26 units), Blocks B
- Phase 2 (27 units), Block A.

Three Housing Estate Liaison Officers (HELOs) and one Senior Liaison Officer are employed by the Council and provide a high-profile presence on the estates. They are engaged with estate management, anti-social behaviour and tenancy enforcement and work towards ensuring that local authority estates are better places to live.

Specific functions include tenancy advice and training, support to resident's associations and investigation of complaints relating to breach of tenancy and/or anti-social behaviour. A Traveller Accommodation Officer and Traveller Liaison officer were appointed in November 2023.

Throughout 2023, the Estate Management Team worked in partnership with other departments in Galway City Council and with other groups and agencies in the city, including An Garda Síochána.

Estate Management staff engaged with the Sliabh Rua residents in forming a Residents Association which was funded Galway City Council.



Assistance was provided in 2022 to the Residents Association with preparing the application for a start-up grant for the purchase of tools to begin a project to rejuvenate their green space by planting a wildflower patch on the green area and eventually adding seating.

The Recreation and Amenity Unit provided assistance supplying shrubbery for new flower beds on the green. Trees were planted in the green area. The trees on the estate have a great significance as they were initially put in to represent the passing of young children belonging to families. The residents of the estate had requested that some of the older trees on the estate which had been damaged by winds over the years needed to be replaced. In 2022 a mural on the estate wall was funded under the Greening the Laneways project and has further enhanced the estate.





In 2023 a wall plaque was provided for the Estate.

In 2023, Residents requested funding for a wildflower patch on the green area and some form of seating to be provided. A play area and seating are proposed for 2024, subject to funding to complete out the works commenced in 2023.

The residents have now a great pride of place and keep the estate clean and free of litter.



### 8.13.4 Carrowbrowne Transient Halting Site and Clos na Cille Estate.

Two playgrounds were provided under the Dormant Account Funding in 2023, in both the Carrowbrowne Transient halting site and Clos na Cille Traveller specific estate. Both playgrounds are an excellent recreational addition to the area for both the residents and their children.



### 8.13.5 Anti-Social Behaviour

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) and breaches of tenancy are dealt with as per Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Policy. The Anti -Social Behaviour Strategy was updated and proposed amendments were agreed in 2022. In most instances, tenancy issues are resolved through verbal warnings, multi-agency co-operation and/or mediation. In cases of serious tenancy breaches, statutory tenancy warnings are issued, followed by legal proceedings for a possession order. Set out hereunder are the figures relating to ASB complaints received and actioned by Galway City Council's Estate Management Unit in 2023.

Table 7 – ASB Complaints 2023

<b>Complaints:</b>	<b>Number</b>
Number of complaints received	650
Number of complaints resolved	625
Number of formal letters	300
Number of Tenancy Notifications Issued	10
Number of tenancy warnings issued under section 7, or 9 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2014	55

Number of tenancy warning reviews requested under section 10 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2014	2
Number of possession applications sought in the District Court under sections 12, 13 or 17 of Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2014	8
Number of illegal occupiers removed from local authority housing under section 20 of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1997	4
No of repossessions for anti-social behaviour	3

Over 75% of the complaints reported in 2023 were resolved through mediation, meetings, and verbal warnings. These types of complaints include one off complaint such as dogs barking, nuisance parking, ball playing, poorly maintained property (overgrowth/accumulation of rubbish), littering, minor disputes with neighbours and so on.

Over 25% of the reported complaints in 2023 warranted warning letters being issued to the alleged offenders. These warning letters were for more serious incidents such as partying and loud music, family arguments affecting neighbours, intimidation/harassment of neighbours, damage to neighbours' property and so on. A small percentage of all complaints received in 2023 warranted a Tenancy Notification or a Tenancy Warning.

The Tenancy Notification is a formal notice issued to the alleged offender in advance of any Statutory Tenancy Warning under the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2014 being served. Galway City Council is committed to tackling anti-social behaviour and nuisance to create safer and better communities for tenants.

Galway City Council recognises that the vast majority of its tenants live in, and wish to enjoy, the peaceful occupation of their dwellings and that only a very small number of tenants are involved in anti-social behaviour.

### **8.13.6 Legal Action**

Legal action has been taken against 8 separate illegal occupiers of City Council properties in 2023. Four properties have been returned to housing stock in 2023, the Sherriff will be engaged in 2024 to gain Possession of properties which have not been surrendered in accordance with the Court Possession Order.

### **8.13.7 Policy and Procedures**

An Estate Management Strategy for Traveller Specific Accommodation is being drafted and the Consultant has met with the LTACC subgroup and LTACC in 2023. This Strategy will be finalised in Q3 2024.

### **8.13.8 Tenant (Incremental) Purchase Scheme**

51 applications have been received under the scheme in 2023. Of these, 19 were deemed eligible to proceed to letter of offer. 18 properties have been sold by Galway City Council in 2023 with a total market value of 3,915,000.

### **8.13.9 Housing Loans**

The Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan (RIHL) and Local Authority Home Loan [LAHL] schemes are Government backed mortgage schemes available nationwide from all local authorities. Galway City Council offer first-time buyers' mortgages of 90% LTV up to a maximum property value of €330,000 in Galway.

€6,760,000 was allocated for new lending approvals in 2023. The actual loan drawdown may take place in either 2023 or 2024. Loans approved in 2023 remain valid for six months post-approval.

371 applications have been received by Galway City Council under Loans Scheme. 167 loan applications have been approved to a total value of €30,559,177. 33 of these relate to the Tenant Purchase Scheme, where tenants were approved funding to buy the property, they were renting from Galway City Council. 77 approved loans have been drawn down by the applicants, to a total value of €15,466,647 and 5 loan offers are still valid and may be drawn down.

### **8.13.10 Rents**

Galway City Council continued to manage and maintain the rent accounts of over 2,700 tenancies in the city. Rents are recalculated to reflect changes in household composition or household income, as per the Council's Differential Rent Scheme 2019.

### 8.13.11 Housing Grants: Adaptation, Mobility Aid and Housing Aid for Older People

245 housing adaptation grants were completed under the Housing Adaptation, Mobility Aids and Housing Aid for Older People grant schemes in 2023. The total expenditure on grant schemes was €1,646,061.23, this equates to €1,316,848.98 exchequer funding (representing 80%), and €329,212.25 matching local authority funding.

Table 8 – Private Housing Grants

<b>Private Housing Grant Type</b>	<b>Total Completed 2023</b>	<b>Total Payments 2023</b>
Housing Adaptation Grant (HAG) Private	71	€651,035.45
Housing Aid for Older Persons (HOP)	156	€930,005.78
Mobility Aids Grant (MAG)	18	€65,020.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>€1,646,061.23</b>

In addition to Private Grants, adaptation works were completed to a further 27 local authority properties at a total spend of €460,503.

Table 9 – Local Authority Housing Grants

<b>LA Housing Grant Type</b>	<b>Total Completed 2023</b>	<b>Total Payments 2023</b>
Housing Adaptation Grant (HAG) LA	27	€460,503

The DPG scheme provides funding for adaptations for a range of works depending on requirements including installation of wet rooms, ground floor bathrooms, sensory rooms, ramps and railings, stair lifts, kitchen, and bathroom modifications in line with Occupational Therapist reports.

## 8.14 Building Control and Minimum Standards

The Building Control programme includes for the review and examination of new and existing buildings having regard to the appropriate Building Regulations. The review and examination include Fire Safety Certificate Applications, Commencement Notices,

Disability Access Certificate applications and Certificate of Compliance on Completion applications issued under the Building Control Management System.

Table 10 – Building Control and Inspections 2023

Number of valid commencement notices	200
Number of valid fire safety certificate applications	22
Number of valid disability access certificates	48
Number of building control inspections	30

## 8.15 Private Rented Minimum Standards Inspections

Table 11 – Private Rented Minimum Standards Inspections

Properties inspected	337
Properties compliant	25
Improvement letters issued	312
Improvement Notices issued	0
Probation Notices issued	0

## **8.16 National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022-2027**

The National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022-2027 is Ireland's second specific housing strategy for disabled people. It aims to facilitate disabled people to live independently and be included in their communities and to enable access for disabled people with integrated support services. The Implementation Plan to the NDSDP was launched in June 2023. This sets out key actions and outcomes to be delivered over the lifetime of the plan. A key action of the NDSDP is the continuation and strengthening of the local Housing and Disability Steering Committees and enhanced reporting to the SPC on a quarterly basis. The Housing Agency held a workshop with members of the HDSG on 19 October 2023 on the new implementation plan.

## **8.17 Strategic Policy Committee (SPC)**

The Housing Strategic Policy Group met 4 times during 2023 and discussed policy matters such Affordable Housing, Disability Strategy Policy, Traveller Accommodation Plans, Housing Acquisition Policy, Amendments to Scheme of Letting Priorities, updates on Homelessness and the Housing Capital Programme. (Work Programme attached for 2023).



## 9. Transport

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 transport policies.

### 9.1 Salmon Weir Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge

The new Salmon Weir Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge opened on 26 May 2023 and is the first new bridge to span the River Corrib in over 30 years. As well as removing potential conflicts that pedestrians and cyclists may have with drivers over the current bridge, which is over 200 years old, it is already proving to be a valued public realm space.



This development was led by the Galway City Council Infrastructure Development Team and funded by the Department of Transport through the National Transport Authority's (NTA) Active Travel Programme and European Regional Development Funding (ERDF).



## 9.2 BusConnects Galway: Cross-City Link (University Road to Dublin Road)

Following completion of the preliminary design for the Cross-City Link, (University Road to Dublin Road), pre-consultation with An Bord Pleanála took place in Q1 of 2022. The preparation and completion of the consent application documentation took place throughout Q2 and Q3. This included the CPO (Compulsory Purchase Order) application documentation. The full application for consent and CPO was submitted to An Bord Pleanála (ABP) on 16 September 2022. Submissions to ABP on the application were received by Galway City Council in December 2022 for assessment and reporting back to ABP in Q1 of 2023.

## 9.3 BusConnects Galway: Dublin Road

Following the appointment of design consultants and development of the Options Report in 2022, the scheme progressed to a non-statutory public consultation in Q1 of 2023. The virtual room included the background to the scheme, brochure, scheme objectives, emerging preferred route drawings and next steps. An online feedback form is available as well as a book a meeting facility.

Following the consultation, the scheme has progressed through the preliminary design phase of the project, including the preparation of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report and associated studies. To inform the scheme design, the traffic modelling report for the scheme was completed in Q3 of 2023 and Ground investigation contracts commenced on site in Q4 of 2023.

Virtual Representation of Skerrit Junction



## 9.4 Martin Junction Upgrade

Construction of the junction started in early 2022 and included significant drainage works, service diversion works, boundary construction, new services, public lighting, surfacing and associated road works. There was significant rock in the area which proved to be challenging during construction.

The project included significant landscaping works. Planting design on the Martin Junction has taken inspiration from the historic form of the Ring fort to create a concentric circular layout to the space and is further defined by the planting types used. The planting consists of a mix of perennial plants which will give presence to the junction and a colourful aesthetic.

Tree planting has been selected with native stock making up the majority of the tree planting which will be set off by 14 semi-mature red flowering hawthorn trees, which are symbolic of the 14 tribes of Galway.

Martin Junction Upgrade was completed and opened to the public on 7 July 2023.

### Martin Junction



## 9.5 Parkmore Road Bus Priority Scheme

The Parkmore Road Bus Priority Scheme will commence in Q1 2024. Details of the works will be communicated to all stakeholders. The works include installing a bus lane 650m in length, footpaths, kerbing, drainage, diversion of utilities and extensive civil works 900m in length.



Photomontage at Ballybrit Crescent

## 9.6 Galway City Cycle Networks

### 9.6.1 Doughiska Road South Cycle Network Scheme

The Doughiska Road South Cycle Network Scheme has been completed and opened to the public in Q4 2023.

## 9.6.2 Ballybane Road and Castlepark Road Cycle Network Scheme

The detailed design of the Ballybane Road and Castlepark Road Cycle Network Scheme is ongoing and is scheduled to be completed along with procurement in Q2 2024. Construction is scheduled to commence in Q3 of 2024 with a duration of 24 months.

Design extract - Ballybane Road junction with Monivea Road



### 9.6.3 Eglinton Canal Active Travel Scheme

This scheme involved the upgrading of the canal towpath, junctions and carriageways from Father Griffin Road to the junction with University Road along Eglinton Canal.

Substantial completion was achieved in October 2023.



### 9.6.4 Bóthar Stiofáin Cycle Network Scheme



The Bóthar Stiofáin Cycle Network Scheme is 870m in length from the Western Distributor Road to Ragoon Road junctions. The proposal includes raised cycle lanes on both sides of the road along with improved pedestrian facilities. A drop-in session on the proposed design was held for elected representatives in December 2023 with a view to lodging Part 8 submission in early 2024.

### **9.6.5 Pedestrian and Cycle Interventions**

The construction of three pedestrian crossings at Blackrock, Salthill and on the Tuam Road south of the Joyce Road Junction was completed in 2022 and made operational in 2023.

The detailed design phase for a pedestrian crossing within Liosbán Industrial estate to provide access for Ability West resource users to the Terryland Forest Park was developed throughout 2023 with construction to commence in early 2024.

The detailed design development for an additional pedestrian crossing on the Ragoon Road to compliment the Millers Lane Permeability project was also completed and operational in 2023.

Bonham Quay pedestrian crossing was designed, constructed, and made operational in late 2023.

## **9.7 Safe Routes to School**

The Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Programme was developed in partnership by the NTA and Green-Schools (An Taisce), in 2020, as a response to the need to support schools to increase walking and cycling to school. As part of the Safe Routes to School programme, Galway City Council is engaging with school communities to support improvements to front of school environments as well as routes to school.

### **9.7.1 Safe Routes to School – Round 1**

In 2021, four Galway City schools, across three locations were selected to participate in Round 1 of the Safe Routes to School programme. These are:

- Scoil Iognáid, Bóithrín na Sliogán, Gaillimh
- Galway Educate Together NS
- St. Joseph's Special School, Thomas Hynes Road, Newcastle, Galway
- Scoil Chaitróna Junior, Renmore Avenue, Renmore, Galway

## 2023 Update

- Scoil Iognáid - Construction commenced on the 25 September 2023 and the expected completion date May 2024.
- Galway Educate Together NS and St. Joseph's Special School - Currently this project detailed design.
- Scoil Chaitríona Junior - Currently is contingent on the development of a new school.

### 9.7.2 Safe Routes to School – Round 2

In December 2022, three Galway City schools were selected to participate in Round 2 of the Safe Routes to School programme for 2023. These are:

- Gaelscoil Dara, Ballyloughane Road, Galway
- Coláiste Iognáid, Sea Road, Galway
- Scoil Fhursa, Nile Lodge, Galway

### 9.7.3 2023 Update

Outline Delivery Plan have been prepared by An Taisce and with meetings with the schools have taken place.

## 9.8 Access Controls Audit

Terryland Forest Park's kissing gate on the N6 Headford Road was designed for removal.

Construction is to commence in early 2024.

Existing Kissing Gate to be removed at Terryland Forest Park adjacent to N6.





## 9.9 Roads Operations and Maintenance

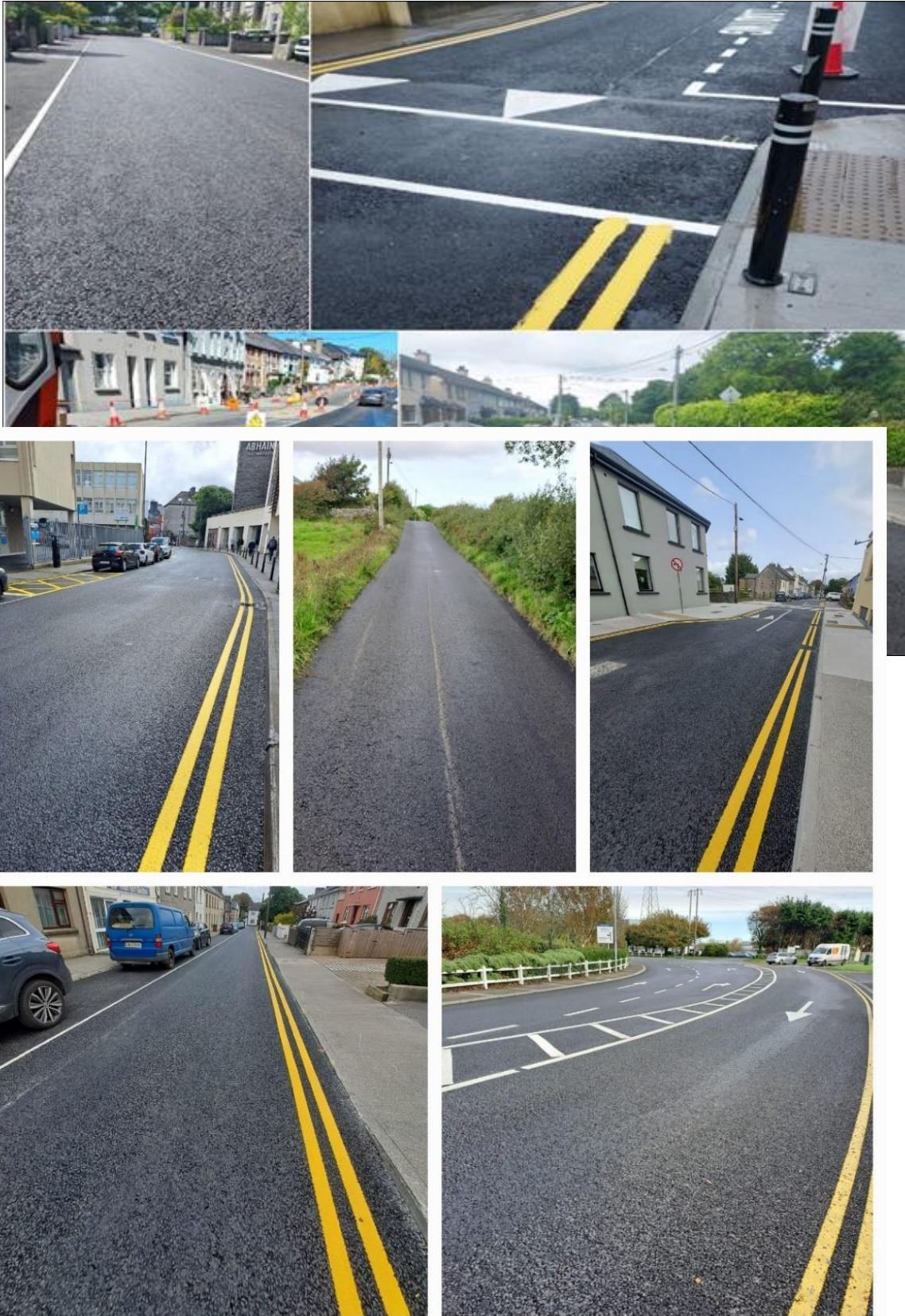
### 9.9.1 Roads Programme

Galway City Council continued a programme of maintenance and upkeep of the city road network. Over 7km of local and regional roads have been fully resurfaced in 2023.

By using the Map Road Asset Management System and carrying out inspections, Galway City Council identified roads which required resurfacing.

Table 12 – Resurfacing 2023

<b>These roads included:</b>		
Kingston Road R337	Barna Rd R336	Cappagh Road L5025
Grattan Park L-51381	Rockbarton Park L-50156	Ballybrit Business Park L-50359
Emmet Avenue L-50326	Seaman Drive L-50346	Tirellan Heights L-10056
Lurgan Park L-50373	University Close L-50063	New Road L-5116
St Anthony's Terrace L-50492	Newtownsmith L-5097	Lios an Uisce L-50375



**9.9.2 Surface Repairs**

Table 13 – Locations of Surface Repairs 2023

Surface repairs were also carried out at the following locations:		
Corrib Park	Cherry Park L-10209	Monument Rd
Clarke Avenue	Old Seamus Quirke Road L-5010	Taylor's Hill
Bohermore R336	Claremont Park	Letteragh Rd
Shantalla Road L-5012	Coast Road R-338	Headford Rd
Newcastle Road R-864	Circular Road L-1020	College Road
Ballagh Road L-5007	St Vincents Avenue R836	Rahoon Road

### 9.9.3 Mobility Improvements and Footpath repairs

Footpath reconstruction works were carried out on the full extent of Forster Street in January 2023.



Mobility improvements were completed at multiple locations also in 2023.

Table 14: Mobility Improvements 2023

Locations such as:			
Westbrook	Seacrest Road	Tuam Road	St Dominick's Road
The Links	Shangort Road	Coole Park	Clybaun Road crossing
Tudor Close	Connolly Avenue	Tone Avenue	Glenard Crescent junction
Doire Beag	Maunsells Road	Clarke Avenue	Western Distributor Road
Ballymoneen	Maunsells Park	Barry Avenue	Salthill Promenade
Kingston Gardens	Wellpark Grove	Willow Park	Threadneedle Road
Salthill Village	Claddagh	Corrib Park	McDonagh Avenue
Monksfield	Rosan Glas	Murrough Drive	Upper Salthill Road
Carragh Hill	Rahoon	Emerson Avenue	St Anthony's Terrace
Heather Grove	Ard na Mara	Moyola Park	Whitestrans Avenue
Grattan Road	Ballybane Road	McDermott Avenue	

#### **9.9.4 Proactive Drainage Maintenance**

The Transport Operations team also had a dedicated drainage and gully maintenance crew working across the city to ensure that water ponding and flooding during heavy rainfall events was limited. In addition to maintenance, a number of locations were identified that required further works to clear drain blockages such as tree roots, pipe failure and blocked soak pits. The transportation crews had a very busy year as they carried out works in multiple locations across the city while also being available for out of hours calls and severe weather storm events in 2023.

#### **9.9.5 Winter Maintenance and Storm Preparedness**

The Transport Operations and Maintenance team were prepared for any storm forecast over the winter/ storm season with flood barriers in place and sandbags at the ready. Galway City Council continually monitored any potential flooding risks across the city and carried out clean-ups of all locations affected.



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



In November 2023, roads crews responded to a severe weather event when Storm Debi reached our shores. This storm resulted in considerable flooding. The Local Emergency Coordination Group led by Galway City Council met regularly throughout the storm in order to implement a cross agency response. This provided the platform to allow a dynamic response using the Major Emergency Management framework and the local flood response procedures.

Members of the team in Transport Operations also assisted with the coordination of the relief funding available to private homeowners and businesses via the Irish Red Cross and the Community Welfare Service. This involved recording sites and providing assistance via phone and email. Funding was also provided to Galway City Council by the National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management as part of the exceptional cost recoupment in flood affected areas scheme.

As part of the Major Emergency Management Framework, the Major Emergency Plan for Galway City is currently being updated which will include updated flood emergency response and severe weather emergency plans.

In 2023, 5 staff completed training in the roles of media liaison, information management and on-site coordination for the purposes of performing such duties in accordance with the Major Emergency Plan.

A number of major emergency exercises were attended by the key players in the major emergency plan. Galway City Council were lead principal response agency in a very successful exercise in activating the major emergency plan in December 2023. This exercise included the Gardai, HSE, National Ambulance Service and Fire Service.





### **9.9.6 School Wardens**

The School Warden service is provided to a total of 14 Primary Schools in the City, at a number of designated locations. The service provided assists with the safety of school children while they cross busy thoroughfares, on their route to school. In order to carry out their duties effectively, they require the co-operation of all road users. Galway City Council employed 22 full time School Wardens and 1 standby school warden in 2023.

### **9.9.7 Bridge Maintenance**

Water management works were undertaken at New Road Bridge. Vegetation clearance and localised masonry repointing was undertaken at Dyke Road Bridge.

Site investigation works were completed at University Canal Bridge, Mill Street Bridge and Presentation Road Bridge. Vegetation clearance, masonry repointing, and deck repairs were completed at Presentation Road Bridge. Cleaning of girders commenced at University Canal Bridge.





### **9.9.8 Galway City Council Special Speed Limit Bye-Laws No. 1, 2023**

Galway City Council Special Speed Limit Bye-Laws No. 1, 2023 were approved by the elected members at the meeting of Galway City Council held on 17 April 2023 and came into operation on Monday 28 August 2023. Public notices were published in national and local newspapers and on the Galway City Council website in advance of the operative date. (Week commencing Monday 14th August 2023).

The schedule and map regarding the Special Speed Limit Bye-Laws No. 1, 2023 are available on the council website. A new 30km/h speed limit zone in the city centre includes the following roads:

- College Road
- Bohermore
- Headford Road (from Bodkin Junction to Woodquay)
- Dyke Road (from Headford Road Junction to Terryland Water Treatment Plant Access)
- Eglinton Street
- St. Francis Street
- University Road
- Mill Street
- Nuns Island
- Henry Street

- Sea Road
- Munster Avenue
- Merchants Road
- Eyre Square

Speed limit increases apply to the following sections of National Roads:

- N59 city boundary near Glenlo Abbey to the Circular Road Junction – Increase from 50km/h to 60km/h
- N6 Ballybane Junction to Tuam Road Junction – Increase from 50km/h to 60km/h
- N6 Tuam Road Junction to Kirwan Junction – Increase from 50km/h to 80km/h
- N6 Bodkin Junction to Browne Roundabout – Increase from 50km/h to 60km/h
- N83 Tuam Road (City boundary near Roadstone to Kenny's Garage) – Increase from 50km/h to 100km/h
- N83 Tuam Road (Kenny's Garage to Castlegar Road Junction) – Increase from 50km/h to 60km/h

Council roads crews erected and covered all statutory speed limit signage in advance of the operative date. Crews unveiled all the signage during the morning of Monday 28 August 2023.

### 30km/h signage



### **9.9.9 City Centre Pedestrian Area Rehabilitation**

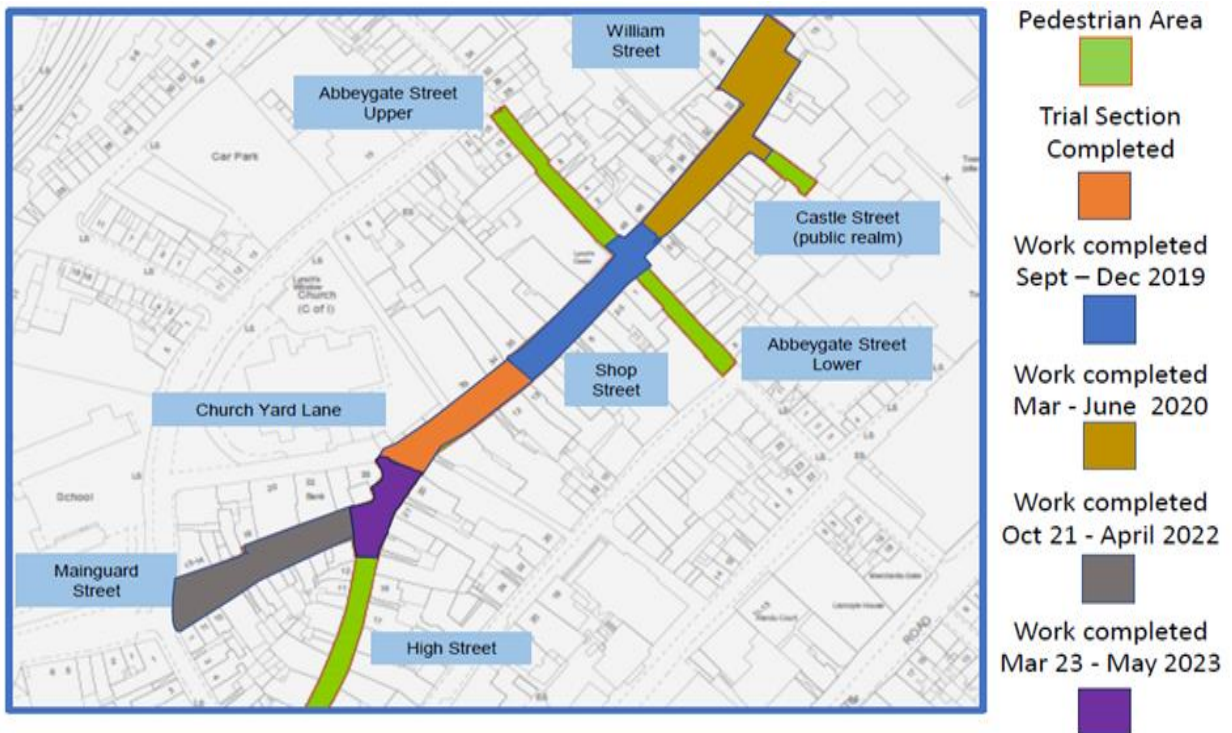
The pedestrianisation of Shop Street and its extended area back in 1999 benefited many of the business premises along the city centre streets. However, the paved surface has increasingly deteriorated over the years due to the effects of wear and tear, storm damage associated with rising river/sea levels, vehicle damage associated with goods deliveries and other factors have all taken their toll on the city's pavements.

