

Galway County Development Plan 2022~2028

ISSUES
PAPER

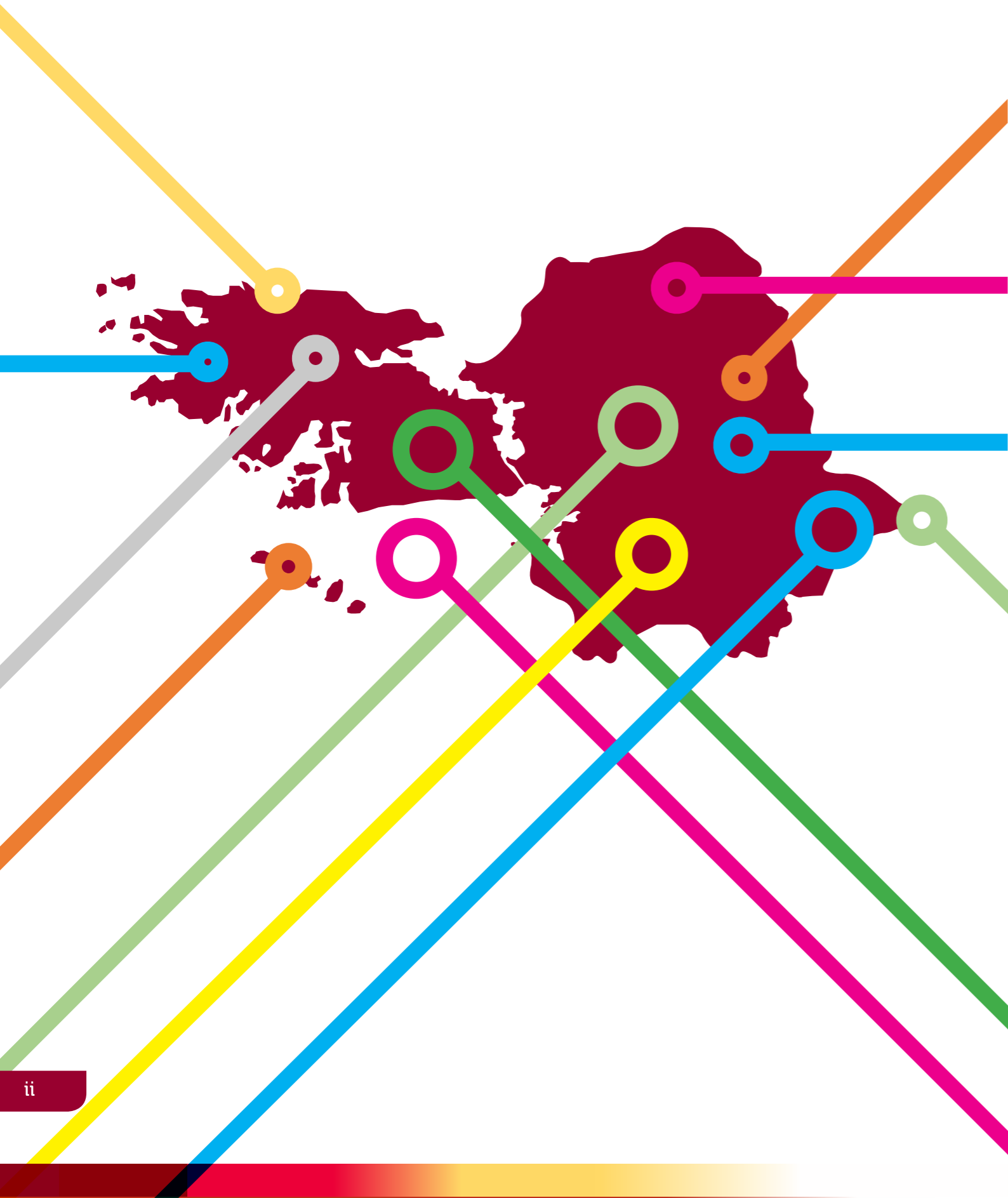


Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council



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Preamble

Galway County Council commences the preparation of the 2022-2028 County Development Plan on the 18th June 2020. This Plan-making process must be completed within two years by May 2022. The Regional Spatial Economic Strategy (RSES) came into effect on the 24th of January 2020. A series of short videos have been prepared and will be published on social media and on our website to stimulate public participation in this process while adhering to social distancing. The consultation period of the Issues Paper will run for an extended period of 12 weeks rather than the statutory 8 weeks. The consultation dates for this Issues Paper are 18th June 2020 - 10th September 2020 (inclusive). Please review these short videos and Issues Paper at: www.galway.ie/cdpreview

The review and preparation of the Galway County Development Plan is one of the most important functions of the Council. The new County Development Plan will set out the strategy for the future planning and sustainable development of County Galway up to 2028 and beyond. The County Development Plan review has come at a time of change globally, nationally and locally.