To address the issue, the Transportation Section, in consultation with the local businesses and stakeholders, commenced a phased works programme of rehabilitation in 2019 and to date have completed works on a number of the City Centre Streets - as indicated in the map below - with further work phases planned.

Pavement Rehabilitation and Drainage Works Completed at Shop Street / High Street Junction – June 2023



Map of Pedestrian Rehabilitation Areas



**9.9.10 Multi-Modal Transport Corridors**

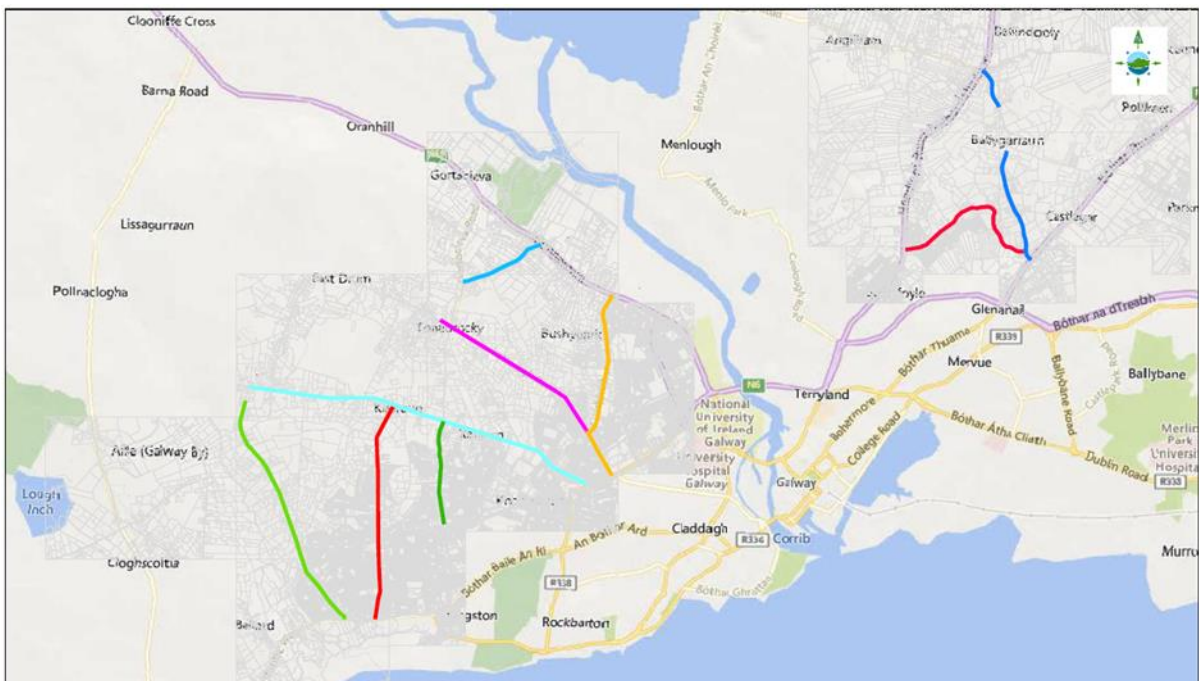
A Constraints and Feasibility Study to establish the requirements for the provision of a hierarchical multi-modal transport corridor to facilitate Walking, Cycling, Public Transport and Private Car has commenced. Concept design works along the identified routes is

progressing and a draft report is expected by mid-year 2024. A programme of design will then be established.

The roads considered as part of this assessment are listed below:

- Bóthar an Chóiste
- School Road
- Circular Road
- Letteragh Road/ Leitriff Road
- Ballagh Road
- Ballymoneen Road
- Cappagh Road
- Ragoon Road
- Clybaun road

#### Roads included under the Constraints and Feasibility Study



## **10. Water Services**

### **10.1 Irish Water**

All functions relating to the provision of water and sewerage, other than rural water schemes, transferred to Uisce Éireann (UÉ) formerly Irish Water from 1 January 2014, with a twelve-year service level agreement (SLA) signed between the parties on 31 December 2013.

As this agreement is due to terminate in December 2025, negotiations took place with a view to finalising the SLA on the basis of UÉ taking full operational control of public water services.

An agreement "Framework for Future Delivery of Water Services" was reached at the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) in July 2022 following which the Master Services agreement (MSA) was established in August 2022 between all parties.

A schedule to transition the full operational responsibility to Uisce Eireann (UE) as per the MSA was established for all local authorities. Galway City Council transferred on the effective date of 26 July 2023 bringing into effect the MSA which superseded the Service Level Agreement (SLA) in place.

Galway City Council staff continue to work in the water section directed by Uisce Eireann management and this partnership of labour supply to Uisce Eireann will continue up to 31 December 2026, at which time staff working in the water section will transfer to UE or get reassigned to the City Council teams in other sections.

Direct labour costs will continue to be reimbursed by UE to GCC during this time. The DHLGH have now confirmed it will take responsibility for all stranded costs and will reimburse Local Authorities for same.

Surface water systems remain the responsibility of Galway City Council. However, where sewer is a combined system, this is the responsibility of UE. UE have commissioned a Drainage Area Plan which will include the combined sewers. This report is due to be completed in 2024.

## **10.2 Servicing of Proposed Ardaun Major Urban Housing Development Site (MUHDS)**

Uisce Éireann commissioned a detailed design for the installation of approximately 500m of a new 450mm Ø foul sewer and a 250mm Ø watermain to serve future developments proposed for Ardaun, Co. Galway. The proposed upgrade works will cater for the additional water and wastewater requirements from the proposed (MUHDS) site. GMC is undertaking this work for Uisce Éireann under the Uisce Éireann Growth and Development programme.

In order to optimise efficiencies, Galway City Council formed an agreement with UÉ to allow for a 600-diameter surface water sewer to be designed in the same design corridor as the UÉ services with a view to constructing all services simultaneously. The proposed route of the wastewater and surface water sewers runs from proposed site to the existing sewer networks on Doughiska Rd. GCC engaged Clandillon Civil Consulting to design the surface water sewers. The designs are currently being finalised.



## 11.Planning and Development

Objective: to have in place a system of physical planning capable of meeting sustainable economic, environmental and social development objectives for Galway City.

### 11.1 Development Plan and Policy Draft City Development Plan 2023-2029

The Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029 was adopted by the Elected Members in November 2022 and came into effect in January 2023.

The Plan sets out a framework to guide the sustainable development of the city for the next six years and into the longer term. The plan has a key focus on compact growth and regeneration and the integration of climate action considerations in all aspects of planning policy.

The Plan is accompanied by a Housing Strategy, a Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA) and a Density and Building Height Strategy. The Plan was subject to a number of Environmental Assessments namely Strategic Environmental Assessment, Appropriate Assessment and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. All documents are available to view on the city council website and [consultation portal](#).

The Plan, following a recommendation to the Minister for Housing Local Government and Heritage, by the Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR), was subject to a Ministerial Direction which was issued in May 2023 (following a process of public notice and consultation).

The Direction required that a number of changes be made to the Plan to ensure full consistency with national and regional policy and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. These changes have been incorporated into the final plan and the full text of the direction is included in Appendix 6.

## 11.2 Development Management

### 11.2.1 Planning Applications

In 2023, a total of 442 planning applications were lodged with Galway City Council, of which 190 were online ePlanning applications.

Four applications were received for the purposes of extending the duration of planning permissions as provided for under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended).

Table 15 - Planning Applications Breakdown

Domestic Extensions	83
Other Buildings	28
Dwellings	81
Developments not included in the above	95
Applications exempted from Fees	14
Outline Permission	0
Advertisement Structures	12
Plant, Machinery, Storage Tanks	1
Agricultural buildings	0
Caravans Parking Open storage	0
Extension of duration of Planning Permission	4
Overhead Electricity, Comm Lines	1
Online Payments	155

### 11.2.2 Outdoor Events Licences

In 2023, the following 3 events requiring a licence proceeded as planned.

- **St. Patrick's Day Celebrations:** This outdoor event involved performers, floats, and entertainment passing through the streets of Galway on Friday 17 March 2023. Traditional family entertainment also took place in Eyre Square from the 17-19 March 2023.

- **Macnas:** This event involved performers and musicians, commenced at University Road, passed through the streets of Galway City and finished on Fr. Griffin Road. The event took place from 5:30pm to approximately 7:30pm on Sunday 29 October 2023. An audience upward of 35,000 people attended the event.
- **Galway Christmas Market:** The market was held at Kennedy Park, incorporating the Plaza, Eyre Square north, Eyre Square West and the environs.

The Market was presented in two phases:

- Phase 1: 10 November – 22 December 2023
- Phase 2: 23 December 2023 - 7 January 2024

Throughout Phase 1, the Market once again consisted of a mix of international and local vendors and offered an arrange of food and crafts. In addition to the traders, onsite entertainment was provided as well as the Bier Keller. Phase 2 involved a scaled back, post-Christmas, family focussed entertainment event supported by some food and snack offerings.



### **11.2.3 Local Authority Development – Part VIII**

The following Part 8 Developments were approved by the City Council in 2023.

- Homeless day centre with temporary and emergency homeless accommodation at Seamus Quirke Road.
- Church House (“The Manse”) and adjoining Theatre building at 23 Nun’s Island.
- Ballybane Road and Castlepark Road Cycle Network Scheme.

### **11.2.4 Planning Appeals to An Bord Pleanála**

There were 34 decisions for Galway City Council appeal to An Bord Pleanála in 2023. Of the decisions, 24 were upheld.

### **11.2.5 Large Scale developments**

A new planning process for Large-Scale Residential Developments (LRD) replaced the Strategic Housing Development (SHD) process in 2022. This change brought decision-making back to the local planning authority in the first instance, with the subsequent right of appeal to An Bord Pleanála. The definition of LRDs remains broadly similar to SHDs, that is, developments of 100 housing units or more, or student accommodation developments comprising 200 bed spaces or more, or a combination of same. The two systems (LRD and SHD) will operate concurrently for a period of time.

During 2023 Galway City Council received 3 LRD applications:

- LRD 23/3 – Gort na Bró Ragoon Galway – Glenveagh Living Limited – Rec: Refusal 15/11/2023. On Appeal to An Bord Pleanála.
- LRD 23/129 – Letteragh Ragoon Galway - Cairn Homes Properties Ltd – Rec: Refusal 19/10/2023. On Appeal to An Bord Pleanála.
- LRD 23/60174 - Coolough Road, Terryland, Galway City – Lodged 19/12/2023.

### **11.2.6 Declarations of Exemption**

During 2023, a total of 28 Applications for Declarations of Exempted Development were lodged with Galway City Council under Section 5 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). 17 applications were deemed exempted development.

Under Section 97 (Housing Strategy) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), a total of 46 Applications were received in 2023 and 20 applications were granted.

### **11.2.7 Planning Enforcement**

Galway City Council continues to adopt a proactive approach to ensure compliance with planning controls and the prevention of unauthorised development. In this regard, the planning authority received 266 complaints in 2023 that required investigation. A total of 157 warning letters and 35 enforcement notices were issued. During 2023, the enforcement team introduced a paperless environment which has improved efficiency within the section. In addition to this, work commenced on a new enforcement IT system which will be rolled out in Q3 of 2024.

### **11.2.8 Development Contributions**

The 'Development Contribution Scheme 2021-2027' was adopted by the Council and became effective on 1 May 2021. During 2023, a total of c. €2.3m was collected during the course of 2022. The monies collected will be used to assist in the provision of necessary public infrastructure and community facilities prioritised for the city.

In 2023, the Government approved measures under the Housing for All Action Plan to incentivise the activation of increased housing supply and help reduce housing construction costs. These included the introduction of temporary time-limited arrangements for the waiving of local authority 'Section 48' development contributions and the refunding of Uisce Eireann water and wastewater connection charges. The waiver applies to residential developments commenced between 25 April 2023 and 24 April 2024. The Government compensates Galway City Council for these development contributions during this period.

### 11.2.9 Heritage

Galway City Council Heritage Office, in conjunction with the Heritage Council's Grant Scheme, carried out the following projects in 2023:

- Galway's Heritage in Stone, Volume 9:
- Galway City Annual Heritage Conference 2023
- Galway's Cemeteries and Graveyards Guide.
- Archaeological and Environmental Summer School
- Book on Vernacular Heritage of Galway

Galway City Council, in conjunction with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, awarded 9 heritage grants under 'The Built Heritage Investment Scheme 2023':

- Le Petit Delice T/A Truffle, 19 Market Street
- Thatch cottage, Bushypark
- Loretto, 132 Lower Salthill
- 1 St Mary's Terrace, Taylor's Hill, Galway
- 6 St Mary's Terrace, Taylor's Hill, Galway
- Fisheries Watch Tower, Wolfe Tone Bridge - Galway Civic Trust
- Poor Clares Convent, Nun's Island, Galway
- 8 Galway Arts Centre, 47 Lower Dominick St
- St. Nicholas Collegiate Church, Lombard Street, Galway



Two grants were awarded under 'The Historic Structures Fund 2023:

- 23 Nun's Island - Theatre
- The Augustine Priory, St. Augustine Street, Galway

The Heritage Plan 2016 – 2022 sets out the framework for actions on Heritage for a 5-year period. In 2023 work advanced on the preparation of the next Galway City Heritage Plan. This included engagement and discussions with the Public, the Heritage Forum, the City Council and critical stakeholders to inform the preparation of an emerging draft Galway City Heritage Plan, which will include a series of actions appropriate for the next five-year cycle of the Galway City Heritage Plan.

#### **11.2.10 Building Control**

The City Council has a role in relation to the enforcement of the Building Control Acts and the Building Regulation. Details of Commencement Notices, Fire Safety Application and Disability Access Certs submitted during 2023 are listed in the table below.

Table16 - Commencement Notices, Fire Safety Application and Disability Access Certs submitted in 2023

Fire Safety Certificates	88
Disability Access Certificates	56
Commencement Notices	172

#### **11.2.11 Living Cities Initiative**

The Living City Initiative (LCI) is a tax incentive scheme for 'special regeneration areas' in Irish Cities. The LCI focuses on the regeneration of retail and commercial districts and encouraging people to live in the historic urban centres. Parts of Galway City Centre have been designated as a Special Regeneration Area under the LCI. It offers tax relief for

qualifying expenditure incurred on the refurbishment or conversion of certain buildings for residential and commercial use.

The deadline for applying the scheme was extended in September 2022 to December 2027. While the tax relief for residential works is dealt with by the City Council, commercial relief is dealt with directly by the Revenue Commissioners. One property was approved funding in the City in 2023.

### **11.2.12 Vacant Site Levy**

The Galway City Vacant Site Register was established in accordance with the Urban Housing and Regeneration Act 2015 in Q1 2019. Based on detailed analysis of residentially zoned lands throughout the city, several potential vacant sites were identified and assessed in accordance with the legislation and prioritised against a range of criteria consistent with proper planning and sustainable development principles set out in the core strategy and development policies and objectives of the City Development Plan.

In total five sites are entered onto the register in 2023. The Vacant Site Levy will be replaced by the Residential Zoned Land Tax (RZLT).

### **11.2.13 Residential Zoned Land Tax.**

The RZLT was introduced in the Finance Act 2021. The objective of the tax is to activate land that is serviced and zoned for residential use or mixed use, including residential use, to increase housing supply and to ensure regeneration of vacant and idle lands in urban locations. The tax measure is intended to encourage activation of existing planning permissions on lands which are identified as being in scope and to incentivise owners of suitable lands without planning permission to commence the process of engagement with Planning Authorities. The process to identify and map land that is subject to RZLT is undertaken annually by the local authority.

A draft map was published (November 2022) and a subsequent supplemental map was issued in May 2023 showing residential lands subject to RZLT. A number of submissions were made requesting removal of lands from the RZLT which were assessed, and



determinations made by the local authority or by An Bord Pleanála on appeal. The first RZLT Map was published on 1 December 2023 and the annual tax will be first due in February 2025, having been deferred from February 2024.

### **11.3 ePlanning Portal**

The E-Planning portal is a new online planning application system for Galway City Council, which came into effect on Tuesday 20 June 2023. The objective of the new online portal is to improve efficiency, reduce the potential for invalid applications, and deliver on the government strategy to move more public services online. The LGMA is responsible for the roll out of the e-planning portal for local authorities, and they play an advisory, support and training role during the roll out period of this project. In 2023, 43% of planning applications received were online applications.

### **11.4 Strategic Policy Committee**

The Planning Department continued its support of the Planning Strategic Policy Committee during 2023 and matters discussed and considered by the committee during the year included both internal and external briefings and presentations on:

- City Development Plan 2023-2029 Update
- Presentation on Ardaun LAP
- Update on Headford, Murrough and Castlegar LAPs
- Development Contribution Waiver Scheme
- E-Planning Portal Update
- Residential Zoned Land Tax Update
- Census 2022 Population Statistics
- Sandy Road Draft Framework Plan
- Heritage Forum/Plan Update
- Regeneration Site Progress
- New Planning Department Structure
- Greater Galway Charter

In addition, a Joint SPC meeting was held with Galway County Council Planning SPC, and the following matters discussed:

- Galway City Development Plan Update
- Galway County Development Plan Update
- Galway Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (GMATS) update
- Galway Airport Site Masterplan Update

### **11.5 Ardaun Local Area Plan (LAP)**

The implementation of the Ardaun Local Area Plan (LAP) 2018-2024 is ongoing. Ardaun has been identified as the key area for the extension of the city with the ability to meet a significant amount of the future housing need for Galway. It can also provide opportunities for mixed use development, structured and co-ordinated with supporting facilities and services.

Key infrastructural projects are currently being advanced to support the phased delivery of the LAP, including transport and water/wastewater services.

Work is progressing by Irish Water on the design and implementation of the Ardaun Wastewater Network Extension. This infrastructure will enable development for Ardaun Phase 1 with a target of 500 completed units within the development plan period to 2028.

The URDF funded Martin Roundabout Upgrade to multi-modal signalised junction was completed this year which facilitates access to Ardaun (southern section).

URDF funding has also been awarded to further enhance access to the lands and the design feasibility studies will advance in 2024.



## **11.6 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) and the Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP)**

A key sustainability element of the RSES and MASP is to deliver growth in a compact form. The City Development Plan 2023-2029 advances these ambitions at a more fine-grained level supporting the redevelopment of key regeneration/brownfield sites in the city and development of infill sites and underutilised lands at locations that are well served by existing and planned public transport. It also builds on the RSES strategy to grow the city as a globally competitive, successful, urban centre of scale.

### **11.6.1 Public Realm Strategy**

The Galway Public Realm Strategy provides a vision of place, design guidance and outlines project proposals to improve Galway's streets and public spaces. The strategy has been incorporated into the Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029 with a key policy to progress its implementation.

Funding to advance a number of public realm projects in the city centre was awarded under the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF). An allocation of €8.64 million funding was awarded for five specific projects. These projects will provide significant new and improved public realm in the city centre. The projects comprise new public spaces at Woodquay and the Galway Cathedral, rejuvenated space at Fishmarket and Eyre Square (North) and new public realm to support sustainable transport use and pedestrianisation of specific city centre streets. These projects will be brought forward in consultation with local communities and key stakeholders on a project- by- project basis.

## 12. Economic Development and Culture

The objectives of the Economic Development and Culture sections are:

- to facilitate a strong sustainable economic ecosystem in Galway which will support a good quality of life for its residents and will ensure the sustainable development of the region,
- to deliver a transformative strategy which makes Galway a working model of cultural sustainability, community participation, best practice and world class cultural and creative experiences.

### 12.1 Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2024 – 2029

During 2023, Galway City Council developed the LECP Framework Plan 2024 – 2029 and the first Implementation Plan 2024 – 2025. The LECP sets out a clear vision that ‘Galway City will be a sustainable, inclusive, safe, innovative and creative city region’ that aligns with local, regional and national strategies and policies.

The Elected Members of Galway City Council adopted the LECP Framework Plan 2024 – 2029 and LECP Implementation Plan 2024 – 2025 at the January 2024 Council meeting.

See [GalwayCity - Local Economic and Community Plan \(LECP\)](#)

### 12.2 AEC (Atlantic Economic Corridor)

Galway City Council is a partner in the Atlantic Economic Corridor initiative and continued to support and promote a number of AEC related projects during 2023. This initiative builds on the input of geographical, sectoral, and thematic interests with the aim of building a brighter and sustainable future for the region and specifically for Galway City. During 2023, a revised Atlantic Economic Corridor Strategy 2023-2025 was finalised with key stakeholders, aiming to support the need for rebalanced economic activity and promote regional development along the Atlantic coastline.

### **12.2.1 ConnectedHubs.ie**

There were over 350 Connected Hubs operating across the country at the end of 2023, with 10 hubs operating across Galway City offering remote working, coworking and collaborative spaces and helping drive economic activity, supporting communities and enabling individuals to live and work in their local communities. See the [Connected Hubs | Home Page](#).

CREW, the new Creative Enterprise and Innovation Hub, an initiative of ATU Galway City, the Western Development Commission and Ardán to develop and support the creative industries sectors along the AEC was constructed during 2023, with funding secured through the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment under Enterprise Ireland's Regional Enterprise Development Fund (REDF). The Hub will provide shared and own door enterprise space, collaboration areas and event space and will be home to 150 Creative Technology and Creative Digital entrepreneurs in areas such as game development, animation, immersive technology, content creation and digital design when it officially opens in early 2024.

Platform 94 opened a €5.2m extension at its Galway city headquarters during 2023, the site has been extended to 66,000 sq. ft across four floors as Platform94 seeks to facilitate the development and expansion of the tech cluster and knowledge economy across the western region.

A feasibility study for a Renewable Energy Innovation Hub, commissioned by the Galway Harbour Company, which was awarded grant aid under Enterprise Ireland's Regional Innovation Scoping Scheme (REISS) was completed during 2023. The feasibility study considered the establishment of a start-up and scaling hub for individuals, organisations and businesses interested in developing innovative solutions for the renewable energy industry on lands at the Port.

### **12.3 Enterprise Centres**

Galway City Council's Economic Development Unit currently manages two Enterprise Centres - Sandy Road Enterprise Centre and Westside Enterprise Centre, with units varying in size from 220 sq. ft. to 2500 sq. ft. Throughout 2023, the Council worked closely

with tenants in both Centres to regularise their occupancy by reviewing and standardising licence agreements. The business support provided through these two centres included referrals for relevant businesses to the Local Enterprise Office, Galway or the SICAP Social Enterprise Development programme.

As part of the re-development for Sandy Quarter, Galway City Council engaged directly with occupants in the Sandy Road Enterprise Centre during 2023 in order to keep them up to date on the development process and encourage their engagement and consultation throughout.

Galway City Council is represented on the Board of An Fiontarlann Teo, who manage a further 17 enterprise units in Westside, varying in size from 400 sq. ft to 1000 sq. ft. The Council are also represented on the Board of SCCUL Enterprise CLG, who manage the SCCUL Enterprise Centre in Ballybane, offering affordable, high quality enterprise space to individual enterprises, companies and social enterprises. Planning permission was also granted in July 2023 for an expansion of the SCCUL Enterprise Centre which will add approximate 5,000 sq. ft to the existing building which will be dedicated social enterprise space.

## **12.4 Local Enterprise Office Galway**

The Local Enterprise Office Galway (LEO Galway) is a comprehensive support service for entrepreneurs starting a small business or expanding an existing one which operates as a shared service by Galway City Council and Galway County Council. It provides an integrated support service focusing on the needs of small businesses. Supports provided include training, mentoring, financial assistance, advice, counselling, and promotion of an enterprise culture (including through programme run in schools).

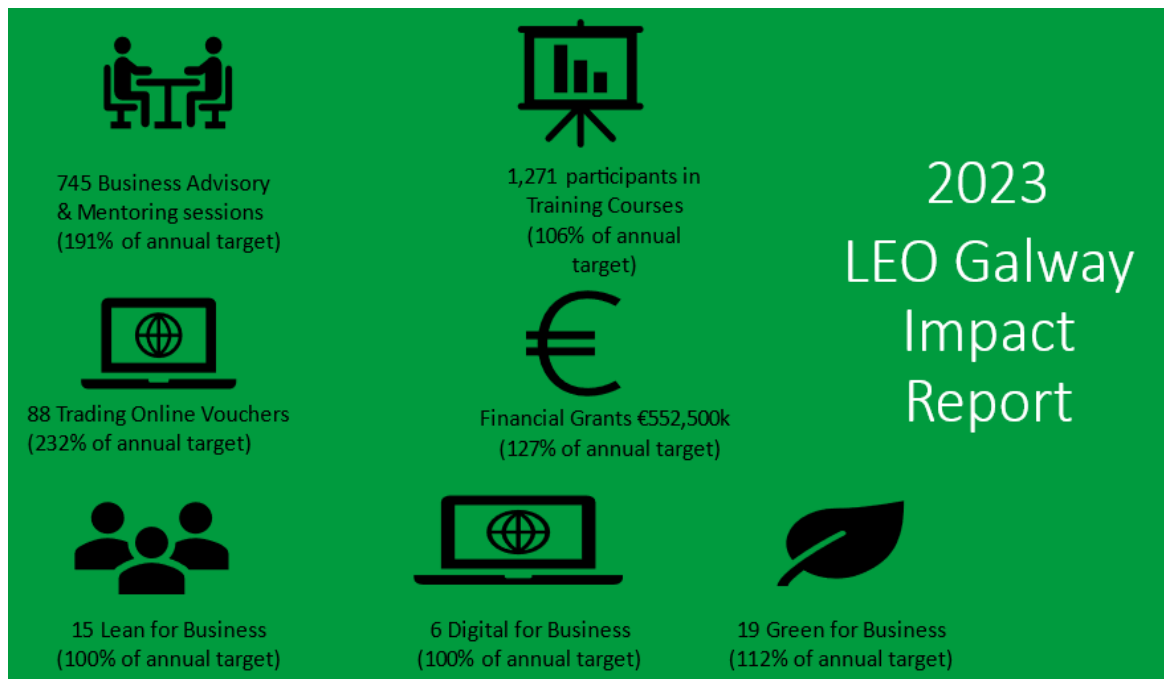
The LEO Galway also signposts clients to the Council's other business-related services and to business-related services operated by other agencies. 2023 was a busy year for LEO Galway. In 2023, LEO Galway supported 259 companies that created 117 jobs across the city and county. LEO Galway continued to provide business support services, organised and hosted training and development courses and supported Local Enterprise Week, National Women's Enterprise Day, the Student Enterprise Programme and the

Local Food Craft and Gift Fair. There was a focus on competitiveness with the Lean for Business; Green for Business and the new Energy Efficiency Grant which was introduced in 2023. See [Allinadayswork](#).

Galway City Council partnered with Galway Chamber and other business associations from across the city on various initiatives throughout the year including a Shop Local Campaign during November 2023.



### 2023 Leo Galway Impact Report



## **12.5 All Ireland Smart Cities Forum**

Galway City Council is a member of the “All Ireland Smart Cities Forum” focused on the advancement of cities in both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland through the deployment of, and value creation generated by, smart city programmes. The Smarter Cities primary objective is that this will be a cooperative Forum for the advancement of smart city agendas across all partner cities.

The City Council also participated in the Joining the Dots Networking initiative of the British Embassy in Dublin which facilitates networking between Cities in Ireland, UK and Northern Ireland to share best practice.

## **12.6 Marketing and Regional Festival Fund 2023**

The 2023 Marketing and Regional Festival Fund awarded €93,500 in grants to seven different festivals and events held between September 2023 and April 2024. This initiative successfully generated positive economic growth for Galway City during the off-peak season.

## **12.7 Tourism Strategy**

The Galway City Tourism Strategy 2020 – 2025 continued to be delivered. The key goal of working closer with the industry was crucial to the many of the successes, including the continued delivery of an ambitious Outdoor Dining programme, delivery of collaborative marketing campaigns for the City and the delivery of key funding schemes such as the Marketing Fund. A number of key projects, such as the Blueway Feasibility study, establishment of new water activity tourism hub, construction of the new Galway City Museum and destination town’s infrastructure were all advanced during 2023 and will help attract additional visitors, increased dwell time and spend of visitors and ultimately increase jobs in the sector in the coming years.



### **12.7.1 Galway Convention Bureau**

The Galway Convention Bureau attracted 36 different international events to the city in 2023, worth €8,117,098 to the local economy. The team also generated €15,387,242 of leads for future years business.

### **12.7.2 Capital Projects**

A number of capital projects advanced in 2023. The Urban Animation Project (€1,030,834) in Woodquay Park and Water sports Hub (€850,000) on the Dyke Road saw the projects develop through the design processes and are ready for advancement to planning in early 2024. The Destination Towns project of an Outdoor Museum (€615,000) is near completion and will be fully installed in early 2024. This includes public realm improvements in the Westend which were installed during the Summer of 2023.

### **12.7.3 St Patrick's Festival 2023**

St Patrick's Festival 2023 included the biggest St Patrick's parade in the city to date with over 2,000 participants from 40 community groups across the city. Guests of honour at the parade included the late Saoirse Ruane and Andy Friend. The festival included 3 days of music in Eyre Square and a family fun day in Salthill.

## **12.8 Leisureland**

2023 was Leisureland's first full year operating post covid restrictions. The facility numbers steadily rose throughout the year and by September were back to pre-covid attendance. Leisureland celebrated its 50-year anniversary in June 2023, with an evening's entertainment where the achievement of 50 years serving the community was acknowledged.

In January 2023 an updated car park management system was installed. This has enabled the facility to better manage the carpark and ensure as much as possible parking space is available for clients of the facility. Universal access to the facility has been improved with the installation of a new ramp access to the front door. Further investment has included two brand new saunas for both the gym and pool deck.

Galway City Council began working with Urban Lab of the University of Galway on the public consultation for Leisureland. The appointment of Urban Lab saw the beginning of conversations with local school children on what they would like to see in the area in the future.

## 12.9 Galway City Night-Time Economy (NTE) Initiative

Galway is one of nine pilot cities and towns to secure a Night-Time Economy (NTE) Advisor as part of an initiative funded by the Department of Arts, Culture, Tourism, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media.



The primary objective of this initiative is to revitalise the NTE through enhanced coordination and collaborative structures, spearheaded by the NTE Advisor.

From October to December 2023, the following key activities were undertaken:

- One-to-One Meetings: The NTE Advisor engaged directly with local NTE stakeholders to understand their perspectives and challenges.
- Research: Desk-based research was conducted, analysing existing strategies and identifying gaps and opportunities.
- Working Group Establishment: Internal and public consultative groups were established, bringing together diverse community and business representatives for input and collaboration.
- Presentations and Meetings: The NTE Advisor engaged with multiple stakeholders, including City Council Committees, the Galway Chamber, Galway Business Watch, and a Neighbourhood Watch public meeting, to raise awareness and gather insights.

## 12.10 Galway City Council Museum

The capital development programme continued throughout the year with the Museum Extension Design Team working towards the completion of the design phase, and towards the tendering of the construction contract. An Energy Audit led to a Museum Retrofit programme which will be part funded by Galway City Council and the SEAI Pathfinder fund.

A wide variety of exhibitions, events, workshops, talks and collection development took place during the year. Here are some of the highlights. RTE's The Afternoon Show came to the City Museum, and 2023 also saw RTE, TG4 and BBC documentaries being filmed at the museum.



### 12.10.1 Temporary Outdoor Exhibition Space

'Borderland – Ukraine 2022' was a series of images taken by award-winning documentary photographer, Karen Cox.

A new outdoor exhibition, opened at Galway City Museum as part of the Galway International Arts Festival. This exhibition celebrated fifty years of the Hip Hop culture through the eyes of Limerick man, Brian Cross – a photographer, film maker and academic.



An exhibition was also progressed in partnership with An Corrib Beo, who collaborated with a number of different community groups to create the new exhibition, 'Corrib Shores: These Are Our People'.

A new exhibition - Superhuman/Fordhaonna was developed in a collaboration with the CÚRAM Medical Devices SFI Research centre at the University of Galway.



Photo: Boyd Challenger

### 12.10.2 Collections

Reliquary donated by the Sisters to the Museum in 2022, and a much wider, internationally important collection of textiles and silver.

Galway City Museum acquired a 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.



Photo: Boyd Challenger

### 12.10.3 Outreach

In November, Galway City Museum, celebrated over a collaboration and partnership Galway Traveller Movement Traveller Community in Galway.



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A new model depicting Traveller culture formed part of the exhibition, as did new braille signage created with Stacy Cleary, a blind teenager from the Traveller community.

In December, to mark the end of the Decade of Commemorations, a wonderful event was held in St. Nicholas' Cathedral.



## 12.11 Town Hall and Black Box Theatres 2023

The Town Hall Theatre (THT) Unit manages two buildings, which include three performance spaces, (the 400-seat main auditorium and 48-seat Studio at Courthouse Square and the nearby multi-purpose Black Box for up to 550 seated, 750 standing) two bars, two exhibition areas for exhibition of work by local artists, eight artists' studios for Artspace and office space for several key local arts organisations. In 2023 an extensive programme of theatre, music, dance, film, comedy, literary, family, community and commercial events was delivered.

In 2023, Town Hall Theatre returned to pre-Covid levels of business with attendances exceeding 100,000 - maintaining its position as the busiest Arts Council-supported Venue/Arts Centre outside of Dublin and Cork. The Town Hall Theatre remained central and pivotal to Galway's extensive cultural ecosystem and was once again home to many main stage productions by Galway's premier theatre companies Druid, Decadent and Branar, and provided marketing support and box office services for many local arts organisations including Cúirt International Festival of Literature, Galway Theatre Festival, Galway Film Fleadh, Baboró International Children Festival, Music for Galway Festivals, and independent artists performing at the ODC in University of Galway. The Town Hall Studio was in constant use for development, rehearsals and performances by emergent and aspiring professional companies and artists, and the THT bar was frequently used as

a meeting and workshop/rehearsed reading space by local artists. The Black Box was used by Fíbín and others for filming TV productions for TG4, and so on.

### **12.11.1 Support for Artists**

Town Hall Theatre's support for artists was extensive and included production support for Moonfish Theatre re The Crows Way; Dance Residency with Eriu to enable the company develop, rehearse and premiere work in Galway; Bru Theatre, Remote Control and Teatro de Silencio for Workshops; Phillida Eves for Outreach Performances in Special Schools; Catherine Young for a series of dance and drum workshops with residents living in Galway's Direct Provision Centres and members of Ukrainian refugee community.

Support for local artists also included rehearsal space, rehearsal and tech support, rehearsal and recording and broadcast spaces, and marketing and box office services. Resource-Sharing included subsidised office for local arts organisations, spaces for meetings for artists, subsidised studios for artists. Mentoring and Advice was given to local and national artists on a wide range of issues.

### **12.11.2 Programme Highlights**

Highlights of the Town Hall Theatre's professional drama programme included performances by the Abbey, Decadent/Gaiety Theatre, Druid including Druid O'Casey, Roisin Stack; Pan Pan, Brokentalkers, This Is Pop Baby, and many more. Town Hall Theatre's Amateur Theatre/Musicals programme included productions by NUIG Musical Society, 9 Arch Musical Society, Twin Productions, SamePage, Hysteria, Bravo Theatre Co, and so on. Its children's programme included Baboró Childrens Festival; Whistleblast Quartet, The Speks, Coirm Gael Linn, Cyclone Rep, and so on. Town Hall Theatre's cinema programme included Galway Film Fleadh, Fresh Film Festival, 48 Hour Film Challenge, BANFF Film Festival and several independent films and its classical music programme included Music for Galway, Irish Chamber Orchestra. Its community programme included multiple local performing arts school groups, annual schools shows, Renmore Pantomime, and so on. Its growing dance programme included performances by Roisin Whelan, Stephanie Dufrense, Catherine Young, Eriu Dance, Ukrainian State Ballet, Ballet Ireland, Michael Keegan Dolan. Town Hall Theatre's literary programme included

events by Cuir, Poetry Ireland, Michael Harding. The venue's opera programme comprised performances by Irish National Opera.

## **12.12 Galway City Council's Arts Office**

In 2023, Galway City Council's Arts Office implemented the following actions from the new Directions Plan for the Arts 2021-2026.

### **12.12.1 Arts Grants**

The Galway City Council Arts Grants for 2023 were launched on 26 January. The annual grant of €400,000 supports Arts organisations across the city to deliver their programmes and core activity. These grants were approved by the Council members in April. The sector was continually supported by the Arts Office and grants were disbursed throughout the year, closing out in November 2023. The Arts Office launched the 2024 grants programme in December 2023. The annual Band Grant valued at €20,000, was launched in Q2 2023 with six bands being successful under this scheme.

### **12.12.2 Artist's Supports**

The Creative Practitioner Bursary, Aras Eanna Residency and Tyrone Guthrie Regional Bursary opened for applications in Q1. Five artists won residency opportunities and 14 creative practitioners were awarded bursaries.

The Creative Practitioner Bursary for 2023 provided funding of up to €3000 per applicant. The Arts Office took an approach to supporting creative practitioners working on ambitious projects as well developing capacity within the sector. €23,400 was awarded in 2023.



Work of Creative Practitioner Kate Mc Sharry. Photo: [Kate Mc Sharry](#)

Rocio Grau was awarded a Galway City Council's Arts Office funded ten-week artist residency in Galway City Arts Centre in partnership with Galway Arts Centre and Atlantic Technical University.

Galway City Council's Arts Office formed a partnership with the Irish Theatre Institute (ITI) for Six in the Attic and Virtual Attic Programme 2023/24. Galway City theatre practitioner Eibhleann Caffrey was selected to participate in this year long programme.

Galway City Council's Arts Office worked with Interface Inagh in 2023 to increase provision to two residencies for 2024. The opportunity opened for Galway City artists launched in December with the deadline in early February 2024. The Arts Office also supported the Irish Writers Centre - National Mentoring Programme 2023. The Arts Office funded a Galway City-based writer on the Irish writer's centre national mentoring programme. Hugo Kelly was the award recipient for 2023.

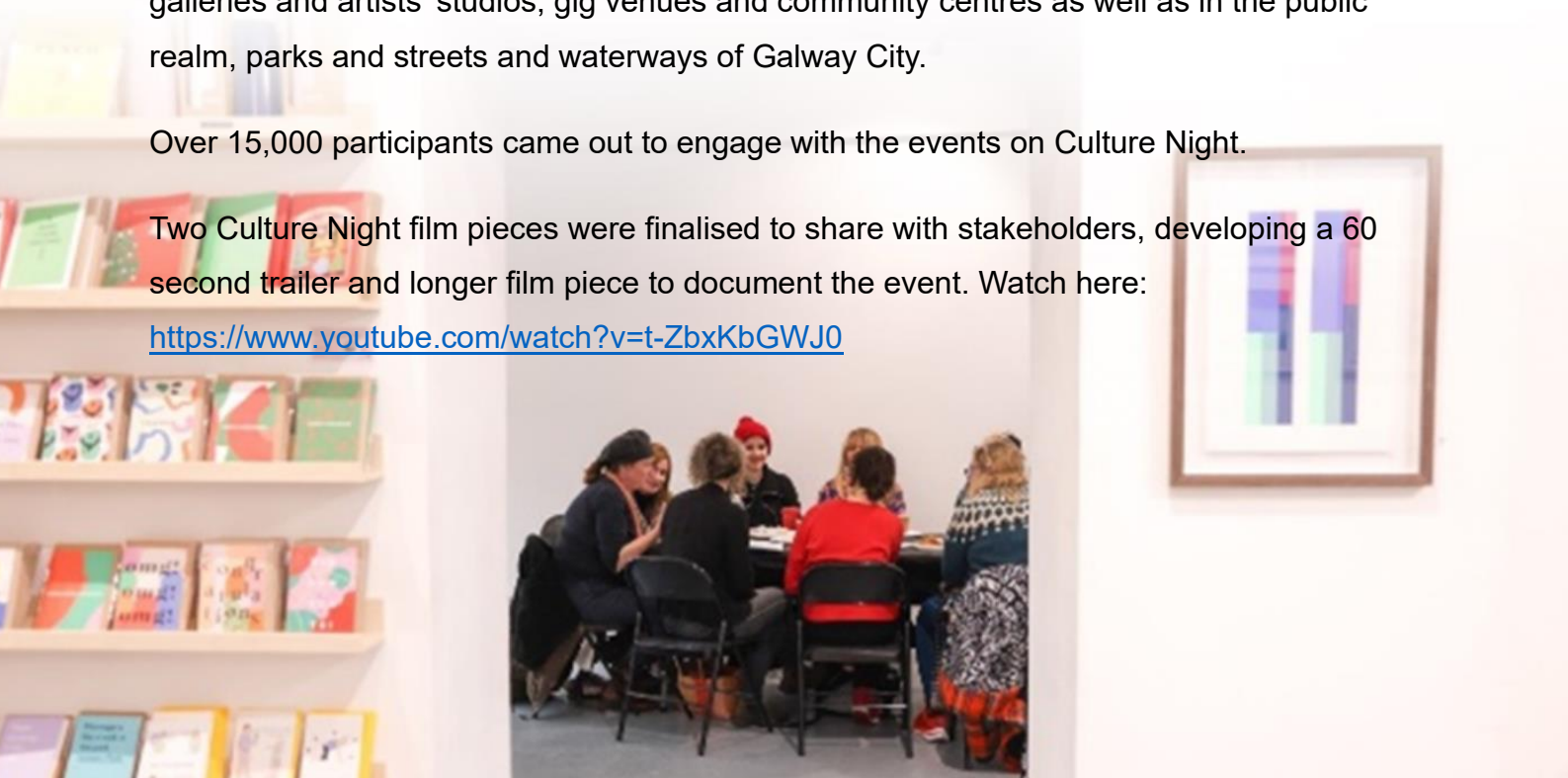
### **12.12.3 Culture Night**

Galway City Council Arts Office delivered a highly successful and extensive Culture Night 2023 programme involving events at over 65 locations around Galway City, taking place in galleries and artists' studios; gig venues and community centres as well as in the public realm, parks and streets and waterways of Galway City.

Over 15,000 participants came out to engage with the events on Culture Night.

Two Culture Night film pieces were finalised to share with stakeholders, developing a 60 second trailer and longer film piece to document the event. Watch here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t-ZbxKbGWJ0>





Culture Night 2023; Photography Kerry Kissane, Avi Ratnayake and Boyd Challenger



#### **12.12.4 Music Generation**

2023 saw introduction of National Strategy for Music Generation. It focused on advocacy, sustainability and quality for the programme.

Music Generation Galway City is chaired by Cllr Terry O’Flaherty and the Music Generation LMEP worked closely with the Arts Office to manage and implement programmes funded with €25,000 local investment. See [www.MusicGeneration.ie](http://www.MusicGeneration.ie)

#### **12.12.5 Film**

Galway City Council’s Arts Office work in partnership with Ardán to implement the UNESCO Galway City of Film programme. The core value of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) is to use creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable development. The investment tied to this international designation is €40,000 per annum. Galway also partners with neighbouring local authorities and the Western Development Commission to manage the Western Regional Audiovisual Production (WRAP) fund with €25,000 investment from Galway City Council.

#### **12.12.6 Art in the Public Realm**

Galway City Council’s Arts, Culture and Infrastructure teams engaged in The Arts Council’s regional consultations for the new all of Government Per Cent for Art Policy in May 2023. Galway City Council Arts Office also supported the Active Travel team with the Percent for Art Scheme associated with the new pedestrian bridge over the Corrib by leading an open call to artists culminating in an evaluation process. Artist Alan Clarke emerged from the two-stage process as the winning artist and has been commissioned to create ‘Gailbhe’, who was a mythological princess of the Firbolg tribe, after whom Galway is said to be named. The sculpture will grace the new Salmon Weir Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge. This project is funded by the Department of Transport through the Percent for Art scheme.

The Arts Office led capacity building tours of local street art in Q1 2023. Facilitated by Outset and led by local street artists Finbar McHugh and Shane O’Malley with Council staff and the business community who are considering producing and commissioning high-quality street art.

## 12.13 Creative Ireland Galway City Council Strategy 2023-2027

The Galway City Council Culture and Creativity Team produced the Creative Ireland Galway City Strategy 2023 – 2027. The Strategy was informed by the consultation associated with ‘New Directions’ and ‘Everybody Matters’. Galway City Council’s Culture and Creativity Team is drawn from a wide range of units and directorates within Galway City Council, including some of its key cultural institutions. In July, Galway City Council appointed a Creative Communities Engagement Officer, to support the Creative Ireland Coordinator in managing and developing Creative Ireland programmes and implementing the Culture and Creativity Strategy 2023-2027. The position is co-funded by Creative Ireland.

### 12.13.1 Creative Communities

The Creative Communities strand of the Creative Ireland Programme enables people to work together to transform their communities, their lives and their environment through creativity. This core funding was implemented through a public Open Call, targeted funding, and the Culture and Creativity Team (full breakdown in Table 15 below).

Artist Jennifer Cunningham and Gary Walshe of Arts Alive with the mural ‘Trá na Mná’

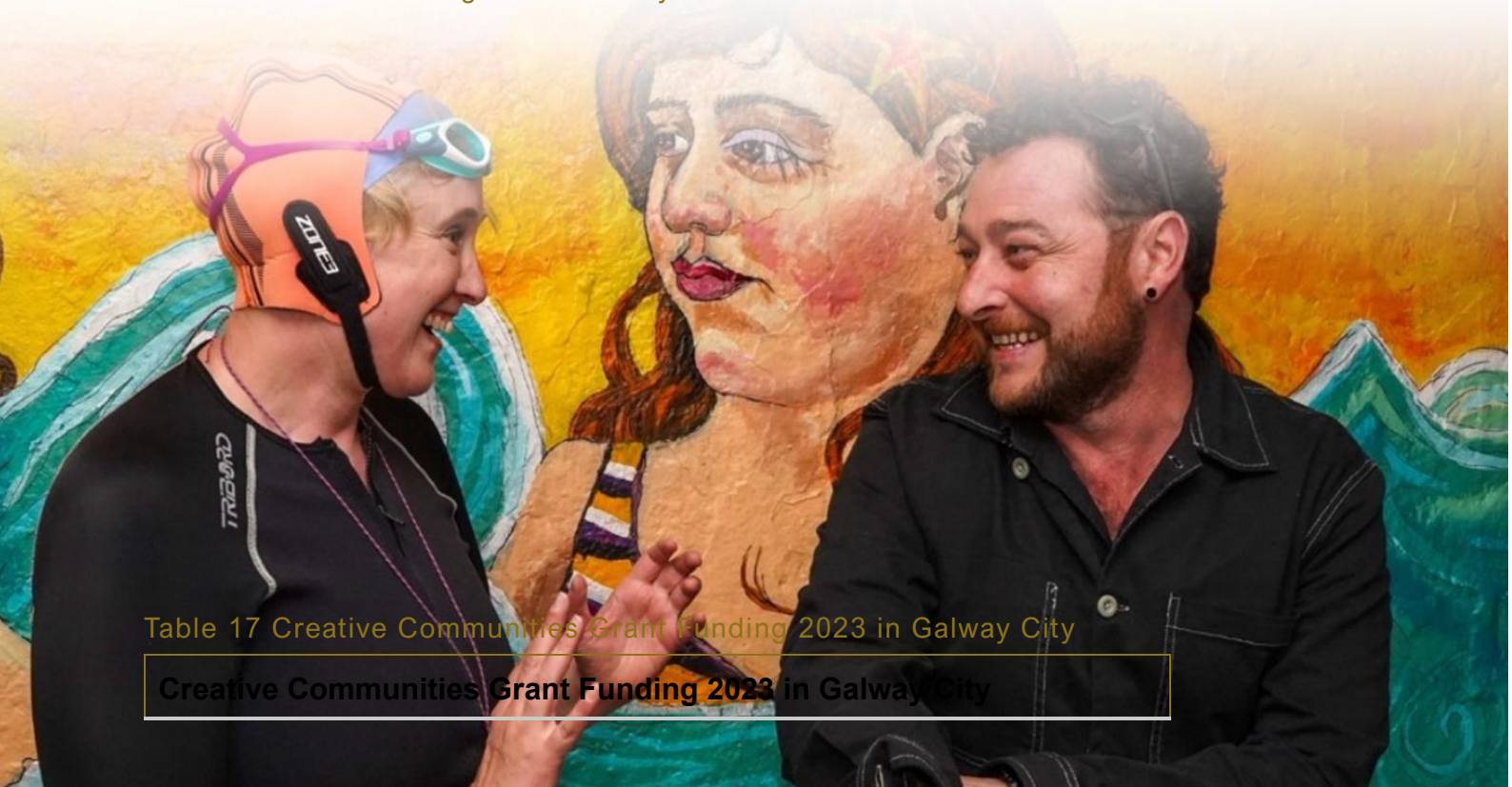


Table 17 Creative Communities Grant Funding 2023 in Galway City

Creative Communities Grant Funding 2023 in Galway City

Number of projects funded	49
Total amount of grants awarded	€350,625
Smallest individual grant	€970
Largest individual grant	€90,000
Average grant size	€6,616
Total grant amount going to artists and creatives	€131,231
Number of creative practitioners engaged	194
Total audience	32,013
Average audience per project	667

Some of the initiatives funded through this programme included:

- [Trá na Mná 'A Reflection of our Time'](#); artist Jennifer Cunningham worked with nine artists with disabilities taking part in the Arts Alive Programme to create a mural on Ladies Beach Shelter in Salthill, launched on Culture Night.
- [Old Galway exhibition and film](#) – an exhibition of over historic photographs of Galway City, Tom Kenny's Old Galway, went on display in Westside and Ballybane Libraries, accompanied by creative workshops that engaged children with Galway's past. A short film, 'Echoes', was produced, documenting workshops with Mercy Primary School.
- [Buaile Bó Ballyloughane](#) – an innovative pilot project engaging schools and local communities in native livestock species of Dexter Cattle and the biodiversity benefits of sustainable farming methods in an urban environment.

### 12.13.2 Cruinniú na nÓg 2023

Saturday 10 June was the annual National Day of Creativity for Young People funded by Creative Ireland and programmed locally by Galway City Council.

The theme for the year was 'imagination' and many of the local events and activities reflected a wide range of imaginative expression, including talented young songwriters and musicians with Music Generation's Live Feed, picture book making with author and storyteller Dolores Keaveney at Westside Library; and building a structure with Architecture at the Edge (full breakdown of Cruinniú Open Call Funding below).

This year, Local Ambassadors Iziegbe, Jessica, Elizabeth, Kimberly, Shannon and Shirley generated interest and involvement locally through interviews and media coverage, raising the profile of Cruinniú and the creative talent of children and young people in Galway City.

#### Music Generation – Live Feed event at Cruinniú na nÓg



Number of projects funded in 2023	15
Total grant amount awarded	€28,068
Smallest grant	€400
Largest grant	€3,200
Average grant size	€1,461
Total grant amount going to artists and creatives	€11,644
Number of creative practitioners engaged	38
Total audience	576
Average audience per event	30

Table 18 -  
Cruinniú Open  
Call Funding 2023

### 12.13.3 Additional Funding

In addition to the programmes above, the Culture and Creativity Team were successful in applying for additional funds from Creative Ireland for specific projects:

- Economic Action Fund; €90,000 was awarded for Árdan to deliver [Wild Galway Games Initiative](#), which provides opportunities to local video game developers to learn, connect, collaborate and develop while being mentored by Galway-based professionals
- Creativity in Older Age; €30,850 was awarded for [Ceol na Cuimhní](#) and [Cupán Ceoil](#) engaged older people in music and tea dances respectively, delivered by Galway City's Healthy Ireland Coordinator.
- Macnas Participation Programme – €40,000 for extending involvement for new and harder to reach communities in Macnas 2023 programme.
- Eastside Consultation and Development - €14,000 for consultation and engagement towards the development of creative programmes in Ballybane and Doughiska in early 2024.

## 13. Community Services Department

The objective of the Community Services Department is to enable all our communities to achieve their potential and to promote and facilitate equality of access and opportunity across all communities.

### 13.1 Galway City Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)

The Galway City LCDC was established to develop, coordinate and implement a coherent and integrated approach to local and community development. The LCDC held 6 meetings in 2023. The [Galway City LCDC Annual Report 2023 is available for download.](#)

Table 19 – Membership of the LCDC in 2023

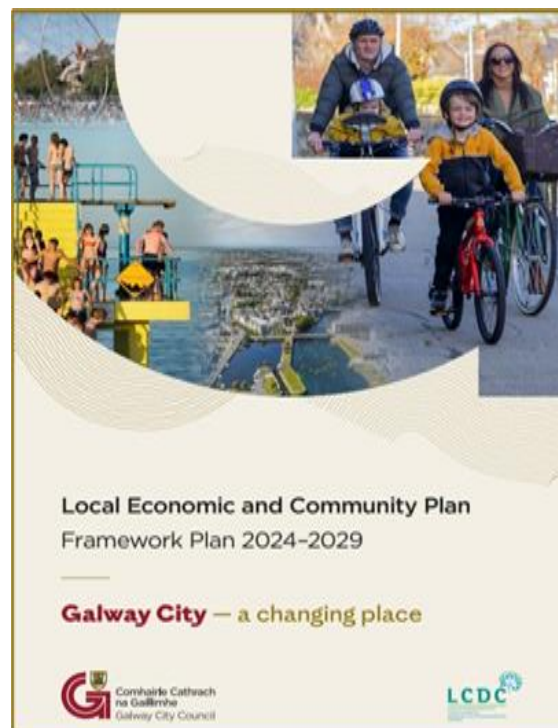
<b>Statutory Interests (7)</b>		
Sector	Name	Organisation
Local Authority Elected Members	Cllr Martina O'Connor	Galway City Council
	Cllr Alan Curran	Galway City Council
Local Authority Officials	Patricia Philbin Interim C.E	Galway City Council
	Valerie Kelly	Local Enterprise Office
State Agencies	Regina Higgins	Department of Social Protection
	Adrienne Lynam	Health Service Executive
	Sinead Morgan	GRETB
<b>Non-Statutory Interests (8)</b>		
Sector	Name	Organisation
Community and Voluntary	Joanne Laffey; Lorraine Lally; Anne Marie Stokes, Charlotte May, Fiona McDonagh-Delaney	Galway City Community Network (GCCN)
Trade Union	Elaine Harvey (Chairperson)	Galway Council of Trade Unions
Employers/ Business	Vacant	Galway Chamber

Local Development	Linda Sice Brogan	Galway City Partnership
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## 13.2 Galway City Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP)

The primary aim of the LECP is to set 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.

The LECP was developed to reflect this responsibility under Section 66 of the Local Government Act 2001 as amended by section 44 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014. Implementation Plans will be developed every two years, based on the High-Level Objectives outlined in the LECP Framework 2024 – 2029. The first Implementation Plan will cover the years 2024 – 2025.



The LECP Framework 2024 – 2029 details 5 High-Level Goals and 17 Sustainable Community and Economic Objectives as well as consideration of outcomes and high-level indicators for the 6-year LECP period. 63 actions are contained in the Implementation Plan 2024 - 2025 as well as relevant key outcomes to facilitate evaluation. c.75% of the actions will be delivered directly by Galway City Council while 25% will be delivered in partnership with other agencies / directly by other agencies.

The elected members of Galway City Council adopted the LECP Framework Plan 2024 – 2029 and LECP Implementation Plan 2024 – 2025 at the January 2024 Council meeting following the comprehensive process undertaken in line with national guidelines and legislation and subject to the satisfactory completion of all necessary consents, and approvals.



**Dormant Accounts Fund – Community Engagement Project** - Galway City LCDC was one of three local authorities to secure funding under the Dormant Accounts Fund to develop a pilot project on participation and engagement by marginalised and disadvantaged communities in the LECP process. Galway City Community Network agreed to lead out on the project and engaged with the selected marginalised communities. The engagement project sought the views from a number of panels and a LECP Actions Book was developed comprising the views and suggestions from a civil society panel, Travellers, LGBTI+ community, youth on the margins, migrant women, and the deaf community. The Actions Book together with the wider public consultation process was used to identify and formulate actions for inclusion in the first LECP Implementation Plan.

### **13.3 Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2018-2022**

SICAP 2018 - 2022 (extended to 2023) was an important programme for 2023 and key focus for the LCDC with regular reports and consideration of progress at LCDC meetings. The Galway City LCDC is the contracting authority, and its role is to manage and administer the programme, which is delivered by Galway City Partnership. The budget for 2023 was €723,461 with additional Ukrainian funding of €227,239.

The Key Performance Indicator (KPI) 1 target was exceeded by 19% with 51 local community groups assisted under SICAP, against a target set of 43. KPI 2 target for 2023 was also exceeded by 22%, with a total number of disadvantaged individuals engaged on a one-to-one basis at 540 against the target set of 442. 58% of individuals were newly registered and 22.62% were from disadvantaged areas in Galway City which exceeded the target set and agreed of 22% for %KPI 2 Living in Disadvantaged Areas.

Galway City Partnership continued to support the Ukrainian Community through the SICAP Project Officer who facilitated English Language Classes in partnership with GRETB, and two Ukrainian Support Workers. In collaboration with the Ukrainian coordinator funded by Galway City Council, the Support Workers have successfully established relationships and networks across different communities and services in

Galway City to provide ongoing support, translation, information sharing, and signposting for the Ukrainian refugee community.

### **13.4 SICAP 2024 – 2028**

A rigorous tender procurement process for SICAP 2024 – 2028 took place over a 6-month period. Galway City Council on behalf of Galway City LCDC received one fully completed tender from Galway City Partnership. The contracts were signed in December 2023 with the successful tenderer, Galway City Partnership to deliver the new SICAP 2024-2028 programme worth €4.5m.