The needs of Galway's population must be considered in this review process by creating sustainable communities through housing delivery, job creation, enterprise promotion, tourism support, provision of services and community facilities within the context of a healthy well planned natural and built environment. The Council seeks to balance the need to facilitate

new development and further growth with the need to protect both the concerns of residents and communities while preserving the distinctive heritage and environment of the towns and rural areas of County Galway.

The Development Plan making process includes periods of consultation where participation from members of the public is invited and welcomed. The County Development Plan will be adopted following full consideration by the Elected Members of the Council.

The publication of this Issues Paper is the first step in the making of the new County Development Plan. This consultation document presents an overview of the main planning and development issues in Galway and seeks to encourage public debate on what broad issues should be considered in the new County Development Plan.

The issues highlighted in this Issues Paper and subsequent short videos are relevant, but they are by no means exhaustive. It is vitally important that as many individuals and groups are involved in this process as possible so that the final County Development Plan reflects public concerns and aspirations whilst having regard to national and regional policies and guidelines. Everybody is entitled to give an opinion on any aspect of the County Development Plan. At this stage we are particularly interested in encouraging submissions on strategic and 'big picture' issues.

More detailed issues such as requests for the zoning of land should be left to the Draft County Development Plan consultation phase or be dealt with during the preparation of the Local Area Plans which cover a number of towns in the County.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Kevin Kelly (Interim Chief Executive)



Making a Submission

Please include your name, address, email, contact number and where applicable, details of the organisation or group you represent. Further information on this process and updates are available on www.galway.ie/cdpreview. There is an online form available for you to complete with your viewpoints. See link below:

www.galway.ie/cdpreviewsubmissions

This form will be sent directly to us and will be taken as your submission/observation.

If you would prefer to send your viewpoints via email, see link below:

forwardplanning@galwaycoco.ie

Please note that requests or proposals for the zoning of particular land for any purpose cannot be considered at this stage of the process.

The staff from the Forward Planning Policy Unit will be available to take your call if you have queries on the process and on the making a submission, call 091 509382, 091 509311, 091 509533 or 091 509121 to talk to us directly.

In addition staff will be available to meet Wednesday afternoons by appointment only for pre-arranged meetings in County Hall, which will last up to 15 minutes in duration. Call 091 509121 to schedule a meeting.

Submissions/observations can only be made between 18th June 2020 and the 10th September 2020.

The deadline for receipt of all submissions is 4PM on Thursday the 10th September 2020.

PLEASE NOTE THAT SUBMISSIONS RECEIVED AFTER THIS DATE CANNOT BE ACCEPTED.

Where do I send my Submission/Observation?

You may submit your submission/observation by **one** of the following methods:

In writing to: Administrative Officer, **CDP Review**, Forward Planning Policy Unit, Áras an Chontae, Prospect Hill, Galway.

Or

Email: forwardplanning@galwaycoco.ie 

Or

Online form: www.galway.ie/cdpreviewsubmissions 

Please send your submission/observation through one medium only, either electronically or hard copy.

When making a submission please note:

In accordance with Section 19 of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act, 2018 all valid submissions received by the Council shall be published on the Galway County Council website within 10 working days of its receipt by the Council. The planning process is an open and public process and therefore your submission (in part or in total) will be available to view online at www.galway.ie

Galway County Council is subject to the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act, 2014; the Data Protection Act, 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

Please be aware that in order to process submissions that may contain GDPR Special Categories of Data/Sensitive Personal Data as defined by Article 9 of the GDPR, explicit consent to the processing of the special categories of data must be provided by the person to whom the data refers.

It is necessary for the Council to collect some personal information in order to process your submission. Legally we can process this information in the exercise of official authority vested in the Council. The protection of your personal data is a key priority for the Council and your data will be processed in line with our Privacy Policy which is available at www.galway.ie or in hard copy from our offices at Galway County Council, Áras an Chontae, Prospect Hill, Galway.

Should you have any questions about our privacy policy or the information we hold about you please contact us by email at forwardplanning@galwaycoco.ie or write to us at Data Protection Officer, Galway County Council, Áras an Chontae, Prospect Hill, Galway.





What is a County Development Plan?

The County Development Plan sets out the overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the County over a six-year period, within the context of the national and regional framework of strategies and guidelines. Galway County Council is now commencing the process of preparing the

new Development Plan 2022 - 2028. Every 6 years a Planning Authority is legally obliged to make a new County Development Plan under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). This Plan will set out the strategic spatial vision and future direction for the County from 2022 - 2028.

Stages of a Development Plan

There are various stages involved in the preparation of a Development Plan. This current stage is considered to be Stage 1 'Pre-Draft' and includes for the preparation of an Issues Paper. During this and the subsequent stages, as outlined below, the Planning Authority will consult with the public to encourage and facilitate public participation in the preparation of the new Development Plan.