#### **Signing of Contracts SICAP programme 2024 - 2028**



### **13.5 Mayor's Awards 2023**

The Mayor of Galway City, Cllr Clodagh Higgins presented and announced the winners of the Galway City Mayors Awards at a gala awards ceremony at the Galway Bay Hotel. Almost 80 individuals and groups, who were nominated across the categories, received a certificate from the Mayor in recognition of their voluntary activity in community life in the city.

The category winners were presented with a beautiful piece of crystal, made by Galway Crystal and a bursary of €500 to use towards their volunteering. The recipients in each of the categories were:

- Arts, Culture, Heritage and Cúrsaí Gaeilge Award: Bádóirí an Chladaigh
- Neighbourhood Community Champion Award: Ballinfoile Community Remembrance Garden
- Community Service and Social Inclusion (Individual) Award: Laura McDermott
- Community Service and Social Inclusion (Group) Award: (Joint Winners): Blood Bike West and United Women Galway
- Older Person Volunteer of the Year Award: Frank Downes and his dog Zander
- Sports Volunteer of the Year Award: Natasha Zgadova
- Children and Youth Support Award: Galway Sick Kids Foundation
- Young Volunteer of the Year Award: Sláinte Society- University of Galway
- Environmental Sustainability Award: Sliabh Rua Residents Association

The Galway City Volunteer of the Year Award was presented to Stephen Cullinane, Brian and Lisa Higginbotham in recognition of the charity funding that they have raised to date with over €400,000 raised for various charities over the years. For their generosity of time, energy, devotion and determination for what they are fundraising for and all it offers to the people of Galway and across the Country.



## 13.6 Community Funding Schemes

**Community Recognition Fund 2023/2024** - aims to support the development of community infrastructure and facilities in recognition of the contribution being made by communities across the country in welcoming and hosting significant numbers of arrivals from Ukraine and other countries. Council received €1,911,918 from the Department of Rural and Community Development for projects listed in the table below.

Table 20 – Community Funding Schemes Projects

Location	Proposal
Glen Oaks / Droim Chaoin	Refurbishment of Multi Use Games Area / and development of new community park at Droim Chaoin
Sports Fields Various locations	Purchase and installation of Box Up kits at sports facilities at Miller’s Lane, Cappagh Park, Salthill Park, McGraths Field, Crestwood, The Plots, South Park, Glen Oaks, Ballybane, O’Sullivan Park Mervue.
Crestwood	Upgrade and refurbishment of community facility / club house and development of Astro pitch MUGA for community use
Corrib Park	Astro pitch surface replacement / lighting provision. Additional facilities for Grass Pitch development including toilets and changing rooms
Westside	Additional funding for lighting Westside running track
Westside Boxing Club	Purchase of equipment
Claddagh Pitches	Installation of pitch walkway lighting for recreation use
O’Sullivan Park Mervue	Installation of environmentally sensitive bollard lighting around the park walkway to increase use and enjoyment and enhance overall accessibility.
Salthill	Installation of power supply to facilitate community events at area next to main car park

Leisureland Salthill	Repair and maintenance to PVC Roof, Recover Building 3, MandE Air Handling units to be replaced (refurbishment and energy efficiency works)
The Manse Nun's Island	Refurbishment of the Manse Nun's Island cultural centre
St Nicholas Church	Purchase and installation of new lighting system for exterior of iconic city centre building and development of Wellness Garden / Oasis in the city centre
Black Box Theatre	Purchase and installation of new accessible ramp
Galway City Museum	Purchase of audio – visual equipment for intercultural education programmes
Galway's Westend	Purchase of equipment for Access for All pilot scheme in Galway's Westend

A number of projects completed in 2023 included lighting installation at Claddagh pitches, purchase of audio-visual equipment for the Galway Museum and boxing ring refurbishment for the Westside Boxing Centre. The majority of projects are underway with completion required in 2024.

**Community Support Fund** - €276,838 was awarded to 73 local community and voluntary groups which helped to support groups particularly in disadvantaged areas, with their non-pay running costs, non-pay operating costs for example, energy costs, rental/lease costs, insurance bills and so on. In addition, the funding helped support the purchase of equipment and necessary repairs and minor improvements to facilities.

**Local Community Festivals** - €15,000 was allocated to 11 community led festivals and events in recognition of the positive contribution that festivals and events can make to communities, giving the local community the opportunity to tailor festivals and events to the needs of their community.

**Africa Day** celebrates the richness of African cultures and the contribution of people of African descent to Irish life. This year's events included a cultural festival in Salthill Park, a symposium in the Institute of Lifecourse and Society (ILAS) building in the University of

Galway and an Afro Music Night for all the community featuring the best Afro DJs in Galway.

**Galway City Street Feast** took place on 25 June 2023. Street Feast aims to promote social inclusion and integration, tackle loneliness and build supportive and resilient neighbourhoods in new and older communities across Ireland. 36 street feasts took place across Galway City in 2023.

## 13.7 Humanitarian Response

The Ukrainian Community Response Forum continued to work together in the delivery of services for Ukrainian refugees in Galway City. The role of the Forum is to coordinate the community-led response in the provision of local assistance and support to Ukrainian refugees as they are accommodated in Galway City.

In facilitating the Ukrainian initiative under SICAP, the Galway City Partnership Ukraine Response Team supported Ukrainian community groups and individuals, such as Ukrainians Helping Ukrainians Galway (UHUG), UA MRIIYA, HARMONY – Ukrainian Choir, and KALINA to run activities and partake in different events in the community (events include the St. Patrick’s Parade, Commemoration Day, International Women’s Day, Westside Arts Festival).

In addition, they linked BOTPs to English classes and broader support for children and families while also running CV workshops, employability support initiatives, and training programmes such as Barista, Safe Pass, Manual Handling. The GCP Ukraine Response Team also supported BOTPs who have been allocated a property under the Offer a Home scheme, delivering several support initiatives including information workshops, and providing clinics including running a household and paying bills in Ireland.

The Offer a Home Scheme was launched nationally in November 2022 and focuses on vacant properties suitable for non-shared accommodation for Displaced Ukrainians. Over 105 displaced Ukrainians have been accommodated in 28 OAH properties to date. Additional properties registered will be allocated in 2024.

Funding was announced for the establishment in each local authority of a Local Authority Integration Team (LAIT). A cornerstone of this new model is a focus on supporting the principle of ‘integration from day one’ with the overarching aim of empowering applicants to live independently in the community. To achieve this goal, applicants will require access to a network of assistance and supports. The LAIT will commence operations in 2024 and will work with applicants for International Protection; those with Refugee, Subsidiary Protection, or Permission to Remain status; Programme Refugees, and Beneficiaries of Temporary Accommodation (BOTPs).

## 13.8 Galway City Community Network / Public Participation Network

With +170 members drawn from the community, voluntary and environmental sectors, Galway City Community Network is the Public Participation Network in Galway City. The role of Galway City Community Network is to facilitate representation of the community, voluntary and environmental sectors on relevant local government, local development bodies and any local, regional, national or international structures deemed appropriate by GCCN.

### GCCN Members at the GCCN 2023 Winter Plenary



GCCN acts as a platform for the community, voluntary and environmental sectors to develop policy and positions on issues of common concern and to advocate for these policies and positions to be implemented.

GCCN facilitates representation in key forums including the Local Community Development Committee, Strategic Policy Committees, the Joint Policing Committee, Galway City Partnership and others.

GCCN provided training and capacity building opportunities to its membership, including an Induction Session and ongoing development for representatives. GCCN used collaborative consultation and active participation processes, involving GCCN linkage groups and members

 Galway City Community Network 

**Save the Date!**  
**Wednesday 31st of May 6.00 pm**

Galway City Community Network is inviting you to join us in the Maldron Hotel for the launch of a collaborative submission to the Local Economic and Community Plan developed together with the groups that are most marginalised in Galway city!  
*More Details to follow...*





in the production of policy submissions on matters like the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) and the National Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Implementation Plan.

In line with its work around public participation and engaging marginalised groups in public consultations, GCCN held consultations for various submissions including Bus Connects Dublin Road, Sandy Quarter Development, DRCD Strategy (2023-2025), Galway Metropolitan Area Transport, Local Area Climate Action, National SDG Review, and Seanad Public Consultation on local democracy and the Green Paper on Disability Reform.

### **13.9 Community Development Programme**

AMACH! LGBT+ Galway was successful in securing funding through the DRCD's Community Development Programme, providing the organisation with its most sustainable funding to date. This funding has allowed AMACH! to secure a premises to re-establish Teach Solais LGBT+ Resource Centre. AMACH! received additional support from the LCDC through the Community Support Fund to help ensure their goals and objectives were successful in 2023. The combined funding allowed for a host of opportunities for the LGBTI+ community to be engaged, support their capacity through personal development programmes and a facilitate a range of LGBTI+ peer support opportunities. AMACH! was successful in securing the Creative Communities Grant 2023, which allowed AMACH! to run multiple projects during and in the run up to the Galway Community Pride Festival.

### **13.10 Healthy Galway City**

Healthy Ireland is a government-led initiative aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of everyone living in Ireland. The Healthy Ireland Fund 2022-2025 Grant Agreement included an allocation of €78,122.42 for 2023 to allow delivery of priority health and wellbeing initiatives. The HGC Coordinator attended the WHO European Healthy Cities Annual Business Meeting and Technical Conference in November. The Conference provided an opportunity to meet with and learn from researchers, practitioners and policy makers involved in the Healthy Cities movement. Healthy Ireland Outcome Indicators are detailed further in the 2023 Local Community Development Committee Annual Report.

HI and GSP delivered the **Nature for Health programme** based in local woodlands that supports participant to enjoy gentle exercise, mindfulness, biodiversity, local history and therapeutic art. This programme ran in Merlin Woods, and targeted people living in disadvantaged communities and people with disabilities.

Galway City Partnership (GCP) and Galway Traveller Movement (GTM) were selected as partners under HIF Round 4 2022 – 2025 for their expertise and proven track records in including and empowering people living in disadvantaged communities and the Traveller Community, respectively. Healthy Galway City allocated €20,000 to GCP for the delivery of **mental, social and physical wellbeing** programmes to people living in disadvantaged communities in Galway City.

These programmes included Community Singing Groups in Westside, Ballinfoile and Ballybane. All three singing groups performed as part of the ‘Cupán Ceoil’ Christmas Lunch event in December. Other programmes targeting people living in Westside, Ballybane and Ballinfoile include Yoga Classes, Art and Creativity Classes, Wellness and Mindfulness Classes, and Physical Activity and Wellbeing classes.

#### Launch of Beach Wheelchairs



Galway City allocated €9,980 to GTM for the delivery of a ‘**Galway Traveller Movement Health and Wellbeing**’ programme. In addition to programmes, GTM also planned a

number of community events to promote positive mental health and wellbeing within the Traveller Community in Galway City. Healthy Galway City collaborated with a range of stakeholders, including the HSE, Local Authority, charities, NGOs, interagency and community group to provide programmes and opportunities to increase levels of positive mental health in the target groups.

€10,000 was allocated by Department of Health under the **Period Poverty Project** relating to the provision of free period products in locations managed by the LA. Free dispensers and period products were installed in venues managed or supported by Galway City Council: Ballinfoile Castlegar Neighbourhood Centre; Leisureland; Renmore Community Centre; Westside Community Centre; Knocknacarra Community Centre; Westside Resource Centre; Galway City Museum and City Hall.

Smaller projects delivered included: A community cooking group for people with lived experience of mental illness with Cosáin Wellness CLG; 'Connecting Communities through Food and Culture' with Galway Melting Potluck; 'Healthy Men, Happy Tribes' Men's Health Week event in June; 'Autumn Wellbeing Programme' and 'Winter Chill and Crafts' workshops with Merlin Woods Training Centre; Community Foraging Workshops in August and September; Galway City and County 'Connect Café' event with Mental Health Ireland, Jigsaw and the HSE as part of Mental Health Awareness Month in October; 'Connect Café' for people living in Direct Provision in partnership with Galway Recovery College and Universities of Sanctuary in October; Halloween Harvest event in Ballinfoile Mor Community Garden, in partnership with local schools. HGC contributed funding towards a Croi Connects Public Talk 'I know What to Do, So Why Can't I Do It?' in November.

Healthy Galway City continued to deliver the **safefood Community Food Initiatives** on behalf of Galway City Partnership. GCP was awarded the CFI Leader role for 2022 – 2024. As part of this project, two community events and two smaller projects were arranged to promote healthy eating and nutrition in disadvantaged communities. Under this initiative, the following programmes and events took place: Westside Community Organic Garden Open Day (as part of Westside Arts Festival) in July; Ballybane Community Organic Garden Open Day in August; Westside Healthy Food Made Easy programme in November / December and Ballinfoile Castlegar Cooking on a Budget programme in November / December.

Under Creative Ireland ‘**Creativity in Older Age Scheme**’ ‘Ceol na Cuimhní / The Music of Memories’ was delivered through Saolta Arts CLG who hosted local musicians in live music workshops and performances for patients of Merlin Park University Hospital and University Hospital Galway, and for residents of residential healthcare settings.

“**Cupán Ceoil Tea Dances**” incorporated art, live music, dancing, food and friendship to reduce the impact of isolation and loneliness on older adults living in Galway City. This project targeted older adults experiencing social isolation in the Westside, Ballinfoile and Ballybane communities.

#### Cupán Ceoil Tea Dances Participants



The project was launched in June with a group trip to Bunratty Castle in Limerick. Attendees looked forward to monthly Creative Arts and Tea Dance sessions throughout September, October and November 2023 and the project culminated in a Christmas Lunch event for over 110 older adults in December.

In October 2022, the Department of Health issued an SLA for the **Ukrainian Refugee Health and Wellbeing Support Fund** to Galway City Council, for the amount of €28,575 Galway Sports Partnership, Healthy Galway City, the Galway City Council Arts Office, in partnership with Galway City Partnership Ukrainian Emergency Response Project Leader and Ukrainian Refugee Support Worker and Volunteer Galway Ukraine Support Worker

completed the template for proposed activations in Galway City. The Ukrainian Refugee Health and Wellbeing Support programme was completed in May 2023. Financial and progress reports have been submitted to the Department of Health. Feedback from participants and partner organisations has been extremely positive regarding this programme.

### **13.11 Age Friendly Programme Initiatives**

**The Healthy Age Friendly Homes Programme** is a unique cross-government collaboration between the Department of Health, HSE, and Local Government through Age Friendly Ireland. It provides an important, rounded model of care which supports older people to remain in their own homes where possible. Galway City Council will have a local coordinator working exclusively across the city in 2024 to deliver this innovative programme.

Older people from across Galway attended an **Information Day** hosted by the Galway Age Friendly Alliance and the Older Persons Councils in November. Guest speakers on the day included John Lonergan, the former Governor of Mountjoy Prison. There were also presentations on HSE Older Persons Services and on Crime Prevention. Information stands were on display from members of the Age Friendly Alliance committee.

The new **Directory of Services for Older People** was also launched at the event. The Directory provides information on health and other essential services. It provides useful information not only for older people, but for their families and carers as well as service providers themselves.

The Parks Department submitted an application under the **National Age Friendly Achievement Award** and O'Sullivan Park in Mervue was shortlisted under the Environment Category. Staff attended the awards ceremony including the Deputy Mayor. Unfortunately, the project did not win the overall award.

**Positive Ageing Week** - The theme of Positive Ageing Week 2023 was Challenging Ageism- Reframing How We Think, Feel and Act towards aging and older persons. Positive Ageing Week took place in October. Galway shone a light on 13 people who are wonderful examples of the positive aspects of ageing and the vast and varied contributions

of older people who quietly improve our lives, neighbourhoods and communities all year round. This flagship event is the Local Heroes Exhibition which featured in various libraries across the city showcasing these amazing people who epitomise positive, healthy and active ageing.

Left - Launch of Directory of Services for Older People

Right – Launch of Positive Aging Week



### **13.12 Galway City Comhairle na nÓg**

Galway City Comhairle na nÓg is a Youth Council for young people 12-17 years living or in education in Galway City. The committee continued to meet weekly on Monday evenings using the Galway City Council training room with regular attendance of 16-18 young people at each meeting. The topic for 2023 was Physical Disabilities and Accessibility with a focus on accessible youth spaces for young people, looking at it from the viewpoint of physical as well as sensory accessibility. In line with guidance, the Galway City Comhairle na nÓg Youth Conference took place in the Galway Bay Hotel on 18 October 2023 with 80 people attending from schools in Galway City.

### **13.13 Community Centres and Facilities**

An application was prepared and submitted under the Community Centre Investment Fund 2023 in partnership with Newcastle Combined Residents Association for the development

of a community centre in Newcastle. This c.€4m project will be of significant value to the community and an announcement is expected in Q1 2024.

Ballinfoile Community Centre's activities and bookings continued to increase with an ongoing increase in footfall. Following the extension of the management contract with SCCUL, City Council continued its successful collaboration with SCCUL and Croí Na Tuath in offering services and facilities to local communities. Galway City Council is a member of the BCNC Advisory Group, and a meeting was held to review progress and address any operational / maintenance issues. Council carried out a maintenance review in October and identified a number of areas requiring attention including repair of faulty lighting system in car park and replacement of all lighting with energy efficient LEDs, resolving a water flow issue, a survey to identify water ingress to sports hall floor with repair and remedial works scheduled, repair of issues with emergency door and a review of anti-glare measures for the Sports Hall which will be undertaken in 2024. There are also energy efficiency works planned for 2024 to install solar panels.

### **13.14 Galway Local Sports Partnership (GSP)**

GSP continued to have an impact on sport and physical activity provision during 2023. Clubs are still feeling the effects of Covid-19 restrictions and the slow return of volunteers to aid in the delivery of the activities of the clubs.

GSP supported 850 people over 72 courses including 34 Safeguarding 1 (basic awareness), 12 Safeguarding 2 (Club Children's Officer) course, 11 Safeguarding 3 (Designated Liaison Person) courses, 12 first aid courses and 3 Volunteer Support training sessions. Volunteers were also supported in gaining coaching certification through the GSP Club Development and City Council Sports Club grants.

**Funding Supports for Clubs and Groups** - GSP supports Galway City Council with the Sports Club Grant scheme. In 2023, 50 clubs received funding under the scheme worth €134,200. The maximum allocation allowed to any one club under the scheme was €3,500, with 26 being awarded this amount.

GSP allocated €62,817 to 63 clubs to deliver a range of programmes aimed at increasing participation under the Galway Sports Partnership Club Development fund. Amounts

ranged from €200 to €2,500 with programmes targeting older adults, teenage girls, setting up new clubs to the purchase of equipment that would support new players. €20,407 was allocated to 21 City Clubs under the scheme.

**Active Cities Galway Programme** - The Active Cities programme commenced in 2023 including partnerships with Tennis Ireland, Recreation and Amenity Department and Healthy Galway City. The first programme was aimed at getting the newly refurbished tennis courts in Westside and Crestwood active with Couch to Court. A programme aimed at the very beginner to become more comfortable with playing tennis on the community courts. Under funding secured by Healthy Galway City, Active Cities launched the latest Nature for Health walking programme in Merlin Woods. The biggest programme under this was the Galway Active Aged Leisureland membership scheme which has given 40 memberships for over 65s for just €24 for 12 months.

#### Active Cities Galway Initiatives



**Bike Week** - 2,196 people took part in over 20 events from 13-21 May. Events ranged from school activities, community cycles to a large City Centre Cycle.



## City Centre Cycle, Bike Week 2023



**Women In Sport (WIS)/Her Outdoors Weeks** - GSP delivered a number of activities in March for WIS week as well as a number of come 'n' try type events during Her Outdoors Week in August. WIS week highlighted all sports whereas the Her Outdoors was focused more on the adventure sports.

**European Week of Sport Event (EWOS)** - GSP kicked off EWOS with an event that tied into Culture Night in Westside. Targeting teenagers, we delivered a glow games event that was full of fun. The promotion of the EWOS involved many of the club around the city as well as some GSP programmes.

**Sports Disability Inclusion Officer (SIDO)** - GSP continues to roll out nationally recognised training through Active Disability Ireland. Boccia, equine programmes and walking programmes were delivered with a number of groups catering for people with disabilities across Galway. Under this remit the SIDO officer also supports activities for older adults. PALs training workshops were delivered as well as a Good to Go workshop, training people over a number of weeks to lead activities within their group. Among this age group Activator poles are hugely popular with more than 4 courses completed in the City last year.

**Ballybane Doughiska Community Sports Hub (CSH)** - 2023 was the last year of funding through Dormant Account Fund through Sport Ireland. GSP's. Continued its good

work in providing community activities for all ages, including, badminton, afterschool, BuggyBuddies, BoysBeWell and many more.

**National Governing Bodies Development Officers** - Galway City Council continue to support two NGB Development officers in Football (FAI) and Rugby (Connacht Rugby).

They continue to develop participation with our targeted groups throughout the city. Their role includes delivery of training courses, supporting existing clubs with governance and coaching, school links and developing programmes for those target groups to get involved in sport.



## **14. Environment**

The objective of the Environment Department is to protect, enhance and conserve the natural environment of our city and promote high quality recreational, leisure and amenity facilities to improve quality of life.

### **14.1 Provision of Waste Management Services and Supports**

#### **14.1.1 Landfill Operation and Aftercare**

Restoration works and monitoring of the Carrowbrowne landfill site continued in accordance with the conditions of the EPA licence with ongoing infrastructure upgrading and renewal as required.

#### **14.1.2 Recovery and Recycling Facilities**

The Civic Amenity Facility in Liosbán Industrial Estate continued to operate free of charge to domestic householders.

#### **14.1.3 Composting Facility**

The use of the composting facility at Carrowbrowne ceased in 2014. The facility is currently being leased.

#### **14.1.4 Bulky Goods Collection**

Funding of €7,739 was provided through the Anti-Dumping Initiative 2023. 25,970 kg of household bulky waste was collected from Galway City householders.

#### **14.1.5 Hazardous Waste Collection**

Galway City Council ran a Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day on Saturday 9 September 2023.

On the day, households in Galway City could bring their hazardous waste along to a collection vehicle at Galway Racecourse for safe and proper disposal.

A specialised, online booking system was used, and householders booked a time slot in advance. A total of 14,360 Kgs of hazardous waste was collected on the day, with 298 households using the service.



## 14.2 Monitoring and Managing Waste Enforcement

### 14.2.1 Waste Enforcement

Galway City Council continued to monitor compliance with and enforce waste regulations under the waste management legislation, in line with the National Waste Enforcement Priorities which include Construction and Demolition Waste, End-of Life Vehicles (ELV) and Waste Metal, Household and Commercial Waste and Tackling Significant Illegal Waste Activity. Work included:

**Licensing and data validation:** In 2023, Galway City Council monitored and enforced the conditions of waste facility permits, certificates of registration and waste collection permits to ensure compliance. The annual returns of 15 waste collectors and 4 waste facilities based in the city were validated.

**Producer Responsibility Initiatives (PRI):** Throughout the year, Galway City Council liaised with PRI schemes on all aspects of compliance obligations and reviewed lists of registered operators against local records. Revoked lists and anomaly data issued from CUWERLA assisted in choosing which retailers and operators to prioritise for inspection, as did previous experience with the retailers. In 2023 Galway City Council carried out 61 inspections.

**Construction and Demolition Waste:** In 2023, 7 inspections were carried out at construction sites. There is one authorised CandD waste facility in Galway City and this was monitored and inspected by Galway City Council in 2023. The Council also inspected sites of origin and sites of destination for all notified Article 27 applications.

**Household Waste:** Galway City Council maintains a Section 34C Register which is a list of all households in the city availing of a waste collection service. This information was provided to the Council on a quarterly basis by the four licenced waste collectors operating in the city. At the end of 2023, there were 24,552 households on the Section 34C Register availing of a waste collection service.

**Multi-agency enforcement work:** Multi-agency enforcement work: Galway City Council liaise with the Connacht Ulster Waste Enforcement Regional Lead Authority (CUWERLA), the EPA, the Gardaí, and other local authorities in relation to waste enforcement. In June 2023, Roadside checkpoints were carried out, in conjunction with An Garda Síochána, Revenue and the Road Safety Authority. Galway City Council waste enforcement staff were checking for compliance with waste permits and unauthorised waste activity.

### **14.3 Community Warden Service to the Environment Department**

The Community Wardens assist in investigating complaints made by the public.

13 Section 14 Directions under the Waste Management Act 1996, as amended, were issued by the Community Warden team in 2023. In addition, the Community Wardens carried out inspections of 36 garages in the city, with a focus on waste metal, tyres, batteries and hazardous waste. The EPA's Smart Garage Guide was distributed to garages during the inspections.

### **14.4 RMCEI - Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections**

Galway City Council submitted its Inspection and Compliance Plan under RMCEI 2024 to the EPA in March 2024. The document sets out the plan for environmental inspections in Galway City for the year across the areas of waste, water, noise and air. In total, 1,519 non-

routine environmental inspections were carried out in 2023, representing an increase of 8.53% on completed inspections in 2022. This is indicative to the increase in resources for the Community Wardens carrying out such investigations.

## 14.5 Environmental Awareness Programme and Initiatives

### 14.5.1 Green-Schools Programme

All schools in Galway City are registered for the Green-Schools programme resulting in a number of educational facilities achieving Green Flag status. In 2023, 15 School visits were completed by the Environmental Awareness Officer. 10 schools in total received Green Flags.

### 14.5.2 Greening the Laneways

Galway City Council have completed three Greening the Laneways in 2023. Greening the Laneways has been shortlisted for Best Green Sustainable Initiative at the 2023 LAMA awards. A [short film was also created](#) of the initiative.

Bowling Green, Summer 2023



St. Bridget's Place 2023



Cabbage Lane April 2023

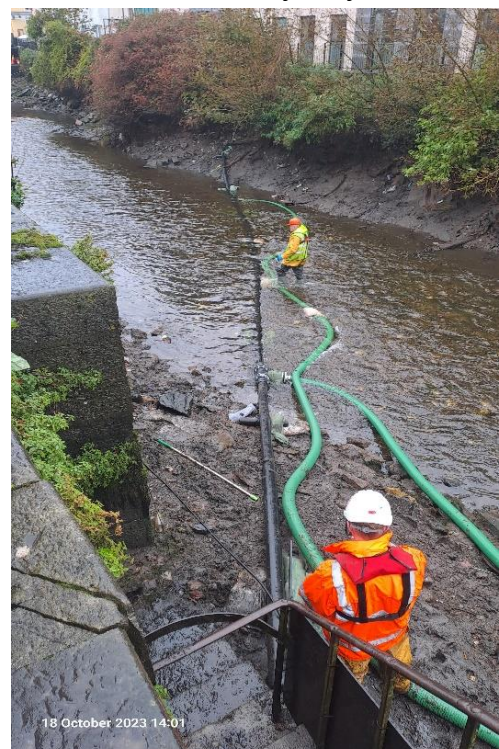


### 14.5.3 Anti-Dumping Initiative (ADI)

In 2023, Galway City Council received funding of €89,329 through the Anti-Dumping Initiative and carried out 7 projects. Galway City Council collaborated with Galway County Council and Barna Recycling on a bulky goods collection event, to supplement the bulky goods collection service offered by the Council. A Hazardous Waste Collection event took place in September. A city-wide clean-up campaign known as Love Galway City was organised, comprising of community clean-ups and the Council-led clean-ups of illegal dump sites. The very successful 'Greening the Laneways' project, involving community-based enhancement works in laneways, was expanded in 2023 (see above).

Awareness campaigns were also carried out on highlighting Galway City Council's Litter Management Unit and unauthorised waste collectors and checking for a waste permit.

The Eglington Canal project involved the installation of a hydrocurtain/barrier on the Eglington Canal to



trap buoyant waste, thereby stopping it entering the marine environment and, also, facilitating easy removal of the waste from the canal.

#### **14.5.4 Co-Operation Ireland (IPB) Pride of Place Competition**

This annual all-island initiative, which is hosted by Co-operation Ireland and sponsored by IPB Insurance is run in conjunction with local authorities. Rockfield Greening the Laneways were nominated for the Creative place category at the IPB Pride of Place awards 2023, and Galway Community College Lough Atalia Project received a nomination for the Climate Action and Biodiversity category.

Galway Youth Climate Assembly not only were nominated but came runners-up in the Community Youth Led Initiative category.



### 14.5.5 Community Clean Ups

Galway City Council supported 75 community clean ups in 2023. This included giving out litter pickers, bags and gloves to groups and collecting the bags by the GCC litter crews.

### 14.5.6 Love your Beach Week 2023

Galway City Council and Clean Coasts Ireland teamed up again for Galway's first Love your Beach Week from Wednesday 7 June 2023 to Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> June. All the events happened simultaneously at 4 iconic beaches in Galway City. All of the events were free and open to the public and many Galwegians and Tourists alike came and helped with the Beach cleans. Everyone took responsibility to help protect the wonderful beaches of Galway City.

### 14.6 Amenity Grants

88 grants were awarded in 2023 to the value of €21,150.

### 14.7 Anti-Litter Awareness Fund 2023

The Anti-Litter Anti-Graffiti grant funded the Clean it up you Dirty Pup! campaign; Love your Beach Week/Day 2023; Picker Pals; a cinema advert; and the Spring Clean.

#### Love Your Beach Week 2023 – Events on 7 and 8 June

**7-10 June 2023**  
**Love Your Beach Week 2023**  
**Wednesday 7 June**  
**Ballyloughane Beach**

5:00pm

- **Launch** with Mayor Clodagh Higgins
- **Litter clean up** with Beach Buds Clean Coast Group
- Workshop '**Beachcombing for Biofacts**' with Gary Kendellan, Galway Atlantaquaria

6:00pm

- Fun Workshop '**Drum Sounds and the Sea**' with Community Spirit Drumming

For more information, see [GalwayCity.ie/Love-Your-Beach-Week](https://GalwayCity.ie/Love-Your-Beach-Week)

Galway City Council, City Hall, College Road, Galway, H91 X4K8  
Email: [customerservice@galwaycity.ie](mailto:customerservice@galwaycity.ie) Phone: +353 91 536400

**7-10 June 2023**  
**Love Your Beach Week 2023**  
**Thursday 8 June**  
**Grattan Beach**

5:00pm **World Oceans Day**

- **Litter clean up** with Galway Volunteer Centre

6:00pm

- Workshop: '**How Beaches Help Us Tackle Climate Change**' with Dr Kevin Lynch, University of Galway

For more information, see [GalwayCity.ie/Love-Your-Beach-Week](https://GalwayCity.ie/Love-Your-Beach-Week)

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Email: [customerservice@galwaycity.ie](mailto:customerservice@galwaycity.ie) Phone: +353 91 536400

## 14.8 Tidy Towns National Competition and Galway City Tidy Towns and Garden Competition

A total of 95 applications were received for the Galway City Tidy Towns and Garden Competition, which is run by GCC. The garden competition aligned with the objectives of the National Biodiversity Action Plan and the National Pollinator Plan. This was evident with the pollinator-friendly goals of the competition being widely embraced by gardeners with many lawns looking more rustic, increased use of wildflowers and a reduction in the use of pesticides.

Galway City Tidy Towns is run by volunteer groups - GCC contributed €3,085 to these groups.

### Garden Competition Launch



### Michael Duffy, Best Garden in Galway City Winner



## 14.9 Litter Management Services

### 14.9.1 Operation of Street Cleaning

Street cleaning and litter management services continued to operate over a seven-days-a-week schedule, starting at 5am every morning.

Galway City Council's street cleaning crews commenced a trial deep clean across the city centre in 2023.

This initiative commenced on Wednesday 8 March from 5:00am to 8:00am and targeted Williamsgate Street, Williams Street, Castle Street, Shop Street, Upper and Lower Abbeygate Street, Churchyard Street, Mainguard Street, High Street and Quay Street.

The trial deep clean involved a tractor and bowser bringing water to be brushed by road sweepers with bio-friendly degreaser to remove dirt, grease and grime. This was a very successful initiative and improved the cleanliness of the streets.

#### Tractor and Bowser Cleaning the Street



#### 14.9.2 Litter Management Plan 2018 – 2022

Under Section 10 of the Litter Pollution Act, 1997, a local authority is obliged to make a Litter Management Plan. The plan sets out the objectives to prevent and control litter, enforcement, along with measures to encourage public awareness of litter in Galway City. Implementation of the Plan continued in 2023.

#### 14.9.3 Litter Fines

Litter fines are issued under the Litter Management Act 1997. In 2023 a total of 112 fines were issued. Total income received in 2023 was €13,135, an 80% increase on the previous year due to both an increase in Community Warden activity and the introduction of pre-court reminder correspondence warning offenders of impending legal action.

#### **14.9.4 Derelict Sites**

The Council continued to actively engage with the owners of sites listed on the Derelict Sites Register as well as other sites being monitored. At year end, a total of 9 properties were on the Register.

#### **14.10 Dangerous Structures**

Galway City Council continue to engage with relevant property owners to actively encourage the resolution of such structures.

#### **14.11 Water Quality and Safety, Air and Noise Pollution**

##### **14.11.1 Water Quality**

Annual water quality ratings are generally calculated using monitoring results over a four-year period and are assessed against stringent bacterial limits to protect bather health. Following a review of the 2019 - 2022 dataset records of water quality at Ballyloughane beach, the EPA classified the quality of bathing water at this location for 2023 as Good. This was in line with 2022 classifications and an improvement on previous year's with Ballyloughane Beach achieving a Sufficient Water Quality rating in 2020 and 2018, and a Poor Water Quality rating in 2019 which resulted in bathing being prohibited for the season. The improvement in results can be accredited to corrective works carried out to cross connections in the sewer network catchment. Silverstrand and Salthill beaches maintained their Excellent status which Grattan Road maintained its status of Good.

##### **14.11.2 Air Quality Monitoring**

In partnership with the EPA, the Clean Air Together (CAT) project was launched in August 2023. Clean Air Together (CAT) is a citizen science project where people voluntarily sign up to measure levels of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) pollution in their local area. NO<sub>2</sub> is predominantly a traffic-related air pollutant that can cause negative health impacts. The Clean Air Together campaign took place in October-November 2023 with over 300 participants in Galway City. 71 per cent of locations sampled were in the lowest category for NO<sub>2</sub>, with a further 24.5 per cent in the next lowest category.

## Clean Air Together Results Map



Works to install a “Low-Cost Sensor Network” of air monitors was completed in Q4 of 2023. Air monitors that measure PM<sub>2.5</sub> in real time were installed at various locations throughout the decarbonisation zone in Westside.

Members of the public can view the real-time information on air quality in their location. These monitors are in addition to the 3 no. EPA monitors that are installed in Galway City at Ragoon, Eyre Square and Briarhill.



## 14.12 Noise Action Plan

Noise pollution incidents were investigated on a case-by-case basis during 2023 and complainants advised as to the procedures to be followed under the Environmental Protection Agency Act. Galway City Council being the designated Action Planning Authority under Article 7 of the European Communities (Environmental Noise) Regulations 2018, SI No 549 of 2018 (the Regulations), made a Noise Action Plan 2019-2023 for sections of major roads in Galway City that experience a volume of traffic greater than 3 million vehicle passages per year. The plan excludes noise from domestic activities, noise created by neighbours and noise at workplaces.

## 14.13 Casual Trading

The 2023 breakdown of Casual Trading licenses issued is below.

Table - 21 – Casual Trading Licences

Day	Number
Saturday license	68
Sunday license	55
Summer Market	41
Christmas Market	38
Eyre Square	10

## 14.14 Automated Public Conveniences (APCs)

APCs are provided by Galway City Council at the following locations:

- Blackrock,
- Ladies' Beach,
- Palmer's Rock,
- Millennium Playground,
- Eyre Square, and
- Earl's Island.

The APC at Earls Island was temporarily removed to allow for the construction of the Salmon Weir Pedestrian Bridge during 2023.

The new “Changing Places” facility in Ladies Beach, Salthill was opened for use in September 2023.

Changing Places facilities are different from mainstream accessible toilets in that they include both a hoist and a height-adjustable changing bench.

They have been designed to put health, safety and dignity concerns of the person with a disability and the carer to the fore.



## 14.15 Provision of Dog Services

In 2023 there was 204 dogs through our dog pound. 153 of these dogs were rehomed, reclaimed or returned to their owners and 42 of these dogs were taken by various dog charities.

The increased media campaign promoting the Galway City Dog Pound proved popular across social platforms such as Facebook and Instagram. These campaigns included neutering campaigns and rehoming campaigns. To increase dog licence compliance our dog wardens undertook door to door inspections throughout the city. A media campaign was also launched to notify the public of these dog licence compliance inspections.

New Solar panels were installed in Galway City Dog Pound in 2023. The system is a 7.5kWp panel array with a 5kW inverter. The system produces Direct Current (DC) electricity from the panel array, and the inverter converts it to usable alternate current electricity (AC). Electricity supplied from the panels can sufficiently supply the building when fully operational.

The Dog Warden's electric-powered battery vehicle can also be fully charged from surplus energy.

#### Solar Panels at Dog Pound



### 14.16 Fire and Library Services

Fire and Library services are operated and managed by Galway County Council, as a shared service on behalf of the City Council.



## 15. Climate Action

The objective of the Climate Action Department is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase energy efficiency, promote renewable energy, enhance resilience and adaptation, build partnerships and foster innovation and technology adoption within the city.

### 15.1 Climate Action Plan 2024 - 2029

The Climate Action Department commenced preparing for the Local Authority Climate Action Plan by developing a baseline of emissions and climate action risk assessment. Workshops and briefings were held with elected members and internal staff to draft appropriate actions to be included within the Draft Plan to be adopted in February 2024.

### 15.2 Climate Adaptation

The Climate Adaptation Strategy was adopted in 2019 and runs up until 2024. Galway City Council continued to implement actions in 2023 and regular meetings were held to update on progress. Council is engaged with the EU Mission Adaptation to Climate Change, which provides a platform through which Galway City can leverage learnings from other European cities across the spectrum of climate adaptation measures.

Galway City Council introduced its first Nature based Solutions project in the city on Grattan beach and developed a "Roadmap for Grattan beach and Dune site" to inform stakeholders of the relevant short-, medium- and long-term actions that could be implemented.



### 15.3 Energy and Emissions

Energy Management and Targets - An Energy Management Team comprised of lead staff in Galway City Council responsible for significant energy users, for example, public lighting, buildings and transport fleet was set up in 2021 and meet on a regular basis to identify a register of opportunities that provides a pathway to achieving Galway City Council 2030 emission reduction targets.

**Monitoring and Reporting of Energy Use** - Galway City Council continued to work in partnership with the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI), to monitor and report energy use across the organisation. Work commenced in developing a pathway to achieving 2030 targets which will be further progressed. Grant funding to complete building retrofits was approved for Ballinfoile Community Centre, Knocknacarra Community Centre and Galway City Museum with works to commence in 2024. The Climate Action Department also completed retrofits of LED lights and energy efficient heaters to nine (9) site offices at a cost of 20,000 euro and energy savings of 5 tonne of Co2 per year.

The Climate Action Department managed the install of 7.5kWp Photovoltaic system (PV) to the roof of the Galway City Council Dog Pound. This involved the installation 18no. x 420w of Solar Panels to the existing roof with the installation of 1no. 5kWh inverter and connection to the existing ESB supply sub board. This is the first Solar PV project for Galway City Council with a P.V. sized system of 7.5 kWh.

## 15.4 Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil

Approval was secured to use hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) for use as a replacement for diesel in all vehicles not currently planned to change over to electric vehicles. HVO reduces emissions by up to 90% which significantly supports the local authority in achieving its 2030 targets.



## 15.5 Net Zero Cities

The Climate Action Department applied to become a Net Zero Pilot City and were the only Irish city to be awarded the designation and awarded 1 million euro funding. Galway City Council is progressing the objectives of the project in increasing awareness of retrofit options, increasing the pool of contractors to complete retrofits and removing barriers to retrofits within the private housing sector.



## 15.6 Community Climate Action

Community briefings were held throughout 2023 to provide information on the local authority climate action plan, community climate action fund and other climate action initiatives being delivered by the Galway City Council team.



## 16. Recreation and Amenity

The objective of the Recreation and Amenity Department is to protect, enhance and conserve the natural environment of our city, to provide leadership in climate action and to develop and promote high quality recreational, leisure and amenity facilities to improve quality of life.

### 16.1 Amenity and Community Capital Projects

#### 16.1.1 St Joseph's Ragoon Cemetery Extension Project

Landscaping works to the existing lawn cemetery section were completed with headstones fitted to 14 urn plots.

Drone footage of completed lawn cemetery extension in Ragoon.



#### 16.1.2 New Cemetery Site

New Lawn Cemetery on Dublin Road – Ground investigation works complete and work on preliminary design ongoing.

#### 16.1.3 Restoration of Bohermore Chapels

Restoration works and repairs to the roof, gutters and windows were substantially completed on the old Catholic Chapel.

## 16.2 Green Spaces Strategy 2022-2032

A request for tender was issued in the last quarter of the year for the procurement of consultancy services to prepare the Green Spaces Strategy for Galway City. Arup Ireland was awarded the contract and were appointed just before Christmas. This enabled the work to start in January 2023.

ARUP

### Project Stages & Outputs



The Green Spaces Strategy is a requirement of the Development Plan 2023-2029 and will build on the Recreation and Amenity Needs Study (RANS) 2008.

The Strategy will be similar to RANS as it will apply an evidence-based approach to identify what recreation and amenity facilities are needed and where they will be spatially located across the city based on expected population growth and other factors.

The main elements that distinguish the Green Spaces Strategy from RANS is it will provide a baseline of the current ecological condition of the city's green and blue infrastructure, establish the natural capital value of the green network, and provide a masterplan for strengthening the ecosystem services in the city.

The Strategy therefore combines the recreational needs of the city and the enhancement of its green and blue infrastructure in relation to the projected population growth of Galway City.

### 16.2.1 Woodquay Park Project

Galway City Council was awarded €1,030,834 under the Department of Tourism and Fáilte Ireland's **Urban Animation Capital Investment Scheme** for the Woodquay Park Project. This project will include enhancement of the park space and surrounding street network, improved pedestrian connectivity and an artwork installation in accordance with the Galway Public Realm Strategy.

A multi-disciplinary design team was appointed in February 2023. Significant progress was made with Stage 1 - Preliminary Design, including completion of a raft of site surveys, stakeholder consultations and concept design development. A Part 10 planning submission will be made to An Bord Pleanála in Q2 2024 with detailed design and construction phases to follow in 2025.



## 16.3 Sports Capital Projects

### 16.3.1 Salthill Tidal Pool Feasibility Study

This project involves the undertaking of a feasibility study associated with the refurbishment and redevelopment of the now disused Salthill tidal pools. Originally built in 1930, the pools were decommissioned in the 1980s. A multi-disciplinary design team was appointed in June 2023. Various site surveys, a public consultation event and stakeholder meetings were undertaken in Q2 and Q3 of 2023. Concept designs are currently being developed and the study is due to be complete in Q2 2024.

### 16.3.2 Corrib Park Grass Soccer Pitch

This project involves the development of a full-sized grass soccer pitch and ancillary works. Construction work commenced in February 2023 with the pitch seeded in September 2023. The pitch will be open for use in Q3 2024 following a period for grass establishment.

Corrib Park Grass Soccer Pitch



### 16.3.3 Glen Oaks/ Drom Chaoin MUGA Refurbishment

This project involved refurbishment of an existing multi-use games area (MUGA) facility and replacement of a derelict MUGA facility with a park space. The MUGA refurbishment works were completed in June 2023. Following a public consultation event in July 2023, the derelict MUGA was removed in November 2023 and returned to open green space. Further landscaping works are planned to take place in Q2 2024.

Glen Oaks/ Drom  
Chaoin Multi-Use  
Games Area





#### **16.3.4 Establishment of Multi Disciplinary Framework for Masterplans & Kingston and Millers Lane Parks and Public Urban Realm Project**

Galway City Council Recreation and Amenity department is required to deliver a significant number of large, medium and small-scale capital recreation and amenity projects. To ensure that these could be delivered and that we had in place the specialist resources required to allow projects to progress, GCC wanted to establish Multi-Supplier Framework for Multi-disciplinary Consultancy Services for Recreational Amenity Facilities in Galway City. The Framework provided for the engagement of consultancy services by competition during the four-year lifetime of the framework.

Tenders for a Multi-Supplier Framework for Multi-disciplinary Consultancy Services for a New/Upgraded Public Recreational Amenities in Galway City was advertised on the 11th of May 2023 with a deadline for return of tenders on the 8th of June 2023. Following very significant interest in the tender from interested parties the deadline was extended to the 22nd of June 2023 to allow time for bidders to complete their proposals and maximise the number of bidders for the City Council. By the end of July the initial Framework Panel was set up and allowed us to progress through to Stage 2 which was the competition titled the Kingston Millar's Lane Public Parks and Public Urban Realm.

Tenders were issued in October and returned in December 2023. Tender analysis was undertaken during December with award of Contract in in Q1 2024. This procedure formally established the Framework with 3 Consultancies over the next 4 years.

#### **16.3.5 South Park and Public Urban Realm Project**

- Stage 1 Initial establishment of Framework as above Completed in 2023.
- Stage 2 Drafting of Tender documents scheduled for Q4 2023, with issue of documents for tender in Q1 2024.

#### **16.3.6 Renmore Master Plan Project**

- Stage 1 Initial establishment of Framework as above Completed in 2023.
- Stage 2 Drafting of Tender documents scheduled for Q4 2023, with issue of documents for tender in Q1 2024

### **16.3.7 Retractable Automated Ball Stop Netting at Cappagh Park:**

- Tender for Contractor and fabricator advertised; suitable bidder appointed, and contract awarded.
- Detailed fabrication designs in progress; contractor to be on site in Q1 2024 (weather depending).

## **16.4 Event Permits**

The Department process applications for events in the parks and open spaces across the city and issued 68 permits. Examples of permits issued were educational walks, charity runs/walks, filming, brand activations, Galway Potters Market, Galway International Arts Festival, Galway International Oyster Festival, Vintage Car display. Over the summer months, orienteering and community events were also permitted in our parks and beaches.

## **16.5 Community Facilities and Projects**

### **16.5.1 Galway City Allotments**

Galway City Council operated two allotment sites in the city – Merlin Woods City Park (44 plots) and Shantalla Community Park (33 plots). Any vacant plots were reallocated in accordance with the Allotment Scheme 2023. In Merlin, improvement works were undertaken. In Shantalla, improvement works were undertaken.

### **16.5.2 Community Centres**

- Westside - Installation of basketball scoreboard and timer to league standard. Replacement of side basketball hoops.
- Knocknacarra Cappagh – Installation of basketball score board and clock to national competition standard. Repairs to paving bricks to the side of Knocknacarra Community Centre were completed.
- Renmore –To increase usage and facilitate both mini and senior basketball, a number of adjustable height basketball boards/nets were installed. Damaged

gutters and rooflights to the centre were also repaired. New heating system installed in main hall.

- Crestwood Clubhouse – Upgrade of car park. Survey works started on building to establish maintenance requirements. Works to start in 2024.

### 16.5.3 Glenard Community Nature Park

During the pandemic, the local community at Glenard Park found that they used their local park a lot and contacted the Council around improvements they felt could help make the park more biodiverse and accessible.

In 2022 a Masterplan was produced based on the community engagement and an extensive tree survey undertaken. In 2023, based on the above tree survey non native, invasive and dangerous trees were removed. Extensive planting of suitable and mature native trees was undertaken throughout the park.

The central circular bed planting was replaced and old park benching was removed and replaced with age friendly seating. More works planned for 2024.



### 16.6 Other Sports facilities

Fluorescent floodlighting at Roscam Tennis Court and Basketball Courts were upgraded to new LED floodlights.

### 16.7 Pitches and Dressing Rooms

51 pitches are located across the city which provide for the playing of all forms of sporting activities, most of which were licensed to various Clubs/schools/colleges for an 11-month period from 1 September – 31 July. These comprise of:

- Rugby: 4,
- Soccer: 23,

- Gaelic Games: 13,
- All Weather: 4,
- Training: 2,
- Astro Turf/cages: 3 and
- Multi Use: 2.

Repairs to the playing pitches with sand were carried out as well as the re-sodding of goalmouths, installation of artificial goalmouths, erection of signage and inspection of goalposts.

## **16.8 Parks, Woodlands and Estate Management**

### **16.8.1 Parks**

In Parks throughout the City, grass cutting, flower bed maintenance, tree and hedge pruning were carried out. In Kennedy Park, refurbishment works on the Browne Door and glass surround were completed.

### **16.8.2 Woodlands**

Recycling facilities for Christmas trees was provided in January at Hunters and Merlin Woods Depots. In addition to the routine maintenance undertaken, path resurfacing works were completed on Rosshill Woods. Terryland Forest had its path resurfaced along the Headford Road.

### **16.8.3 River Walk Works**

Improvement works have been completed by Recreation and Amenity Operations on Bruach na Corribe, in conjunction with the opening of the new pedestrian and cycle bridge works, with a link from Friar's Walk to River Walk.

## Bruach na Corribe Improvement Works



### 16.8.4 Skateparks

Works were completed on refurbishing Children's Millennium Park (CMP) Skatepark from timber rhino units to concrete structures.

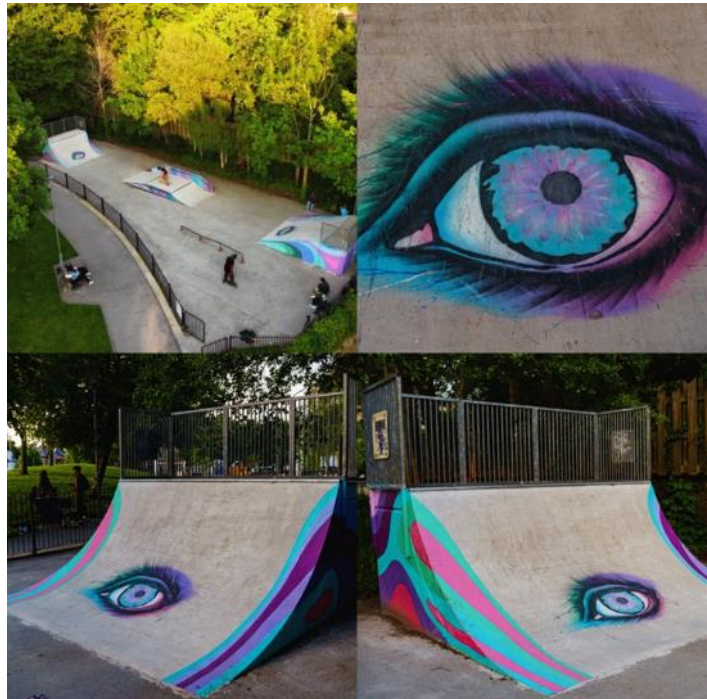


Image Right – Skatepark, Children's Millennium Park

### 16.8.5 Estates and Open Spaces

The following is a summary of the main works undertaken:

- Tree pruning works and cut back was carried out on numerous estates and green spaces. Grass cutting in all of the approximately 400 estates in the city was completed. Hedge pruning and flower bed maintenance was completed.
- Outdoor dining initiative with flower displays/ planter boxes were done at prominent locations throughout the City including Eyre Square, Woodquay, Spanish Arch and Salthill for the busy Summer tourist season.
- Trees were cut back along Rusheen Woods Estate.
- Tree pruning works were carried out to the front of Jury's Inn near Spanish Arch and to a birch tree at Glenard Crescent.
- Tree surround works were completed at Cross Street and in Eyre Square. This used a new sustainable drainage system of flexipave porous surfacing system. It is made from recycled tyres rubber, stone, aggregate and a binding agent.
- A landscaping service contract for Galway City Council verges and roundabouts was completed.
- A new pathway was completed through Councillor funding at Corrib Park Estate, Newcastle.

### 16.8.6 Healthy Green Spaces Initiative and “No Mow” areas

132 Bat boxes installed in 6 residential areas that are participating in the Healthy Green Spaces initiatives. They are Tara Grove, Dangan Heights, The Maples, Highfield Park, McGraths Field, and Tirellan Heights.

Bat Box



Taylor's Hill Green School's team received pollinator friendly mixed spring bulbs, ornamental flower seed and peat compost.

The 46 acres of No Mow meadows throughout the city in the open spaces and estates were managed and harvested as per previous years.

The three photos right/ below are of Clareview Park, which is a Healthy Green Spaces group and has an outstanding No Mow area.



### 16.8.7 Westside Memorial Garden

A memorial garden to remember the deceased in Westside was completed adjacent the Rocky Road pathway.



The Memorial Garden was funded by Cllr Mike Cubbard.

The official opening of the Memorial Garden was held by on 25 May 2023 with the Mayor, Councillors, landscaping Contractor, local residents, Parish Priest and GCC staff who worked on the project in attendance.



**16.8.8 Floral Projects**

2,361 square meters of mixed bulb and perennial planting took place in Ballybane, Castlepark and Salthill



White Strand Road, Salthill



Ballybane Road

Castlepark Road



**16.8.9 Tree Planting Programme**

There were over 100 mature trees planted throughout the City during the year.

Mature Tree Planting Eyre Square



## 16.9 Playground Operations and Management

Ongoing playground maintenance works was carried out across the city. These included deep cleaning, replacement of woodchip, repairs/replacement of equipment, painting, surface maintenance, removal of graffiti and inspections to ensure that all equipment meets the standards required for safe use.

### 16.9.1 Claddagh Playground Refurbishment Works

This project was completed by Recreation and Amenity Operations, with an official opening of the newly refurbished playground on 25 May 2023.

A new pirate frigate ship was installed with new tarmac treatment applied to the playgrounds surface and stencilling to brighten up new surfaces. An underwater mural along a block work wall was completed by local artist Irene Naughton.

Much positive feedback was received by Recreation and Amenity staff on the works.

Claddagh Playground - Before



## Claddagh Playground – After



Left to right: Mark Ryan, Craft Foreman, Peter Glynn, Executive Engineer, Cllr Mike Cubbard, Cllr Eddie Hoare, Cllr Martina O'Connor, Liam Moran (Kompan), Mayor Clodagh Higgins, Irene Naughton (Artist), Cllr Donal Lyons, Sharon Connolly, Senior Engineer.

A Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) board was added to the playground. PECS boards allow the child to communicate their needs, make choices, or to know what will come next.

These devices are often associated with decreased behavioural issues in Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and nonverbal children because they allow an alternative expression of needs and ideas. For students who have a difficult time transitioning between activities they are a great way to motivate them to shift settings or actions.



## 16.9.2 Henry Street Playground

Improvements were completed in Henry Street Playground, see photos below.



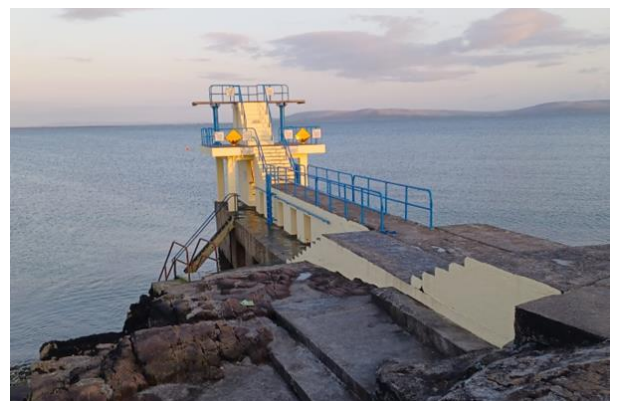
## 16.10 Beaches and Water Safety

Maintenance works carried out on the beaches as required. New information signage boards were also installed at the City's four beaches Grattan, Silverstrand, Salthill and Ballyloughane.

### 16.10.1 Blackrock Diving Tower

Maintenance works continued at Blackrock Diving Tower in 2023.

Power Washing and Painting Works at Blackrock Tower



### 16.10.2 Water Safety

Lifeguard services were provided at all the bathing water facilities in the City between June – September in co-operation with Galway County Council. A total of 60 ring-buoy locations along the River Corrib and canals were inspected weekly and replaced as necessary.

During the bathing season, water samples are taken from the four designated bathing areas in Galway City (Silverstrand, Salthill, Grattan and Ballyloughane) and tested for microbiological parameters indicative of water quality, namely E-Coli and Intestinal Enterococci. Silverstrand and Salthill are Blue Flag Beaches and are sampled at least fortnightly. Ballyloughane and Grattan are sampled at least weekly.

### 16.10.3 Blue Flag/ Green Coast Awards

The Blue Flag and Green Coast Awards were announced by An Taisce in 2023. Salthill and Silverstrand beaches were awarded both flags for 2023, being two of only 5 beaches in the country to hold both flags.

Blue and Green Coast flag award ceremony held by An Taisce



Unveiling of the Green Coast flag at Silverstrand Beach



The Blue Flag is one of the world's most recognised eco-labels for beaches. To be granted Blue Flag status, beaches must comply with a specific set of criteria relating to water quality, information provision, environmental education, safety and environmental management.

The Green Coast Award is a symbol of environmental excellence and has been established to acknowledge, promote and protect the environment of our beaches.

## **16.11 Cemeteries Operations and Management**

The City Council continued to manage and operate two cemeteries in the City at Ragoon and Bohermore.

Cemetery Sunday Mass was held in Bohermore on 21 August which was streamed online. Unfortunately, due to weather conditions, the Cemetery Sunday Mass scheduled in Ragoon for 11 September was cancelled.

Various works were carried out on the cemeteries, namely:

### **16.11.1 Ragoon Cemetery**

- New machinery shed.
- New main entrance gates.
- Works to boundary wall and new compound gates completed with hedging and trees also planted.
- New seating and planting added with a new parking area.
- Recycled plastic bollards fitted to the edges of the access roads to protect existing graves and to facilitate parking control.
- Toilet block refurbished.
- Repairs to the stone wall in old section

### **16.11.2 Bohermore Cemetery**

- Ducting and base for the new storage shed installed.
- The delivery and installation of 30 headstones for urn plots.
- Winter planting in flower beds as well as planting in the tree lined avenue.

### **16.11.3 Old Ragoon Cemetery:**

The Community Service Initiative Team continue to maintain the Old Ragoon Cemetery, whose works include:

- The cutting back and removal of overgrown material, litter picking and the erection of anti-dog fouling signage.
- Bag dispensers and bins installed along the paths.
- Boundary wall rebuilt and repaired.

## **16.12 Biodiversity**

### **16.12.1 Local Biodiversity Action Fund 2023 Applications**

The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) made targeted funding available for local authorities regarding the implementation of the National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) under the Local Biodiversity Action Fund 2023.

Funding was received from the NPWS for the following projects:

- Barna Woods Management and Regeneration Project 2023- Galway City Council procured the services of Leave No Trace Ireland to engage with local stakeholders including the GCC Parks Department, local schools, NGOs, Government Agencies, and the wider public to understand the use and importance of the woods as an amenity and promote a message of care and respect for the woodland and to highlight the key actions being taken for biodiversity and the woodland's long-term, sustainable management. This information in addition to sustainable woodland management and ecological assessments will be submitted DAFM for grant funding under the NeighbourWood Woodland Scheme, when it is relaunched in 2024.
- Ballyloughane Wetland and Conservation Grazing Project - Conservation grazing as part of the 'Buaile Bó Ballyloughane' pilot project of a headland on Ballyloughane Bay which has been managed to date as a No Mow site under the AIPP. The grassland has become rank and suffocating native flora. The project involves using Dexter cattle, an Irish heritage breed. They are a small breed hardy animal and because of their size they are not severe on land and like a good variety of vegetation. For this reason, Dexter Cattle are used for conservation grazing in many parts of the UK and Ireland. Local schools and community groups are invited to participate in an ambassador programme to share information about this native Irish breed, agriculture, and its relationship to Irish biodiversity.



- Invasive Alien Species Management and Education Project 2023 – Extension of the 2022 project to develop a city-wide management strategy and public awareness campaign on invasive species.
- Irish Wetland Bird Survey (I-WeBS) workshops and equipment – This is a collaborative project between Galway City Council, Galway County Council and Bird Watch Ireland to host workshops and provide equipment to support members of the public in conducting wintering bird surveys. As the Irish Wetland Bird Survey is the key monitoring tool for wintering waterbirds in Ireland, the data collected by the volunteer team is required to assess the status of the conservation status of bird species within the bay. This is part of a European and International monitoring programme.

### **16.12.2 Other Biodiversity Projects**

#### **Pond Creation Merlin Woods**

The Merlin Park stream which runs through the woodland has been dry for over 15 years. The Stream was culverted as part of the Merlin Park Drainage Scheme. Therefore, there was little or no surface water within the woodland which provides a very valuable habitat for a diversity of species such as marsh fritillary butterfly, red squirrel, bat and bird species. Galway City Council are investigating ways to bring back the Merlin Park Stream, which may take a number of years to complete. In the meantime, the biodiversity officer with the support of An Taisce's Legacy4LIFE Pond Project has been working with local conservation groups and TY students from a local secondary school to create ponds for wildlife in the woods.

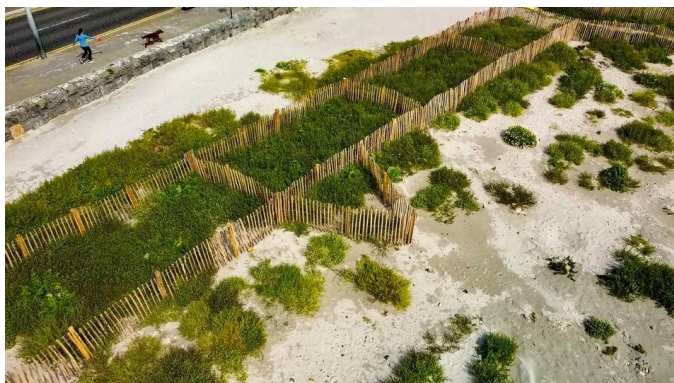
#### **Grattan Beach Sand Dune Project**

In conjunction with the Climate Action Regional Office (CARO) and the University of Galway, Galway City Council with consultants ARUP developed a Roadmap for Grattan Beach and Dune site, which sets out the vision for Grattan Beach as a 'living lab' and national demonstration site for Nature-based Solutions (NbS) to tackle the societal challenge of climate change. A 'Living Lab' is where scientists move from the laboratory to the real world to find solutions to problems, working with other experts and the public.

June 2023



August 2023



This project extends the work of the community led 'I Like Beaches' project (since 2012) where local groups have been contributing their ideas to develop a living lab that would make space for nature and visitors on Grattan. To deliver the first vision for Grattan Beach, in June 2023, Galway City Council, carried out a pilot project to install sand fencing to restore the dunes at Grattan Beach.

This pilot project will help to further inform the NbS and future management measures for Grattan Beach and the dune site as a 'Living Lab' for Galway City.

### **Pond planting at Quincentennial Park**

The ornamental pond at Quincentennial Park is at the heart of the park and has been the backdrop of numerous wedding photographs and provides a place for quiet reflection. Ponds are extraordinary reservoirs of biodiversity and have a critical role as Ireland faces our significant biodiversity loss. In an effort to manage the water quality of the pond and provide a valuable habitat for local wildlife, the pond was planted with hundreds of native aquatic, marginal and wetland plants within and around the pond, to provide valuable habitat for our pollinators and aquatic biodiversity.

### **16.13 2023 Green Flag Awards**

Galway City Council again achieved three prestigious Green Flag Awards in 2023.

The Green Flag Awards acknowledge Ireland's best public parks and gardens, with Quincentennial Park in Salthill achieving the award for the fourth time, Children's

Millennium Park retaining the honour for a fifth year in a row and O'Sullivan Park in Mervue achieving the award for the second time.

Staff are engaged on a daily basis in planting, cleaning, upgrading playgrounds, supporting biodiversity, protecting wildlife, litter-picking, and creating beautiful, engaging and playful spaces for the people of Galway.

Each year new work is carried out in each of our Green Flag Parks in order to maintain the award. Volunteers also assist in maintaining parks and green spaces in the City.

O'Sullivan Park



Children's Millennium Park



Quincentennial Park



## **16.14 Lough Corrib Navigation Trust**

During the year the following works took place.

- Works to slipway were complete at Lisloughrey Pier.
- Removal of vegetation from the Wolfe Tone Bridge took place.
- Extensive clean up works were carried out to Steamer's Quay.
- A Facebook page for Lough Corrib Navigation Trust continues to be updated regularly with Marine Notices.
- Lough Corrib Navigation Trust staff continue to monitor and survey the marker network and produce works lists for specialist marine contractors to carry out necessary works.

## **17. Corporate Governance and Services**

The objective of the Corporate Governance and Services section is to provide an effective support service for Elected Members and the public, to promote and protect the corporate interests of Galway City Council and to provide a support service to the organisation generally.

### **17.1 Communications**

As part of #YourCouncilDay 2023, Galway City Council launched the 'Galway City - Your Council' podcast series, sharing insights on the range of services, projects and people in the local authority.

Local authorities provide over 1,105 services, across areas as diverse as beach maintenance, dog pounds, health promotion, strategic planning, tourism promotion, and housing supply. This series introduced some of the people delivering these services, and the valuable work they do every day in our city.

From 23 June to 31 December 2023, there were 131,100 downloads of the 18 episodes.

The series was also broadcast on Flirt FM, reaching University of Galway staff and students through their own radio station.

The podcast is available wherever you listen to podcasts, or from [www.GalwayCity.ie/Podcast](http://www.GalwayCity.ie/Podcast)



## 17.2 Twinning

Galway is twinned or has full sister-city status with 9 cities around the world. Galway City also has a number of Friendship Agreements with cities. Galway City Council has a special relationship with the LÉ William Butler Yeats ship and crew and promote awareness of the role and functions of the naval service. In 2023, expenditure and other particulars in relation to the performance of its functions under Twinning was €23,078.

Cities twinned with Galway City, year of twinning:

- Lorient, France, 1975
- St. Louis, Missouri, USA, 1977
- Seattle, Washington, USA, 1986
- Bradford, England, 1986
- Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA, 1994
- Chicago, Illinois, USA, 1997
- Aalborg, Denmark, 1997
- Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA, 2001
- Menlo Park, California, USA, 2015

## 17.3 Equality and Human Rights

Galway City Council is committed to an ongoing implementation of the equality and human rights duty set out in Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act. In

doing so, the City Council will embed an explicit, coherent and consistent focus on equality and human rights in all our operations across all our functions and has developed an Equality and Human Rights Values Statement and public sector duty implementation plan to guide and drive this approach.

Galway City Council is one of seven Pilot Local Authorities working with the Immigrant Council of Ireland, Doras and the Irish Network Against Racism as part of an EU funded project of Sustainable Alliances Against Anti-Muslim Hatred (SALAAM). An information and training event for staff was held in November exploring racism and the process of racialisation using anti-Muslim hatred; intersectionality and how it compounds the experiences of those affected by racism and anti-Muslim hatred; Anti-racist practice and how this practically applies to staff roles at policy or implementation stages and key legislation and frameworks which operate to support anti-discrimination and anti-racism work within public authorities.

A training workshop was facilitated for Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee (LTACC) members prior to the LTACC meeting of 27 September 2023, in accordance with the LTACC Communication Protocol and in support of implementation of the LTACC equality and human rights action plan. Maria Joyce, Coordinator of the National Traveller Women's Forum, presented at the training event which covered:

- Trust building, communication, engagement with Traveller families on site, and representation of the Traveller community on local authority structures could usefully be an ongoing focus for the LTACC. Processes of regular site-based community engagement could usefully be pursued. The new staff complement will allow for more community-based work.
- The issue of Traveller apprenticeships could usefully be a focus for the LTACC.
- The forthcoming Council of Europe recommendation on housing and nomadism, which includes a focus on Traveller accommodation and Traveller nomadism, could usefully be given consideration by the LTACC once it issues.
- The document on public bodies responding to Traveller ethnicity, developed by the Galway County Traveller Interagency Group, which is to amalgamate with the Galway City Traveller Interagency Group, could usefully be given consideration by the LTACC.

‘People only understand things in terms of their own experience, which means you, must get within their experience. ‘Communication is a two-way process. If you try to get your ideas across to others without paying attention to what they have to say to you, you can forget about the whole thing.’ (Saul Alinsky,1972)

## 17.4 Freedom of Information Requests

In 2023, a total of 134 requests were made to Galway City Council under the Freedom of Information Act 2014. The table below provides an analysis of the outcome of these requests. Seven requests were appealed internally.

Table 22 – FOI Requests 2023

Requests Granted	28
Requests Part-Granted	40
Requests Refused	28
Requests Withdrawn	14
Dealt with outside of Fol	21
Requests Transferred	0
Carried forward to 2022	3
Total	134

Table 23 - Freedom of Information Requests Received by Section

Section	Number
Community and Culture/Enterprise/Economic Development	2
Corporate Services	31
Environment/Parks	8
Finance	2
Housing	45
HR	0



ICT	4
Planning	17
Transport and Infrastructure	24
Water Services	0
Not allocated to section due to withdrawals, and so on.	1
Total	134

## 17.5 Conferences and Seminars 2023

Table 24 - Conferences and Seminars attended by Elected Members in 2023

Event	No. of Attendees
Associations of Irish Regions (AIR)	2
AILG Annual Conference	3
AILG Autumn Seminar	2
AILG Module 2	2
AILG Module 3	3
AILG Module 4	1
AILG Module 5 Training Day	1
AILG Module 6 Training Day	2
Modular Housing in Ireland	1
LAMA Autumn Seminar	1
Barrister at Law Degree Course	1
LAMA Spring Seminar	1

## 17.6 Register of Electors

The Register of Electors is updated and maintained on an ongoing basis. The Electoral Reform Act 2022 introduced the rolling register which allows for people to register to vote online anytime. The Act also allows 16 and 17 year olds to pre-register and to be automatically added to the Register as soon as they turn 18. Data such as Personal Public

Service numbers and Dates of Birth are now collected when registering to vote to enhance identity checks and to ensure the accuracy of the Register.

In response to the significant reform and modernisation of the electoral registration process, the Corporate Services Team rolled out a Media Awareness Campaign in 2023. This campaign included advertising in local newspapers, on local radio stations and on social media, internal communications with employees and Elected Members, and the delivery of flyers to every household in the city informing them of the new online registration process [www.ChecktheRegister.ie](http://www.ChecktheRegister.ie)

## 17.7 Special Events hosted by Galway City Council

Galway City Council was honoured to be able to facilitate Mayoral Receptions, courtesy, and other visits in 2023 including:

Table 25 – Special Events

<b>Ordinary Council Meetings/ Special Meetings</b>	
Ordinary Council Meetings generally held on the second Monday of each month, excluding August. Special Meetings may be held from time to time by the Mayor in consultation with the Procedures Committee.	
Two such Special Meetings were held in 2023.	
The Statutory Budget Meeting was held on 4 December 2023.	
<b>Civic Receptions</b>	
23/01/2023	Damian Browne to celebrate his life achievements

<b>Mayoral Receptions</b>	
13/02/2023	Atlantic Technology University – World skills National Finalists 2022
17/04/2023	Salthill Knocknacarra Ladies – All Ireland Junior Football Champions
21/04/2023	Richard Hayes
30/05/2023	Foster carers for giving 20 years plus of dedication, care and support
02/06/2023	Connacht Hockey facilities group
06/06/2023	Bríd Ní Chonghóile and the Gaillimh le Gaeilge team
09/06/2023	Reception for Keara Sheeran, singer and choir director
17/07/2023	Galway athletics in Special Olympics, Berlin, Germany
29/08/2023	Galway United FC Women’s Team
25/09/2023	Galway Minor ladies football Team – All Ireland Winners 2023
28/11/2023	Connacht Rugby Players – Bundee Aki, Finlay Bealham and Mack Hansen

<b>Courtesy Visits</b>	
31/01/2023	Austrian Ambassador, Thomas Nader
10/02/2023	Slovak Ambassador, Andrej Droba
24/03/2023	Polish Ambassador, Anna Sochanska
19/04/2023	Ukraine Ambassador, Poland and Lithuania
02/05/2023	Group from Erin, Tennessee, USA
11/05/2023	Mexico Ambassador, Carolina Zaragoza
22/06/2023	Denmark Ambassador
27/06/2023	Delegation from Liyang City, China
11/09/2023	Estonian Ambassador, Mrs Kairi Künka
09/10/2023	Mayor of Cape May USA – Zack Mullock
27/10/2023	Moldovan Ambassador, Larisa Miculeţ
17/11/2023	Republic of Korea Ambassador, Mr Yong-kil Kim



<b>Other visits to City Hall</b>	
10/02/2023	Moderator of Presbyterian Church of Ireland. Rev. John Kirkpatrick
21/04/2023	Visit to City Hall by Lorient, France Sports team
27/07/2023	Celtic Irish American Academy
23/08/2023	Visit from Maire Sogabe (Seattle Sister City, USA)
18/12/2023	Black Dragon Kick Boxing

## **17.8 Cúrsaí Gaeilge**

Corporate Services continues to work proactively with all sections in Galway City Council, directing bilingual language practices and employing support mechanisms to facilitate provision of Irish language services to the public by Galway City Council staff.

### **17.8.1 Coiste Logainmneacha Chathair na Gaillimhe | Galway City Placenames Committee**

Coiste Logainmneacha Chathair na Gaillimhe has representatives from different organisations in the city with different backgrounds and expertise, so that names are chosen and related to the area in which they are located, as well as the physical environment of the city.

### **17.8.2 Baile Seirbhíse Gaeltachta | Gaeltacht Service Town**

Galway City is a Gaeltacht Service Town, under the Gaeltacht Act 2012, which gives particular recognition to an urban area in which services are provided to a Gaeltacht area adjoining or within its operational environs.

The [\(2020-2026\) Irish Language Plan](#) is being delivered through a number of organisations, including Galway City Council, Gaillimh le Gaeilge, University of Galway among others.

### **17.8.3 Meitheal an Phlean Teanga**

Galway City Council is represented on the Meitheal Plean Teanga, (MPT na Gaillimhe). The Language Plan Working Group (MPT) participates in the phases related to the Language Plan implemented in Galway City. The Meitheal Plan Teanga convened twice in 2023.

'Service in Irish' and an increase in the usage, visibility and awareness of the language in the city are central stated aims of the language plan.

### **17.8.4 Galway City Council 4th Language Scheme**

Galway City Council's 4<sup>th</sup> Language Scheme has been in place since 9 September 2022. It covers a comprehensive range of services available in Irish or bilingually throughout Galway City Council.

### **17.8.5 Irish language training**

Irish language classes are available to staff and Elected Members, with a highly experienced native speaker delivering classes for a range of abilities.

## **17.9 Customer Service**

The Customer Service Centre comprises the following:

- The Customer Service Reception Desk and Cash Office, which are both located in the main foyer of City Hall and are open to the public 9am to 4pm, Monday to Friday.
- The Customer Service Call Centre which handles all calls to the Galway City Council general enquiries line, traffic queries line and payments lines between the hours of 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.
- Customer Service complaints, Fix Your Street cases and all emails received via [customerservice@galwayCity.ie](mailto:customerservice@galwayCity.ie) and [seirbhisdhochustaimairi@galwayCity.ie](mailto:seirbhisdhochustaimairi@galwayCity.ie)

The Customer Service team provided the following sectional support during 2023, including the following:

- Traffic Fixed Charge Notices: 3,683 appeals processed. General phone queries were also handled by the Customer Service Team in relation to Traffic.
- Parking Permits: accepted payments, printed and posted 7,417 parking permits including resident, carer and visitor permits.
- Pay and Display: handled all phone queries and notifications of machine faults.
- Environment: processed 1,036 orders for Household Bulky Goods collection, supporting Community Clean ups throughout Galway City by both the provision of bags, gloves and litter pickers and by arranging the collections of waste. There were 55 Community Clean up Collections in 2023 with Customer Service providing the community groups with litter pickers, gloves and bags. General recycling queries, Burial Ground and Casual Trading queries and payments.
- Housing: facilitated Housing tenants and applicants by accepting documentation, application forms, and assisting applicants seeking homeless services, at the Customer Service Reception. The Customer Service Team also handled telephone queries in relation to Choice Based Letting (CBL) and advising and assisting callers in relation to the scheme.
- Recreation and Amenity: queries in relation to facility updates, payments for allotments, community centres and sports facilities, provision of keys for public changing rooms.
- Water Services: reporting of water outages, leaks, and so on.
- Finance: phone and email queries in relation to Rates waivers / appeals.
- Corporate Services: Register of Electors queries, assistance with iReg and general office support.
- Fix your Street cases: processed 558 cases in relation to illegal dumping, faulty street lighting, potholes, blocked drains/gullies and so on by logging these on a database for the community wardens.

### **17.9.1 Call Centre**

Apart from the Housing and Planning Sections, the Customer Service Call Centre supports all other telephone calls received on the main telephone number for Galway City Council (091) 536 400 and processes all reports received from the out-of-hours emergency call centre which operates after 5pm until 9am the following morning.

In 2023, the Call Centre received **57,411** telephone calls. Of the 57,411 calls received:

- The average speed to answer was 14 seconds.
- The average telephone call handling time was 1 minutes 53 seconds
- The average caller abandon rate was 6.8%

### **17.9.2 Cash Office and Telephone Payments**

The Customer Service team operates the cash office with the support of the Finance Section. This includes the receipt of money from both the public Cash Office and also telephone/postal payments. The Customer Service team processed 15,932 receipts at the Cash Office and 18,823 telephone payments in 2023.

### **17.10 Facilities**

The Facilities section carries out all required maintenance, upgrading and development works at City Hall and the outdoor staff depot at Sandy Road. The section also provides assistance to other facilities in the City such as the Museum and Council-owned commercial units.

The Facilities section is responsible for the maintenance of all systems in Galway City Council Office buildings and the Sandy Road Depot. These systems include intruder alarms, fire alarms, heating, ventilation, air conditioning units, canteen equipment, emergency lighting, task lighting, office space provision, and all mechanical and electrical installations.

### **17.11 Protected Disclosures 2023**

No Protected Disclosures were received in 2023, as defined in the Protected Disclosures Act, 2014.

### **17.12 Safety, Health, and Welfare at Work**

The Health and Safety Unit, in conjunction with Senior Management at Galway City Council, continued to co-ordinate the Safety Management System to ensure that our



arrangements discharge the requirements of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005, associated legislative requirements, and corporate obligations in the activities of the organisation.

The Health and Safety Unit has continued its ongoing review of the Galway City Council Safety Statement and Safety Management Manual throughout 2023, and its annual review and update of the Ancillary Safety Statements at each of its directorates and business areas.

### 17.12.1 Proactive Safety Monitoring

The Health and Safety Unit, in conjunction with Senior Management, continued to coordinate the implementation of the Annual Programme of Inspections for 2023. The following Safety Inspections were completed in 2023:

- Safety Inspections completed by Line Managers and Supervisors (258)
- Safety Inspections completed by the Health and Safety Officers (48)

### 17.12.2 Reactive Safety Monitoring

Galway City Council continued to provide services to the citizens of Galway City in a safe and effective manner. The accident and incident rate reflected the increased activity in our operations during 2022 and compared very favourably when examined against incident frequencies in the local sector.

Table 26 – Reactive Safety Monitoring

Incident	Number
Reportable Accidents	4
Dangerous Occurrences	1
Covid-19 Outbreak	0
Injury – Not Reportable	1
Injury – No Absence	3
Service Strike	3
Near Miss	5

Violence and Aggression	6
Road Traffic Accident	2
Vehicle Incident (3 <sup>rd</sup> Party)	1
Vehicle Incident (1 <sup>st</sup> Party)	12

The Health and Safety Unit continued to issue regular monthly Accident and Incident Summary reports and advice to Senior Management and Heads of Departments to prevent recurrence of loss events, and to report Incident Statistics to the Local Government Management Agency.

### **17.12.3 Emergency Preparedness**

The Health and Safety Unit, in conjunction with Fire Wardens and Senior Management, completed Fire and Emergency Evacuation Drills at the following workplaces:

- City Hall
- Grammar School Building (Annex to City Hall),
- Finance offices, Eyre Square
- Black Box Theatre
- Town Hall Theatre
- Galway City Museum

The Health and Safety Unit continued to carry out regular (Weekly) Inspection of First Aid Boxes and AED Defibrillators at City Hall, Grammar School, Eyre Square offices and Sandy Road Depot buildings, to ensure that it was ready and immediately available for use when needed.

The Health and Safety Unit continued to carry out regular (Weekly) Inspection of Fire Extinguisher equipment at City Hall, Eyre Square offices and Grammar School buildings.

### **17.12.4 Health and Safety Training**

The Health and Safety Unit continued its efforts in delivering mandatory and desirable Health and Safety Training courses. Over 460 staff attended safety training in 2023.

### **17.12.5 Safety Consultation**

The Health and Safety Unit continued to meet and consult with the Safety Consultation Committees to address any concerns raised in relation to our operations or the Safety Management System. 22 meetings were held in 2023.

The Safety Consultation Committees were consolidated from seven separate committees down to two Committees in June 2023. The two committees are focused on Operations at Administration buildings and Facility Management (Offices Operations SCC) and Operations at Maintenance Works (Maintenance Operations SCC) respectively.

The Health and Safety Unit continued to provide health and safety updates to the Senior Management Team at the Safety Monitoring Committee (SMC) meetings.

## 18. Human Resources

The main aim of the Human Resources Department is to ensure adequate staff resources to meet the Galway City Council's objectives, encourage and assist staff in developing their full potential as valued employees of Galway City Council, and facilitate provision of staff welfare supports to staff as required.

Functions within the Human Resources Department are facilitation of and/or provision of support to strategic projects such as the Strategic Workforce Plan, Water Services Transition, together with ongoing operation of Recruitment, Industrial Relations and Employee Relations, People XD Data System, Time and Attendance, Superannuation, Performance Management and Development System, Staff Welfare, Learning & Development, and Blended Working.

### 18.1 Workforce 2023

Galway City Council's Management Team comprises the Chief Executive, and five Directors of Service.

Table 27 – Management Team

Management Team				
Director of Service	Director of Service	A/Director of Service	A/Director of Service	A/Director of Service
Roads and Transport (Operations)	Finance	Infrastructure Development Planning	Corporate Governance and Services	Housing
Water Services	ICT		Community and Climate Change	Economic Development and Culture
Recreation and Amenity				
Sports Capital				
Environment				

The headcount in the organisation at 31 December 2023 was 580 staff members consisting of temporary/permanent indoor and outdoor employees who carry out managerial, administrative, technical, craft and other roles.

## **18.2 Strategic Workforce Plan**

Galway City Council commenced work on a Strategic Workforce Plan (SWP) in accordance with Department requirements. Strategic Workforce Planning models workforce demand and supply over a longer term based on how specific internal and external environments will impact the skills, jobs, and talent needs of the business. It is a continual cross functional process of ensuring the right talent in the right place at the right time to address current and future objectives of an organisation.

The overall objective of the SWP for Galway City Council is to identify ‘the type of workforce that will be required for future Council service delivery to meet the needs of citizens of Galway over the next number of years.’

BDO Eaton Square Limited was contracted to deliver a SWP for Galway City Council commencing the project in late Q3 2023. The BDO Senior Team involved in leading engagement on GCC’s Strategic Workforce Plan are a Consulting Partner, Director and Head of Business Transformation, Director of People and Talent, and an Engagement Manager.

## **18.3 Recruitment**

In 2023, despite the competitive environment where there were extensive recruitment drives for talent across the public and private sectors, the Human Resources Department continued to recruit suitably qualified staff who were effectively deployed to address the organization’s requirements.

The Recruitment Section managed 71 competitions in 2023 and processed 193 appointments. These appointments included 103 new employees taking up employment with Galway City Council, of which 88 were permanent appointments and 15 were temporary/contract/seasonal appointments. The remaining 90 appointments comprised acting posts and promotional appointments. 17 staff members retired from GCC in 2023.

## **18.4 Performance Management and Development System – PMDS**

The Human Resources Department plays a key role in coordinating the Performance Management Development System process throughout the organisation. It also provides support, mentoring, and training for Line Managers on the process.

Several PMDS training workshops on maximising the value of the PMDS Process were provided for staff in December 2023.

## **18.5 Learning and Development**

The HR Department provides a variety of learning and development opportunities to assist staff in developing their potential as valued employees.

The following training and development courses were provided and facilitated in 2023 through the Corporate Training Programme:

- Primary Degree and Master's Degree Courses
- I.P.A. Diploma in Local Government Studies 2022/2023
- I.P.A. Certificate in Local Government Studies 2022/2023
- Diploma in Project Management
- Diploma in Public Management
- Staff Induction
- Supervisory Skills Training for Line Managers
- Disability Awareness
- Domestic Violence
- Minute Taking
- Microsoft Teams
- Agresso (Financial System)
- PMDS
- Climate Action Awareness
- Retirement and Life Planning

## 18.6 Time to Read Programme

Volunteers from Galway City Council staff participated in the Time to Read Programme with the Mercy Primary School in 2023. Children from second class received reading support from a City Council volunteer over a period of 16 weeks, which also included a visit for the children to the City Council Offices on College Road, as well as a visit to the City Library on Augustine Street for a reading session.

Time to Read, City Library, Galway



## 18.7 Blended Working

Galway City Council continued to operate a blended working policy with attendance at the Council's onsite location, where required, to allow for face-to-face interaction and collaboration with colleagues and service users.

The current policy, in the second year of operation, allows for employees working a five-day week pattern the opportunity to work a minimum of 3 days per week in Galway City Council offices and a maximum of 2 days remote working. This model is applied pro rata for employees working less than 5 days.

For the period January to December 2024, the remote working re-application process commenced early in Quarter 4 of 2023 with applications approved by year end.

## **18.8 Staff Welfare**

One of the aims of the Human Resources Department is to maintain and implement appropriate staff welfare policies and procedures and to work with staff and Line Managers on a case-by-case basis to deal with staff welfare issues as they arise. 2023 continued to see a high level of engagement and collaboration with staff and Line Managers alike.

The Staff Welfare Team continued to administer Galway City Council's sick leave scheme in 2023 and provided support to staff in availing of same.

Spectrum Life commenced as the new provider for Galway City Council's Employee Assistance Programme from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2023. This service provides employees with access to a wide variety of services to assist through a range of personal or work-related issues, including, but not limited to, mental health, grief and bereavement, wellbeing, nutrition and fitness. There was regular engagement with all staff to advise of updated EAP supports available.

Staff Welfare processed a high volume of Work/Life Balance Scheme applications such as Parental Leave and Shorter Working Year alongside the modal shift with the Cycle to Work Scheme and commuter tickets to assist staff in an ever-changing work environment.

## **18.9 Wellbeing Initiative**

In 2023 Galway City Council were successful in securing funding through the Healthy Ireland Wellbeing Funding initiative in conjunction with the LGMA to implement a wellbeing initiative for staff. The proposal emphasised the importance of providing information for staff on nutrition and healthy eating in the workplace and in everyday life and to develop an overall Wellbeing Strategy for the organisation.

Under this wellbeing initiative, several seminars were held by a dietician from Spectrum Health through online and in person formats. The focus was on general healthy eating guidelines - a balanced meal approach and how to structure meals in the working day.



Guidelines for staff with specific dietary requirements such as coeliac/lactose intolerance, vegetarian/vegan diets were also provided. There was a good attendance from staff at the seminars.

### **18.10 Superannuation**

The Superannuation Section in Galway City Council provided guidance and support on a continuous basis to current and retired staff and worked collaboratively with MyPay on superannuation services throughout 2023. MyPay Superannuation is Galway City Council's Shared Service Pension Provider. The Superannuation Section continues to inform staff in relation to changes / developments in public sector pensions following notification from the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

### **18.11 Employment Relations**

The Human Resource Department facilitates employment relations through engagement with staff members and/or trade unions on various employment matters. It also facilitates engagement on strategic projects, such as workplace relocation and the strategic workforce plan, through a high-level grouping, comprising senior management and trade union officials and representatives.

The HR Department facilitates ongoing engagement with trade unions representatives and officials on all other matters through direct engagement.

From 26 July Uisce Éireann assumed full accountability for delivery of Water Services and the management and direction of all Water Services Staff, including those staff who choose to remain employed by Galway City Council for the transitional period to end of 2026. HR co-ordinated the collation and transfer of required transfer data to Uisce Éireann to allow for a smooth transition of management of water services from Galway City Council to Uisce Éireann. The Human Resources Department also provided support to Water Services staff in relation to the transition including the processing of requests in relation to provision of supporting documentation for meetings with Uisce Éireann and requests for re-assignment within Galway City Council.

## 18.12 Gender Pay Gap Report

Employers with more than 250 employees in Ireland are required to publish their gender pay gap data before the end of 2023 and within six months of their reference date. Galway City Council and all local authorities in the country chose 30th June 2023 as the reference date.

The HR Department produced and published the organisation's annual Gender Pay Gap Report in December 2023. This report highlights the percentage difference between what males and females are paid on average in the organisation, irrespective of roles or levels.

The 2023 report showed a Gender Pay Gap of -6.26% Mean and -20.58% Median. This report of a negative gender pay gap by Galway City Council indicates that on average females occupy higher paid roles than males in the organisation.

## 18.13 Retirement and Service Awards 2023

The Retirement and Service Awards were held on 24 November 2023. The Mayor of Galway City Council, Cllr Eddie Hoare, and the Chief Executive - Interim, Ms Patricia Philbin, acknowledged the contribution to the organisation of staff who had retired, or attained 20 years of service in 2023. During the ceremony retirees and serving members of staff were presented with Galway City Council's Certificate of Award and a token of appreciation.

Table 28 – Retirees on the Honours List

<b>Name</b>	<b>Department</b>
Brendan McGrath	Chief Executive
Ruth McNally	Director of Service
Martina Coen	Water Services
Gerry Conaty	Transportation
Carmel Clabby	Information and Communications Technology
Dave Joyce	Transportation
Caroline Phelan	Planning

Bernard Walsh	Water Services
Joseph Langan	Environment and Climate Change
Norann Keane	Planning
Bridie Burke	Transportation
David Daly	Recreation and Amenity
Brian Murphy	Recreation and Amenity
Patrick Grealish	Water Services
Michael McDonagh	Recreation and Amenity
Michael Cunnane	Transportation
Colie McDonagh	Recreation and Amenity
John Corcoran	Housing and Social Inclusion

Table 29 – Service Award Recipients for 2023

<b>Name</b>	<b>Department</b>
Lesley Bohan	Transportation
Thomas O'Connell	Transportation
Paul Daly	Water Services
Seona Ni Chonghaile	Economic Development and Culture
John Kelly	Recreation and Amenity
Brian Kelly	Environment
Adrian Bray	Recreation and Amenity

## Annual Retirement and Service Awards on 24 November 2023



**Back Row** - Left to Right: Patrick Grealish, Bernard Walsh, Brian Murphy, Thomas O'Connell, Michael Cunnane and John Corcoran. **Front Row** - Left to Right: Caroline Phelan, Lesley Bohan, Patricia Philbin, Chief Executive – Interim, Cllr Eddie Hoare – Mayor of Galway City, Bridie Burke, Norann Keane

The Annual Christmas Party for retired staff members took place on 2 December 2023. The Mayor of Galway City Council, Cllr Eddie Hoare, and Ms Patricia Philbin, Chief Executive – Interim, attended the event and extended Christmas greetings to all present.

## 19. Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

The ICT section of Galway City Council provides staff with support and secure access to technology and systems, enabling Galway City Council to deliver high quality services to the public. The section is focussed on the national strategy for Digital Government which aims to deliver 90% of all services via digital methods by 2030.

Galway City Council's IT infrastructure comprises 80 servers in 4 locations within the city, with an increasing presence in the Cloud. There are a total of 14 sites with connectivity to the network core at City Hall, with new offices at Fairgreen added in 2023. The section supports approximately 480 end users across four core teams: Networks and Infrastructure, Enterprise Applications, Web and Digital services, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

### 19.1 Key ICT Achievements in 2023

The upward trend for ICT support calls continued, with an increase from 6,525 in 2022 to 7,955 in 2023. Staffing levels were improved with the filling of vacancies for Technical Support Officer and IS Analyst Developer. Sanction was received for 2 x Information security posts to be hired in 2024. The breakdown of support calls per team was as below.

Table 30 – Breakdown of Support Calls per Team

Category	No. of Tech Staff	No. Tickets	
		2022	2023
Networks and Infrastructure	6	5,292	5,961
Enterprise Apps	3	652	761
GIS	1 (+1 Vacancy)	295	188
Web	1	282	263
Cybersecurity Incident Investigation	0	4	9
External Network support		0	4

Blended Working ICT Kit Requests		185	105
ICT General	1		295

The following sections outline the key achievements for each function within ICT.

## 19.2 Networks and Infrastructure

The Networks and Infrastructure team provide:

- general technical support for all devices, software, printers, telephony, network connectivity and mobile phones
- technology specialist services such as data access rights, maintaining network security, managing servers, storage, backups, email, disaster recovery provisions
- the management of several third parties supplying highly specialised technology services, including email filtering and security, WAN and LAN support and maintenance, backup platform configuration and server management.
- The provision of IT resources and advice to all projects with technology requirements/considerations

The provision of technology solutions requires a continuous effort to ensure the security of the organisation's data, beginning at the network perimeter and ending with the individual user. The resilience of the core network infrastructure is of paramount importance to the continuation of all services delivered by Galway City Council. The dramatic increase in attacks against government agencies in recent years is a constant reminder that cyberattacks are imminent and inevitable.

Therefore, the continued support and bolstering of network infrastructure included.

- Continued measures to reinforce cybersecurity protection, to ensure threats are discovered early and mitigated against immediately E.g. Implementing additional email filtering features (DMARC, Geoblocking)
- Procurement via tender of new server and storage devices designed to streamline data centre operations, improve resource utilization, and enhance data protection

and availability. It will modernize our infrastructure, simplify management, and reduce costs and energy requirements. This project due for completion in Q2 '24

- Procurement of a platform designed to simplify and enhance the management, adoption, and governance of our Microsoft 365 environments.
- **MDM** (Mobile Device Management) was rolled out to efficiently manage and secure mobile devices, ensuring secure access to resources and data and enhancing productivity by centrally managing device configurations, applications, and security policies across the mobile estate.
- **Conditional Access** - a new security policy was implemented for the Microsoft 365 environment. Conditional Access policies allow the council to enforce adaptive security measures based on specific conditions such as user identity, device health, and location. This combined approach strengthens the security posture of Galway City Council's Microsoft 365 environment, protecting sensitive information and ensuring the integrity of council operations.
- **Softphone roll out** - A pilot rollout of softphones was successfully completed to facilitate hotdesking environments, ensuring seamless communication and collaboration regardless of physical workspace.
- **Fairgreen Kit out** – completed the IT fit-out of new offices in Fairgreen.
- Continued support for Hybrid workers, through provision of secure network access, IT equipment and collaboration tools as required.
- The procurement of a number of platforms and tools to improve the management of Assets, security compliance, governance, and Privileged Access Management which will be rolled out in 2024.

### 19.3 Web Development

The web team is responsible for the maintenance, upkeep and support of the various Galway City Council websites, public facing engagements and development to support the mobile workforce. Alongside this is ongoing work to migrate business processes to online digital services and education of staff in the benefits of digitalisation.

In 2023 many more applications, consultations and processes moved online, including continuous development of the online application experience, for both the public and staff, through the many strands of services including:

- grants/funding
- public feedback
- public engagements on byelaws, application forms for permits, licenses and so on.

Online forms now total 470 across all departments. Doing this has facilitated improved data quality while reducing inefficiencies in processing paper forms. Furthermore, it has allowed for the automation of many time-consuming tasks which also reduces the potential for error.

In addition, a new website design and Content Management System was procured for its built-in accessibility features. The website is in development and to be launched in line with Local Elections in Q2 of 2024.

## **Enterprise Applications**

The Enterprise Applications team are tasked with ensuring the stability and operational efficiency of the numerous databases and enterprise systems and applications which underpin the day-to-day functions of the organisation, along with assisting departments with the introduction of digital solutions.

Achievements in 2023 include:

- ePlanning project delivery
- Implementation of online planning application system, ePlanning
- Implementation of iDocs, document management system, for use with ePlanning
- Migration of 63,000 scanned Planning files from legacy system to iDocs
- Major project was completed which upgraded application servers and databases to the latest most secure versions
- Management of project to install five Clock machines at staff entrances/exits and integration with Core for staff clock-in/out



- Replacement of LGMA's WebPay with MyCoCo online payments of housing loans, housing rents and traffic fines
- Creating Management report for KPI analysis related to ICT helpdesk support tickets
- Built a database and automation scripts to pull data from TomTom. Using TomTom real-time traffic route data for traffic flow analysis in a PowerBI report
- Deploying the latest versions of the iReg (self-registration of electors) application
- Deploying the latest versions of the iHouse (Housing applications) system
- Supported the implementation of upgrade of Rates from two moiety process to single moiety process.
- Supported the upgrade of Travel and Subsistence Expenses System for Revenue reporting.
- Engaged in an in-depth assessment of the current Parking Enforcement Solution in preparation for replacement.
- Configuration of Power Platform Environment for application development and lifecycle management

## 19.4 Geographic Information Systems

The GIS function plays an important role in the Local Authority through the provision of digital mapping systems and services and support for the many applications in use.

Despite ongoing staffing challenges, the following was achieved in 2023:

- Upgraded ESRI ArcGIS enterprise software to the latest version, 11.1.
- Rolled out ArcGIS Software training for new GIS users to enable them to generate their own maps and produced a training manual supporting map generation.
- Generated numerous maps including property registration folios, proposed Greenways cycle lanes and Galway City recreation maps.
- Rolled out a new Feature Analyser Dashboard on the M.APP system enabling users to create their own dashboard view of property registration data.
- Optimised the Derelict sites map and digitiser application.
- Setup the Eircode API allowing voters to check Eircodes on the of LGMA's iReg (Register of Electors) application.

- Supplied updated population figures based on the NTA's SAPS (small areas population statistics), as part of the GMATs project.
- Provided local datasets and information in support of the Green Space Strategy initiative and the National Database of Sport and Recreation Amenities.
- Worked in conjunction with the Planning Department and Local Government and Heritage to produce the supplemental maps for the Residential Zone Land Tax project.
- On a quarterly basis, provided a secure ArcGIS Spatial Mapping System to the Environment and Parks section to support the Waste Byelaws Mapping Project to Eircodes.

## 20. Corporate Policy Group, Strategic Policy Committees, Joint Policing Committee and Local Area Committees

### 20.1 Corporate Policy Group (CPG)

The Corporate Policy Group consists of the Mayor and Chair of each of the Strategic Policy Committees. This Group acts as a type of Cabinet and provides a forum where policy positions affecting the whole City may be agreed for submission to the full City Council. The Mayor represents the Corporate Policy Group at meetings of Galway City Council. All members sit from January to December 2023, unless specified.

<b>Corporate Policy Group Membership</b>	
Number of Meetings held in 2023: 7	
Membership	Chair: Cllr Clodagh Higgins - Mayor of the City of Galway January to June 2023  Chair: Cllr Eddie Hoare - Mayor of the City of Galway June to December 2023  Cllr Frank Fahy, Cllr Martina O'Connor, Cllr Peter Keane, Cllr Niall McNelis, Cllr Donal Lyons
Issued Addressed 2023	Marketing and Promotion Fund 2023 Budget Strategy Report and Budget Report 2024 Training and Development Programme for Councillors 2023 Galway City Council Seal Report 2023 Marketing and Regional Festival Fund 2023 Tourism Bed Tax Report Town Twinning and Friendship Agreements Webcasting

## 20.2 Strategic Policy Committees (SPCs)

Strategic Policy Committees consider matters connected with the formulation, development, monitoring, and review of policy for Galway City Council. The membership of SPCs is made up of Galway City Council Elected Members and external representatives from local sectoral interests.

<b>Housing and Social Inclusion</b>		
Membership	Organisation	Issues Addressed
Cllr Donal Lyons (Chair)	Elected Members	Homeless Update and Homeless Action Plan (standing item)
Cllr D. McDonnell		Housing for All / Housing Capital Programme (updates)
Cllr T. O'Flaherty		Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019 – 2024 (updates)
Cllr M. Cubbard		Housing and Disability Strategy - policy and updates
Cllr M. O'Connor		Housing Allocations / Choice Based Letting policies and procedures
Cllr I. Byrne		Housing Needs Assessment 2023 – updates
Cllr E. Hoare - Replaced Cllr F. Fahy in 2021		Estate Management / Traveller Specific Estate Management / Anti-Social Behaviour (policy reviews)
Cllr A. Cheevers		
Mr Mark Lohan	Irish Congress of Trade Unions	
Marcella Conneely - replaced Bridget Kelly in 2021	GCCN	Housing Acquisitions Policy
Karen Golden		Affordable Housing Scheme / Affordable Housing Fund / Scheme of Eligibility
Walter King	Business Sector	Cost Rental Scheme
		Vacant Homes Initiatives
		Energy Efficiency Retrofit Programme – updates
Number of meetings held in 2023: 4		

<b>Planning</b>		
<b>Membership</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Issues Addressed</b>
Cllr Peter Keane (Chair) Cllr Mike Crowe Cllr Alan Curran – Replaced Cllr Owen Hanley in 2023 Cllr Niall McNelis Cllr Imelda Byrne Cllr Frank Fahy Cllr Clodagh Higgins Cllr Noel Larkin	Elected Members	<b>Development Plan and Policy</b> Review implementation of policies of City Development Plan City Development Plan 2023 – 2029 Process and updates LAP preparation – process and updates Infrastructure delivery – Irish Water capital programme update RSES and MASP implementation – engagement with NWRA County Council SPC – engagement on relevant policy implementation National policy/legislation updates
Marian Spelman	Irish Congress of Trade Unions	<b>Development Management/Enforcement:</b> Development Contribution Scheme – update on implementation
Brendan Mulligan	GCCN	Vacant Sites – update on implementation Statistical data review ePlanning portal - project updates. Update on Legislation New Planning and Enforcement staff
Derrick Hambleton	An Taisce	<b>Heritage:</b> Review of Grant supported projects under –HSF; BHIS; Community Fund; Walled Towns; Decade of Commemoration. Heritage Strategy Heritage Plan Actions - Implementation and updates

		<p><b>Land Activation:</b></p> <p>Strategic Site progress updates</p> <p>Vacant Site Register review and updates</p> <p>Updates on the scoping/publication of Residential Zoned Land Tax maps</p> <p>URDF Funding – progress reports</p> <p>Public Realm Strategy – progress reports</p>
Betsy Boland	Galway Chamber	
Number of meetings held in 2023: 4		

<b>Economic, Community and Cultural Development</b>		
Membership	Organisation	Issues Addressed
Cllr N. McNelis (Chair) Cllr D. Lyons Cllr E. Hoare Cllr N. Larkin Cllr J. Connolly Cllr C. Higgins Cllr M. Crowe Cllr D. Mc Donnell	Elected Members	Oversee the preparation of the economic elements of the Galway City Local Economic and Community Plan 2023 – 2029.  Review of Implementation of ‘Galway to 2025’ – Tourism Strategy for Galway, including key infrastructural projects.  Review work of the Local Enterprise Office.  Ongoing review of the Economic and Cultural Development Unit Annual Service Delivery Plan 2023.
Geri Slevin	Galway Trades Council	Progress the Atlantic Economic Corridor initiative in partnership with the Department of Rural and Community Development including smarter Cities.
Dominick Whelan	Galway City Community Network (GCCN)	Review of the Galway City Creative Ireland Plan 2023 – 2027 and implementation of key actions for 2023 in line with ‘Everybody Matters – A Cultural Sustainability Strategy Framework for
Megs Morley	Galway City Community Network (GCCN)	

Dave Hickey	Galway Chamber	Galway' and Galway City Arts Strategy. Monitoring of Galway City Museum Strategic Plan. Developing Galway as a bi-lingual City and the Gaeltacht Service Town initiative. Supporting Social Enterprise in Galway City. Developing the Green/Circular Economy in Galway City. Implementation of Humanitarian support services to refugees in Galway City.
Number of meetings held in 2023: 4		

<b>Transportation and Infrastructure</b>		
Membership	Organisation	Issues Addressed
Cllr Frank Fahy (Chair) Cllr Alan Cheevers Cllr Clodagh Higgins Cllr Colette Connolly Cllr Mike Cubbard Cllr Noel Larkin Cllr Peter Keane Cllr Niall Murphy	Elected Members	Active Travel - School Streets, School zones, Bike parking, Road Markings Updates on Transport Projects Smart Mobility, Fleet electrification, E-charge Strategy, Street / Car parking E-charging Strategy, E-scooter and E-bike Policies Public Lighting Retrofit to low energy LED and asset upgrade Traffic Management, Special Speed Limits and Traffic Calming
Kenneth Deery	Galway Chamber	Improvement of Footpaths and Pedestrian Crossings in the City
Pat Hardiman	Irish Congress of Trade Unions	Review of Galway Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy
Paul O'Donnell Shane Foran	Galway City Community Network	Toilets facilities for bus drivers

Number of meetings held in 2023: 4

<b>Climate Action, Environment, Recreation and Amenity</b>		
Membership	Organisation	Issues Addressed
Cllr Martina O'Connor (Chair) Cllr Declan Mc Donnell Cllr Donal Lyons Cllr Terry O'Flaherty Cllr Colette Connolly Cllr John Connolly Cllr Niall Murphy Cllr Alan Curran - Replaced Cllr Owen Hanley in 2023	Elected Members	Galway City Council Strategy on e-charging Galway City Councils Green Space Strategy St. Nicholas Market Traders Active Cities Galway Galway City Council, Climate Action Plan Adoption Roadmap Climate Change/Energy Bureau update Galway City Biodiversity Action Plan Revision 2025-2030 Review of LACAP submission received. Community Climate Action Fund Local Authority Climate Action Plan Update Update on Dublin Road Cemetery
Brendan Smyth Eleanor Hough Caroline Stanley	GCCN	
Colm Ryan	MKO Ireland	
Number of meetings held in 2023: 4		

### **20.3 Galway City Joint Policing Committee (JPC)**

Galway City Joint Policing Committee (JPC) aims to develop greater consultation, co-operation and synergy on policing and crime issues between An Garda Síochána, Galway City Council, community representatives and Elected representatives.



The JPC continued to take a strategic approach to its work in addressing local issues collectively and strategically in 2023.

The Galway City JPC convened on four occasions during 2023, with additional meetings of the JPC sub-committees. A very successful and well attended Public Meeting was held on 27 November 2023 in the Ballinfoile/Castlegar Neighbourhood Centre.

Topics discussed at JPC meetings in 2023 focused on the safety of all road users; enhancing community safety responses with a view to crime prevention; domestic violence; anti-social behaviour and supporting community engagement models of best practice.

## 20.4 Local Area Committees

<b>Central Ward</b>		
Members	Number of Meetings in 2023	Topics Discussed
Cllr Colette Connolly (Chair) Cllr Imelda Byrne Cllr Mike Cubbard Cllr Frank Fahy Cllr Eddie Hoare Cllr Martina O'Connor	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Improvement Schemes</li> <li>Naming and Civic Commemorative Policy</li> <li>Part 8 at The Manse, Nuns Island</li> <li>Southpark Master Plan</li> <li>NTA Projects (Bus Connects, Safe Routes to School)</li> <li>Pedestrian Crossings</li> <li>Register of Electors</li> <li>Draft Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2024-2029 and Implementation Plan</li> </ul>

<b>East Ward</b>		
Members	Number of Meetings in 2023	Topics Discussed
Cllr MJ Crowe (Chair) Cllr Alan Cheevers Cllr Noel Larkin Cllr Declan McDonnell Cllr Terry O'Flaherty Cllr Alan Curran	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Improvement Schemes</li> <li>Naming and Civic Commemorative Policy</li> <li>NTA Projects (Bus Connects, Safe Routes to School)</li> <li>Pedestrian Crossings</li> <li>Register of Electors</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2024-2029 and Implementation Plan</li> </ul>
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<b>West Ward</b>		
<b>Members</b>	<b>Number of Meetings in 2023</b>	<b>Topics Discussed</b>
Cllr Niall Murphy (Chair) Cllr John Connolly Cllr Clodagh Higgins Cllr Peter Keane Cllr Donal Lyons Cllr Niall McNelis	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Improvement Schemes</li> <li>• Toilet facilities for Silverstrand</li> <li>• Naming and Civic Commemorative Policy</li> <li>• Part 8 at the Crescent Sea Road Project</li> <li>• Clybaun Housing Scheme</li> <li>• NTA Projects (Bus Connects, Safe Routes to School)</li> <li>• Pedestrian Crossings</li> <li>• Register of Electors</li> <li>• Draft Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2024-2029 and Implementation Plan</li> </ul>

## 21. Performance Indicators 01/01/2023-31/12/2023

Performance Indicator		Value
Housing: H1, H2 and H4	A. Number of dwellings in the ownership of the local authority at 1/1/2023	2,437
	B. Number of dwellings added to the local authority owned stock during 2023 (whether constructed or acquired)	83  Comment: Total of 87 added in 2023. 4 properties not counted here: 3 Units were Traveller Specific (23 Leargán, 7 Gleann Rua, 17 Sceilig Ard) + 1 Leased to AHB (39 Caireal Mór-Galway Simon).
	C. Number of local authority owned dwellings sold in 2023	18
	D. Number of local authority owned dwellings demolished in 2023	0
	E. Number of dwellings in the ownership of the local authority at 31/12/2023	2,502
	F. Number of local authority owned dwellings planned for demolition under a DHLGH approved scheme at 31/12/2023	2  Comment: McHale House (FMS Prop.102720 FMS) and Linden Lodge (FMS Prop.102955).

	A. The percentage of the total number of local authority owned dwellings that were vacant on 31/12/2023	2.72 %
	The number of dwellings within their overall stock that were not tenanted on 31/12/2023	68 Comment: Excluding acqs., new builds, turnkey units, Fána Glas and Sliabh Bán - Housing COT register results of 68 units.
	A. Expenditure during 2023 on the maintenance of local authority housing compiled from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023, divided by the no. of dwellings in the local authority stock at 31/12/2023, i.e. the H1E less H1F indicator figure	€1,875.06
	Expenditure on maintenance of local authority stock compiled from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023, including planned maintenance and expenditure that qualified for grants, such as Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) grants for energy efficient retrofitting works but excluding expenditure on vacant properties and expenditure under approved major refurbishment schemes (i.e. approved Regeneration or under the Remedial Works Schemes).	€4,687,650.08 Comment Maintenance Spends for codes: R108007, R108026/C116001 and R188114/C116002 and R108015 Retrofits, excluding technical staff salaries.:
<b>Housing: H3 and H5</b>	A. The time taken from the date of vacation of a dwelling to the date in 2023 when the dwelling is re-tenanted, averaged across all dwellings re-let during 2023	0.50 wk

B. The cost expended on getting the dwellings re-tenanted in 2023, averaged across all dwellings re-let in 2023	€41,264.84
The number of dwellings that were re-tenanted on any date in 2023 (but excluding all those that had been vacant due to an estate-wide refurbishment scheme)	71 Comment: No. of units let in 2023
The number of weeks from the date of vacation to the date the dwelling is re-tenanted	35.22 wk
Total expenditure on works necessary to enable re-letting of the dwellings	€2,929,803.53 Comment: Spends on COTs in 2023, that includes 11 vacant retrofitted (€1,255,563.61/23) * 11 = €600,486.94, 4 Fire Damaged Units (€159,524.26) and R108007 spend (€2,169,792.33), excluding all income from EERP and insurance settlements.
A. Total number of registered tenancies in the LA area at the end of June 2023	
B. Number of rented dwellings inspected in 2023	337
C. Percentage of inspected dwellings in 2023 not compliant with the Standards Regulations	95.71 %

	D. Number of dwellings deemed compliant in 2023 (including those originally deemed non-compliant)	17
	E. The number of inspections (including reinspections) undertaken by the local authority in 2023	337
<b>Housing: H6</b>	A. Number of adult individuals in emergency accommodation that are long-term (i.e. 6 months or more within the previous year) homeless as a percentage of the total number of homeless adult individuals in emergency accommodation at the end of 2023	41.48 %
	The number of adult individuals classified as homeless and in emergency accommodation on the night of 31 December 2023 as recorded on the PASS system	229 Comment: This figure is higher than last year and reflects the challenges posed in moving people on from EA due to both availability and affordability
	The number out of those individuals who, on 31/12/2023, had been in emergency accommodation for 6 months continuously, or for 6 months cumulatively within the previous 12 months	95
<b>Housing: H7</b>	A. (1) Total number of houses retrofitted between 01/01/2023 and 31/12/2023 under the Social Housing Retrofit Programme	33
	A. (2) Number of houses that achieved a BER rating of B2 or above between 01/01/2023 and 31/12/2023 under the Social Housing Retrofit Programme	33

	A. (3) Number of heat pumps installed in those houses between 01/01/2023 and 31/12/2023 under the Social Housing Retrofit Programme	32
	B. Total annual energy savings in MWh from houses retrofitted between 01/01/2023 and 31/12/2023 under the Social Housing Retrofit Programme	708.7 MWh
	C. Total carbon emission reduction tCo2 from houses retrofitted between 01/01/2023 and 31/12/2023 under the Social Housing Retrofit Programme	228.1
<b>Roads: R1 and R2</b>	A. (a) The percentage of regional roads that received a PSCI rating in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2023	96.06 %
	A. (b) The percentage of Local Primary roads that received a PSCI rating in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2023	98.36 %
	A. (c) The percentage of Local Secondary roads that received a PSCI rating in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2023	95.82 %
	A. (d) The percentage of Local Tertiary roads that received a PSCI rating in the 60 month period prior to 31/12/2023	98.22 %
	B. (a.1) The percentage length of regional roads that received a PSCI rating of 1-4 in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2023	0.09 %
	B. (a.2) The percentage length of regional roads that received a PSCI rating of 5-6 in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2023	4.62 %
	B. (a.3) The percentage length of regional roads that received a PSCI rating of 7-8 in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2023	46.72 %



B. (a.4) The percentage length of regional roads that received a PSCI rating of 9-10 in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2023	44.62 %
B. (b.1) The percentage length of Local Primary roads that received a PSCI rating of 1-4 in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2023	1.89 %
B. (b.2) The percentage length of Local Primary roads that received a PSCI rating of 5-6 in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2023	25.33 %
B. (b.3) The percentage length of Local Primary roads that received a PSCI rating of 7-8 in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2023	48.30 %
B. (b.4) The percentage length of Local Primary roads that received a PSCI rating of 9-10 in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2023	22.84 %
B. (c.1) The percentage length of Local Secondary roads that received a PSCI rating of 1-4 in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2023	2.37 %
B. (c.2) The percentage length of Local Secondary roads that received a PSCI rating of 5-6 in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2023	20.80 %
B. (c.3) The percentage length of Local Secondary roads that received a PSCI rating of 7-8 in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2023	49.89 %
B. (c.4) The percentage length of Local Secondary roads that received a PSCI rating of 9-10 in the 24 month period prior to 31/12/2023	22.77 %
B. (d.1) The percentage length of Local Tertiary roads that received a PSCI rating of 1-4 in the 60 month period prior to 31/12/2023	3.80 %

	B. (d.2) The percentage length of Local Tertiary roads that received a PSCI rating of 5-6 in the 60 month period prior to 31/12/2023	30.28 %
	B. (d.3) The percentage length of Local Tertiary roads that received a PSCI rating of 7-8 in the 60 month period prior to 31/12/2023	48.18 %
	B. (d.4) The percentage length of Local Tertiary roads that received a PSCI rating of 9-10 in the 60 month period prior to 31/12/2023	15.96 %
	A.1 Kilometres of regional road strengthened during 2023	2.7 km
	A.2 The amount expended on regional roads strengthening work during 2023	€792,591.00
	A.3 The average unit cost of regional road strengthening works per square metre (€/m <sup>2</sup> )	€40.50
	B.1 Kilometres of regional road resealed during 2023	0.0 km
	B.2 The amount expended on regional road resealing work during 2023	€0.00
	B.3 The average unit cost of regional road resealing works per square metre (€/m <sup>2</sup> )	€0.00
	C.1 Kilometres of local road strengthened during 2023	4.2 km
	C.2. The amount expended on local road strengthening work during 2023	€1,213,981.00
	C.3 The average unit cost of local road strengthening works per square metre (€/m <sup>2</sup> )	€42.99
	D.1 Kilometres of local road resealed during 2023	0.0 km

	D.2 The amount expended on local road resealing work during 2023	€0.00
	D.3 The average unit cost of local road resealing works per square metre (€/m <sup>2</sup> )	€0.00
<b>Motor Tax: R3</b>	A. The percentage of motor tax transactions which were dealt with online (i.e. transaction is processed, and the tax disc is issued) in 2023	Shared Service operated by Galway County Council
<b>Water: W1 and W2</b>	Percentage of drinking water in private schemes in compliance with statutory requirements	0
	The number of registered schemes monitored by each local authority as a percentage of total schemes registered	0
	How many local authority registered schemes were monitored in 2023	0
	Total number of registered schemes in 2023	0
<b>Waste: E1</b>	A. The number of households which availed of a 3-bin service offered by a licensed operator at 31/12/2023	29,468
	B. The percentage of households within the local authority that the number at A represents (based on agglomerations of more than 500)	100.53 %
<b>Environmental Pollution: E2</b>	A. Total number of pollution cases in respect of which a complaint was made during 2023	1335
	A. Number of pollution cases closed from 1/1/2023 to 31/12/2023	1307
	A. Total number of pollution cases on hands at 31/12/2023	45

	The opening number of pollution cases carried forward from the year end 2022	17
<b>Litter Pollution: E3</b>	A1. The percentage of the area within the local authority that when surveyed in 2023 was unpolluted or litter free	Data Provided by External Source
	A2. The percentage of the area within the local authority that when surveyed in 2023 was slightly polluted	Data Provided by External Source
	A3. The percentage of the area within the local authority that when surveyed in 2023 was moderately polluted	Data Provided by External Source
	A4. The percentage of the area within the local authority that when surveyed in 2023 was significantly polluted	Data Provided by External Source
	A5. The percentage of the area within the local authority that when surveyed in 2023 was grossly polluted	Data Provided by External Source
<b>Green Flag Status: E4</b>	A. The percentage of schools that have been awarded/renewed green flag status in the two years to 31 December 2023	51.28 %
	Schools which attained a Green Flag for the first time in 2023	1
	Schools which renewed their Green Flag in 2023	15
	Schools which held a Green Flag from 2022 and therefore do not require renewal until 2024	4
<b>Energy Efficiency: E5</b>	A. The cumulative percentage of energy savings achieved by 31/12/2023 relative to baseline year (2009)	Data Provided by External Source

<b>Public Lighting: E6</b>	A. Total annual consumption of the public lighting system	2163.00 MWh
	B. Average wattage of each public light	59.96 W
	C. Percentage of the total system that LED lights represent	97.04 %
	Number of LED lights in the public lighting system	9581
	Number of non-LED lights in the public lighting system	250
<b>Climate Change: E7</b>	1 a) Does the local authority have a designated (FTE) Climate Action Coordinator?	Yes
	1 b) Does the local authority have a designated (FTE) Climate Action Officer?	Yes
	2. Does the local authority have a climate action team?	Yes
<b>Planning: P1</b>	A. Buildings inspected as a percentage of new buildings notified to the local authority	19.19 %
	Total number of new buildings notified to the local authority i.e. buildings where a valid Commencement Notice was served in the period 1/1/2023 to 31/12/2023 by a builder or developer on the local authority	172
	Number of new buildings notified to the local authority in 2023 that were the subject of at least one on-site inspection during 2023 undertaken by the local authority	33

<b>Planning: P2 and P3</b>	A. Number of local authority planning decisions which were the subject of an appeal to An Bord Pleanála that were determined by the Board on any date in 2023	35
	B. Percentage of the determinations at A which confirmed (either with or without variation of the plan) the decision made by the local authority	68.57 %
	Number of determinations confirming the local authority's decision (either with or without variation)	24
	A. Total number of planning cases referred to or initiated by the local authority in the period 1/1/2023 to 31/12/2023 that were investigated	145
	B. Total number of investigated cases that were closed during 2023	213
	C. Percentage of the cases at B that were dismissed as trivial, minor or without foundation or were closed because statute barred or an exempted development	30.99 %
	D. Percentage of the cases at B that were resolved to the local authority's satisfaction through negotiations	33.80 %
	E. Percentage of the cases at B that were closed due to enforcement proceedings	35.21 %
	F. Total number of planning cases being investigated as at 31/12/2023	366

	Number of cases at B that were dismissed as trivial, minor or without foundation or were closed because statute barred or an exempted development	66
	Number of cases at B that were resolved to the local authority's satisfaction through negotiations	72
	Number of cases at B that were closed due to enforcement proceedings	75
<b>Planning: P4 and P5</b>	A. The 2023 Annual Financial Statement (AFS) Programme D data divided by the population of the local authority area per the 2022 Census	€45.51
	AFS Programme D data consisting of D01 - Forward Planning, D02 - Development Management, D03 - Enforcement (inclusive of the relevant Programme D proportion of the central management charge) for 2023	€3841270
	A. The percentage of applications for fire safety certificates received in 2023 that were decided (granted or refused) within two months of their receipt	71.15 %
	B. The percentage of applications for fire safety certificates received in 2023 that were decided (granted or refused) within an extended period agreed with the applicant	28.85 %
	The total number of applications for fire safety certificates received in 2023 that were not withdrawn by the applicant	52

	The number of applications for fire safety certificates received in 2023 that were decided (granted or refused) within two months of the date of receipt of the application	37
	The number of applications for fire safety certificates received in 2023 that were decided (granted or refused) within an agreed extended time period	15
<b>Library Service: L1</b>	A. Number of visits to libraries per head of population for the local authority area per the 2022 Census	Library is operated through Galway County Council as a shared service
	B. Number of items issued to library borrowers in the year	Library is operated through Galway County Council as a shared service
	C. Library active members per head of population	Library is operated through Galway County Council as a shared service
	D. Number of registered library members in the year	Library is operated through Galway County Council as a shared service
	Number of visits to its libraries from 1/1/2023 to 31/12/2023 per automatic counters if used	Library is operated through Galway County Council as a shared service



<b>Library Service: L2</b>	A. The Annual Financial Statement (AFS) Programme F data for 2023 divided by the population of the local authority area per the 2022 Census	Library is operated through Galway County Council as a shared service
	B. The annual per capita expenditure on collections over the period 1/01/2023 to 31/12/2023	Library is operated through Galway County Council as a shared service
	A. AFS Programme F data consisting of F02 - Operation of Library and Archival Service (inclusive of the relevant proportion of the central management charge for Programme F) for 2023	€1,791,140 Comment: Galway City Council contribution to Galway County Council as Library is operated through Galway County Council as a shared service
	B. The annual expenditure on new stock acquired by the library in the year	Library is operated through Galway County Council as a shared service
<b>Youth and Community: Y1 and Y2</b>	A. Percentage of local schools involved in the local Youth Council/Comhairle na nÓg scheme	80.0 %
	Total number of second level schools in the local authority area at 31/12/2023	10
	Number of second level schools in the local authority area from which representatives attended the local Comhairle na nÓg AGM held in 2023	8

	A. The number of organisations included in the County Register at 31/12/2023 and the proportion of those organisations that opted to be part of the Social Inclusion College within the PPN	29.24
	Total number of organisations included in the County Register (maintained in accordance with section 128 of the Local Government Act 2001) for the local authority area as at 31/12/2023	171
	Total number of those organisations that registered for the first time in 2023	9
	Number of organisations that opted to join the Social Inclusion Electoral College on whatever date they registered for the PPN	50
<b>Corporate: C1, C2, C4 and C5</b>	A. The wholtime equivalent staffing number as at 31 December 2023	552.27
	A. Percentage of paid working days lost to sickness absence through medically certified leave in 2023	3.55 %
	B. Percentage of paid working days lost to sickness absence through self-certified leave in 2023	0.23 %
	Total number of working days lost to sickness absence through medically certified leave in 2023	5,411.5 day
	Total number of working days lost to sickness absence through self-certified leave in 2023	291 day
	Number of unpaid working days lost to sickness absence included within the total of self-certified sick leave days in 2023	0 day

	Number of unpaid working days lost to sickness absence included within the total of medically certified sick leave days in 2023	960 day
	If any staff are on long-term sick leave (i.e. a continuous period of more than 4 weeks), include a text note of the number of staff on long-term sick leave	44
	A. All ICT expenditure in the period from 1/1/2023 to 31/12/2023, divided by the WTE no.	€4,492.49
	Total ICT expenditure in 2023	€2,481,064.89
	A. All ICT expenditure calculated in C4 as a proportion of Revenue expenditure	2.22
	Total Revenue expenditure from 1/1/2023 to 31/12/2023 before transfers to or from reserves	€110,029,225
<b>Corporate: C3</b>	A. The per capita total page views of the local authority's websites in 2023	13.34
	B. The per capita total number of followers at end 2023 of the local authority's social media accounts (if any)	0.54
	The cumulative total page views of all websites operated by the local authority for the period from 1/1/2023 to 31/12/2023 obtained from a page tagging on-site web analytics service or equivalent	1,126,444
	The total number of social media users who, at 31/12/2023, were following the local authority on any social media sites	45,573
	The number of social media accounts operated by the local authority	6

	Indicate if there was a change to the cookie policies on the local authority sites and the date this came into effect	
<b>Finance: M1 to M4</b>	A. Cumulative surplus/deficit balance at 31/12/2019 in the Revenue Account from the Income and Expenditure Account Statement of the AFS	€2,343,703
	B. Cumulative surplus/deficit balance at 31/12/2020 in the Revenue Account from the Income and Expenditure Account Statement of the AFS	€2,509,228
	C. Cumulative surplus/deficit balance at 31/12/2021 in the Revenue Account from the Income and Expenditure Account Statement of the AFS	€67,765
	D. Cumulative surplus/deficit balance at 31/12/2022 in the Revenue Account from the Income and Expenditure Account Statement of the AFS	€2,646,046
	E. Cumulative surplus/deficit balance at 31/12/2023 in the Revenue Account from the Income and Expenditure Account Statement of the AFS	€2,693,758
	F. Cumulative surplus or deficit at 31/12/2023 as a percentage of Total Income in 2023 from the Income and Expenditure Account Statement of the AFS	2.37 %
	G. Revenue expenditure per capita in 2023	€1,323.94
	H. Revenue expenditure per capita in 2023 excluding significant out of county/shared service expenditure	N/A
	The 2023 Total Income figure from the Income and Expenditure Account Statement of the AFS	€112,098,655

The 2023 Total Expenditure figure from the Income and Expenditure Account Statement of the AFS	€110,029,225
The 2023 Revenue expenditure excluding county/shared service expenditure for the service providers of HAP, MyPay, DRHE and Dublin Fire Services and is only applicable to Dublin City, Laois and Limerick	N/A
A. (a) Collection level of Rates in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2019	83.0 %
A. (b) Collection level of Rent and Annuities in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2019	80.0 %
A. (c) Collection level of Housing Loans in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2019	86.0 %
B. (a) Collection level of Rates in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2020	61.0 %
B. (b) Collection level of Rent and Annuities in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2020	79.0 %
B. c) Collection level of Housing Loans in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2020	86.0 %
C. a) Collection level of Rates in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2021	67.0 %
C. b) Collection level of Rent and Annuities in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2021	80.0 %
C. (c) Collection level of Housing Loans in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2021	88.0 %
D. (a) Collection level of Rates in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2022	84.0 %
D. (b) Collection level of Rent and Annuities in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2022	80.0 %
D. (c) Collection level of Housing Loans in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2022	88.0 %
E. (a) Collection level of Rates in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2023	86 %

E. (b) Collection level of Rent and Annuities in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2023	80 %
E. (c) Collection level of Housing Loans in Appendix 7 of the AFS for 2023	88 %
E. (d) Collection level of HAP SSC for 2023	N/A
A. Per capita total cost of settled claims for 2023	€8.69
IPB Insurance: Number of notified claims for 2023	62
IPB Insurance: Number of settled claims for 2023	33
IPB Insurance: Total cost of settled claims for 2023	€733,957.69
Total cost of claims settled under excess for 2023	Data for M3 will be provided by IPB
Self-insured: Number of notified claims for 2023	Data for M3 will be provided by IPB
Self-insured: Number of settled claims for 2023	Data for M3 will be provided by IPB
Self-insured: Total cost of settled claims for 2023	Data for M3 will be provided by IPB
A. Overall central management charge as a percentage of total expenditure on revenue account	12.95 %
B. Total payroll costs as a percentage of revenue expenditure	30.63 %

	Overall central management charge from the Local Authority FMS and defined in the Annual Budget	€14,474,742
	Total payroll costs from Appendix 1 of the AFS for 2023 (including Salaries, Wages and Pensions)	€34,230,313
<b>Economic Development: J1 to J5</b>	A. The number of jobs created with assistance from the Local Enterprise Office during the period 1/1/2023 to 31/12/2023 per 100,000 of population	Data provided by External Source
	The number of jobs created with assistance from the Local Enterprise Office during the period 1/1/2023 to 31/12/2023	As per NOAC guidelines the figures for these indicators will be obtained directly from Enterprise Ireland. For Galway City (and County) = 52
	A. The number of trading online voucher applications approved by the Local Enterprise Office in 2023 per 100,000 of population	Data provided by External Source
	B. The number of trading online vouchers that were drawn down in 2023 per 100,000 of population	Data provided by External Source
	The number of trading online voucher applications approved by the Local Enterprise Office in 2023	As per NOAC guidelines the figures for these indicators will be obtained directly from Enterprise Ireland. For Galway City (and County) = 88

	The number of those trading online vouchers that were drawn down in 2023	As per NOAC guidelines the figures for these indicators will be obtained directly from Enterprise Ireland. For Galway City (and County) = 34
	A. The number of participants who received mentoring during the period 1/1/2023 to 31/12/2023 per 100,000 of population	Data provided by External Source
	The number of participants who received mentoring during the period 1/1/2023 to 31/12/2023	As per NOAC guidelines the figures for these indicators will be obtained directly from Enterprise Ireland. For Galway City (and County) = 745
	A. Does the local authority have a current tourism strategy?	Yes
	B. Does the local authority have a designated Tourism Officer?	Yes
	The spend on local economic development by the local authority in 2023 per head of population	€238.62
	The spend on local economic development by the local authority in 2023	€20,142,742
<b>Fire Service: F1</b>	A. The Annual Financial Statement (AFS) Programme E expenditure data for 2023 divided by the population of the local authority area per the 2022 Census figures for the population served by the fire authority as per the Risk Based Approach Phase One reports	The Fire Services for Galway City Council is operated through Galway County Council as a shared service



	AFS Programme E expenditure data consisting of E11 - Operation of Fire Service and E12 - Fire Prevention for 2023	The Fire Services for Galway City Council is operated through Galway County Council as a shared service
<b>Fire Service: F2 and F3</b>	A. Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in Full-Time Stations in respect of fire	The Fire Services for Galway City Council is operated through Galway County Council as a shared service
	B. Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in Part-Time Stations (retained fire service) in respect of fire	The Fire Services for Galway City Council is operated through Galway County Council as a shared service
	C. Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in Full-Time Stations in respect of all other (non-fire) emergency incidents	The Fire Services for Galway City Council is operated through Galway County Council as a shared service
	D. Average time taken, in minutes, to mobilise fire brigades in Part-Time Stations (retained fire service) in respect of all other (non-fire) emergency incidents	The Fire Services for Galway City Council is operated through Galway County Council as a shared service

	A. Percentage of cases in respect of fire in which first attendance at scene is within 10 minutes	The Fire Services for Galway City Council is operated through Galway County Council as a shared service
	B. Percentage of cases in respect of fire in which first attendance at the scene is after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes	The Fire Services for Galway City Council is operated through Galway County Council as a shared service
	C. Percentage of cases in respect of fire in which first attendance at the scene is after 20 minutes	The Fire Services for Galway City Council is operated through Galway County Council as a shared service
	D. Percentage of cases in respect of all other emergency incidents in which first attendance at the scene is within 10 minutes	The Fire Services for Galway City Council is operated through Galway County Council as a shared service
	E. Percentage of cases in respect of all other emergency incidents in which first attendance at the scene is after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes	The Fire Services for Galway City Council is operated through Galway County Council as a shared service

	F. Percentage of cases in respect of all other emergency incidents in which first attendance at the scene is after 20 minutes	The Fire Services for Galway City Council is operated through Galway County Council as a shared service
	Total number of call-outs in respect of fires from 1/1/2023 to 31/12/2023	The Fire Services for Galway City Council is operated through Galway County Council as a shared service
	Number of these fire cases where first fire tender attendance at the scene is within 10 minutes	The Fire Services for Galway City Council is operated through Galway County Council as a shared service
	Number of these fire cases in which first fire tender attendance at the scene is after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes	The Fire Services for Galway City Council is operated through Galway County Council as a shared service
	Number of these fire cases in which first fire tender attendance at the scene is after 20 minutes	The Fire Services for Galway City Council is operated through Galway County Council as a shared service

	Total number of call-outs in respect of all other emergency incidents (i.e. not including fire) from 1/1/2023 to 31/12/2023	The Fire Services for Galway City Council is operated through Galway County Council as a shared service
	Number of these non-fire cases in which first fire tender attendance at the scene is within 10 minutes	The Fire Services for Galway City Council is operated through Galway County Council as a shared service
	Number of these non-fire cases in which first fire tender attendance at the scene is after 10 minutes but within 20 minutes	The Fire Services for Galway City Council is operated through Galway County Council as a shared service
	Number of these non-fire cases in which first fire tender attendance at the scene is after 20 minutes	The Fire Services for Galway City Council is operated through Galway County Council as a shared service

## 22. Statement of Internal Financial Control (SIFC)

### 22.1 Introduction

I, Patricia Philbin, Interim Chief Executive (CE) of Galway City Council am responsible for the annual financial statement (AFS), prepared by the Director of Finance, in accordance with the accounting code of practice issued by the Minister under section 107 of the Local Government Act, 2001.

I certify that the financial statements of Galway City Council for the year ended 31 December 2023, are in agreement with the books of account and have been prepared in accordance with the accounting requirements of the Minister of Housing Local Government and Heritage.

The AFS is subject to external audit, by an auditor of the Local Government Audit Service, whose purpose is to form an independent opinion of the accounts and state whether the annual financial statement presents **fairly the financial position** of the local authority and of its income and expenditure for the period in question, and whether the transactions of the audited body conform with the statutory or other authorisation under which they purport to have been carried out.

The AFS reports on the day-to-day activity of Galway City Council in the form of the Statement of Comprehensive Income & Expenditure, summarised by Division. The Statement of Financial Position outlines the Galway City Council overall financial position as of the 31st of December 2023.

The **Statement of Comprehensive Income** represents expenditure and income on the day-to-day running of the Galway City Council.

The key sources of income for Galway City Council are as follows:

	<b>Current Year</b>	<b>Previous Year</b>
	<b>€</b>	<b>€</b>
Goods & Services	27,188,795	26,166,861
Grants & Subsidies	40,639,733	37,072,084
Other Contributions (as appropriate)	453,859	536,232
Rates	39,297,836	37,941,446
Local Property Tax	4,518,431	4,268,123

Activity on the Income and Expenditure account for 2023 is as follows:

Total income has increased by €6.1m since 2022 mainly due to a 10% increase in grant and subsidies. The increase in income has been met with a corresponding increase in expenditure of €9.1m to €110,029,225 before transfers. Despite the budgetary pressure on expenditure, Galway City Council has maintained a surplus for the year of €47,712 which increases the accumulated revenue reserve to €2.7m. Payroll continues to be the most significant cost, with a total payroll cost of €33,400,313. The uplift in costs from 2022 of €2.8m is mainly due increased staff numbers.

	<b>Current Year €</b>	<b>Previous Year €</b>
Income	112,098,654	105,984,747
Expenditure	110,029,225	100,912,643
Transfers to Capital	2,021,718	5,003,052
Surplus for Year	47,712	69,052
Opening Revenue Reserve	2,646,045	2,576,993
Closing Revenue Reserve	2,693,757	2,646,045

The **Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet)** represents the total financial activity of the council for the year together with comparative year figures as appropriate.

The statement includes assets and liabilities as follows:

- Assets both recently constructed/purchased and historical assets.
- Work in progress and preliminary schemes- mainly roads and housing.
- Long Term Debtors – housing loans.
- Current Assets- including Stock, Debtors, Cash at bank.
- Current and long-term liabilities- mortgage and non-mortgage loan borrowings.
- Various Reserves/Balances.

The Net Assets of Galway City Council at the end of 2023 total € 1,311m and are as follows:

	<b>Current Year €</b>	<b>Previous Year €</b>
Fixed Assets	1,294,144,564	1,276,189,993
Works in Progress	31,669,171	15,360,950
Long Term debtors	68,294,790	61,117,621
Current Assets	71,538,218	94,487,067
Current Liabilities	(19,026,692)	(40,581,072)
Net Current Assets/ (Liabilities)	52,511,526	53,905,995
Creditors (Amounts greater than 1 year)	(135,327,991)	(139,016,403)
Net Assets/(Liabilities)	1,311,292,060	1,267,558,157

A **Statement of Funds Flow** was introduced as part of AFS 2011. While the guidance of International Accounting Standard 7 Statement of Cash Flows has been followed, the business of local authorities is substantially different to most private sector organisations and therefore some minor changes to the format have been agreed to ensure the data displayed is meaningful and useful within the local government sector.

## **22.2 System of Internal Financial Controls**

As CE of Galway City Council, I acknowledge my responsibility for ensuring that an effective system of internal financial control is maintained and operated by the Galway City Council. This responsibility is exercised in the context of the resources available to Galway City Council.

Also, any system of internal financial control can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, transactions authorised and properly recorded, and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or would be detected in a timely manner.

Maintaining the system of internal financial controls is a continuous process and the system and its effectiveness are kept under ongoing review.

## **22.3 Financial control environment**

As CE of Galway City Council, I confirm that a financial control environment containing the following elements is in place:

- Financial responsibilities have been assigned at management level with corresponding accountability.
- Reporting arrangements have been established at all levels where responsibility for financial management has been assigned.
- Formal procedures have been established for reporting significant control failures and ensuring appropriate corrective action.
- There is an Audit Committee which as part of its work programme regularly review the internal financial control system.
- Procedures for all key business processes have been documented.
- There are systems in place to safeguard the assets.



## **22.4 Administrative Controls and Management Reporting**

As CE of Galway City Council, I confirm that a framework of administrative procedures and regular management reporting is in place including segregation of duties and a system of delegation and accountability and, in particular, that:

- procedures for key business processes have been documented;
- there are systems aimed at ensuring the security of the ICT systems;
- there are systems in place to safeguard the assets of the local authority; and
- there are appropriate capital investment control guidelines and formal project management disciplines in operation.

## **22.5 Procurement compliance**

Galway City Council ensures that there is an appropriate and ongoing focus on good practice in tendering and purchasing and that procedures are in place to ensure compliance with all relevant procurement guidelines.

## **22.6 Internal Audit and Audit Committee**

As CE, I can confirm that Galway City Council has an internal audit function with appropriately trained personnel, which operates in accordance with a written charter. Its work is informed by analysis of the financial risks to which Galway City Council is exposed and its annual internal audit plans are based on this analysis. I am satisfied that there are procedures in place to ensure that the reports of the internal audit function are followed up.

I can confirm that Galway City has an effective audit committee. I can also confirm that an Audit Committee is in place in accordance with the requirements of Section 122 of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended).

The statutory functions of audit committees as set out in section 59 and 60 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014 are as follows:

- I. to review financial and budgetary reporting practices and procedures within the local authority that has established it;

- II. to foster the development of best practice in the performance by the local authority of its internal audit function;
- III. to review any audited financial statement, auditor's report or auditor's special report in relation to the local authority and assess any actions taken within that authority by its CE in response to such a statement or report and to report to that authority on its findings;
- IV. to assess and promote efficiency and value for money with respect to the local authority's performance of its functions; and
- V. to review systems that are operated by the local authority for the management of risks.

I recognise that the audit committee plays a crucial role in the governance framework of local authorities, particularly in the context of increased public sector accountability. They have an independent role in advising the Council on financial reporting processes, internal control, risk management and audit matters as part of the systematic review of the control environment and governance procedures of the local authority.

I acknowledge the Audit Committee's role in the risk management process and in the continuing review of the control environment and governance procedures in Galway City Council.

## **22.7 Risk and Control Framework**

Galway City Council has implemented a risk management system which identifies and reports key risks and the management actions being taken to address and, to the extent possible, mitigate those risks.

A corporate risk register is in place which identifies the key risks and evaluates and grades them according to their significance. The register is reviewed and updated by the Management Team on a regular basis. There is also a risk register in place for each service division and these are also reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

The outcome of these assessments is used to plan and allocate resources to ensure risks are managed to an acceptable level. The risk register details the controls and actions

needed to mitigate risks and responsibilities for the operation of controls are assigned to specific staff.

As CE, I confirm that key risks and related controls have been identified and processes have been put in place to monitor the operation of those key controls and report any identified deficiencies.

The Statement of Internal Financial Control will be included in the draft Annual Report submitted to Council members by 30 April 2024 and thereafter included in the published Annual Report prepared and adopted by the Council by 30 June 2024.

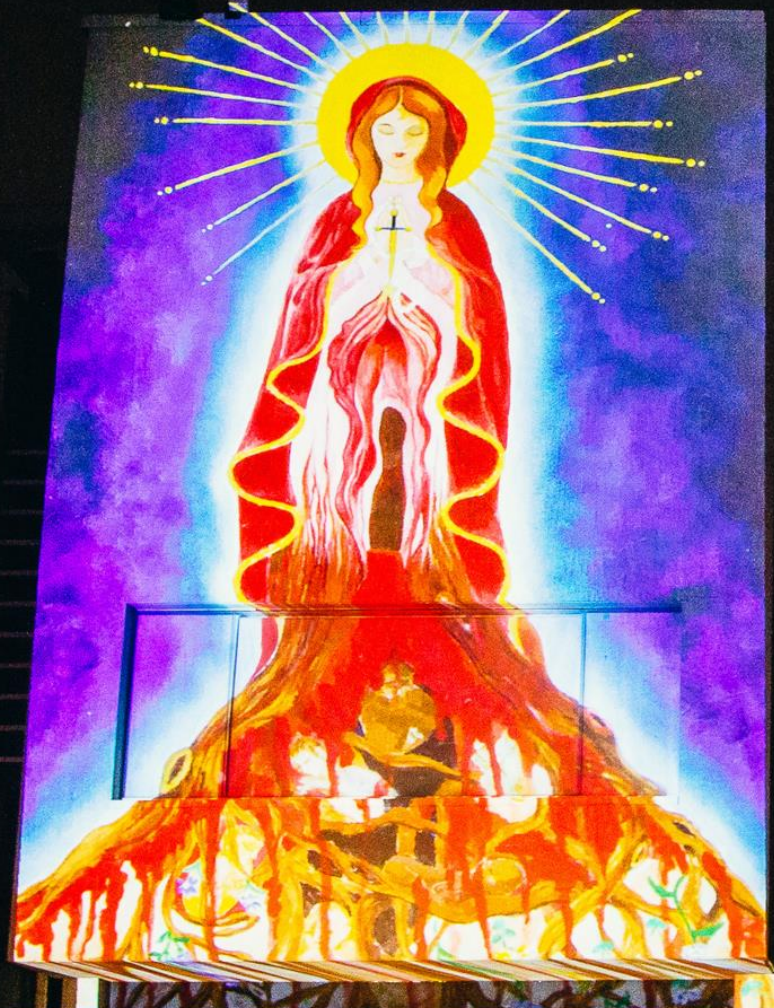
**Patricia Philbin**  
**Interim Chief Executive**

**30<sup>th</sup> April, 2024**





Comhairle Cathrach  
na Gaillimhe  
Galway City Council



# Annual Report 2023