AFTER ALL,
IT'S YOUR
PLAN

STAGE
1

Pre-Draft

- Public Consultation (Issues Paper)
- Chief Executive's Report on Consultation
- Direction from Elected Members
- Preparation of Draft Development Plan

STAGE
2

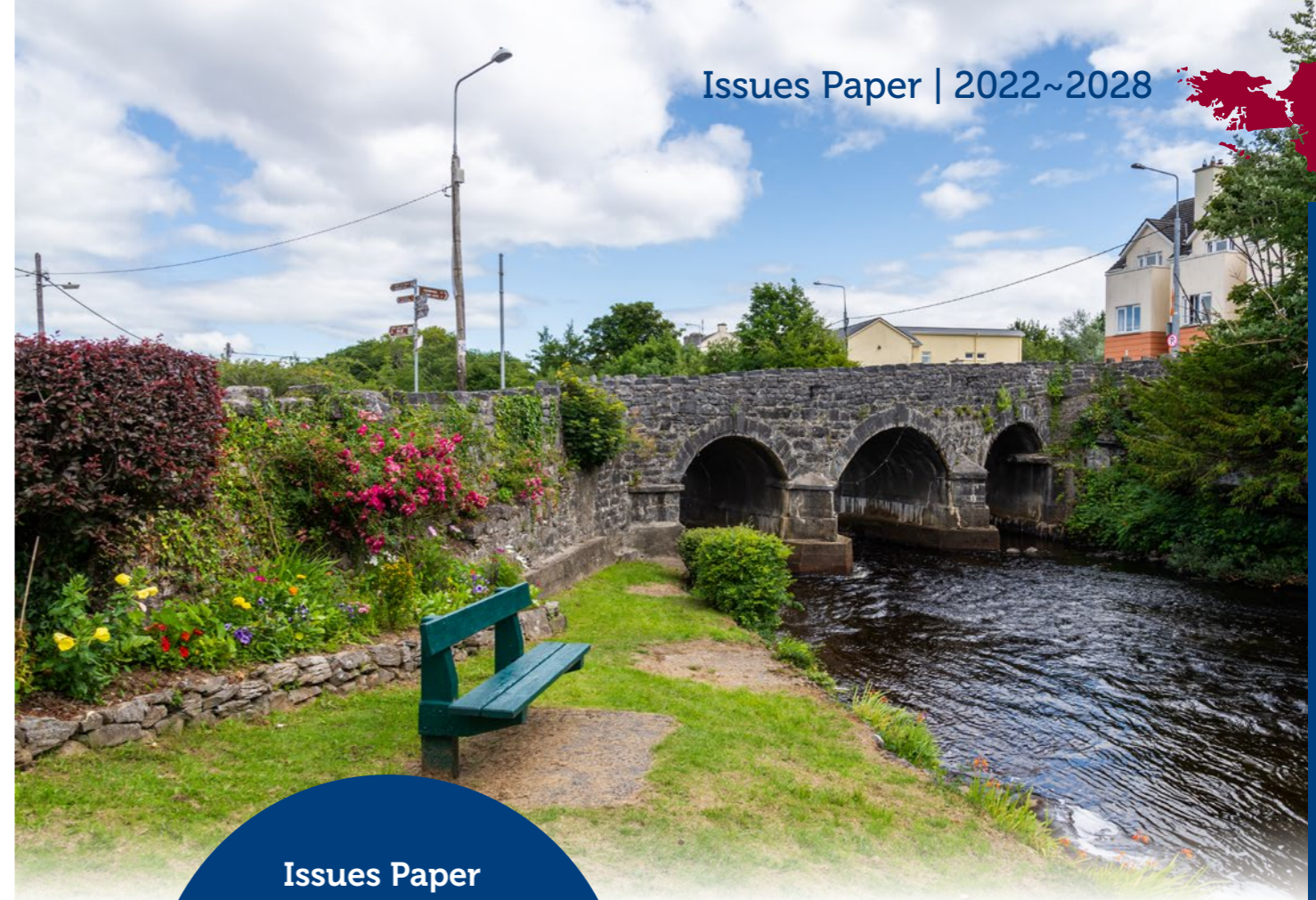
Draft Development Plan

- Public Consultation Draft Plan
- Chief Executive's Report on Submissions
- Consideration of Chief Executive's Report by Elected Members
- Material Amendments being Prepared

STAGE
3

Amendments to Draft

- Public Consultation (Amendments)
- Chief Executive's Report on Submissions
- Consideration of Chief Executives Report by Elected Members
- Adoption of New Development Plan



Issues Paper

The Issues Paper is intended to encourage dialogue on the key topics important to the County of Galway, as well as promote and support your involvement at this early stage.

AFTER ALL, IT'S YOUR PLAN

With your active help and guidance, the new Galway County Development Plan can create a more attractive, inclusive, competitive and sustainable County.

The new Plan should reflect the needs and ambitions of all communities in the County of Galway, so it is essential that you have your say right from the start. Galway County Council welcomes the views of individuals or groups on the content of the new County Development Plan. We really want to know what **you** think the main issues facing the County of Galway in the future.

PLAY
YOUR
PART

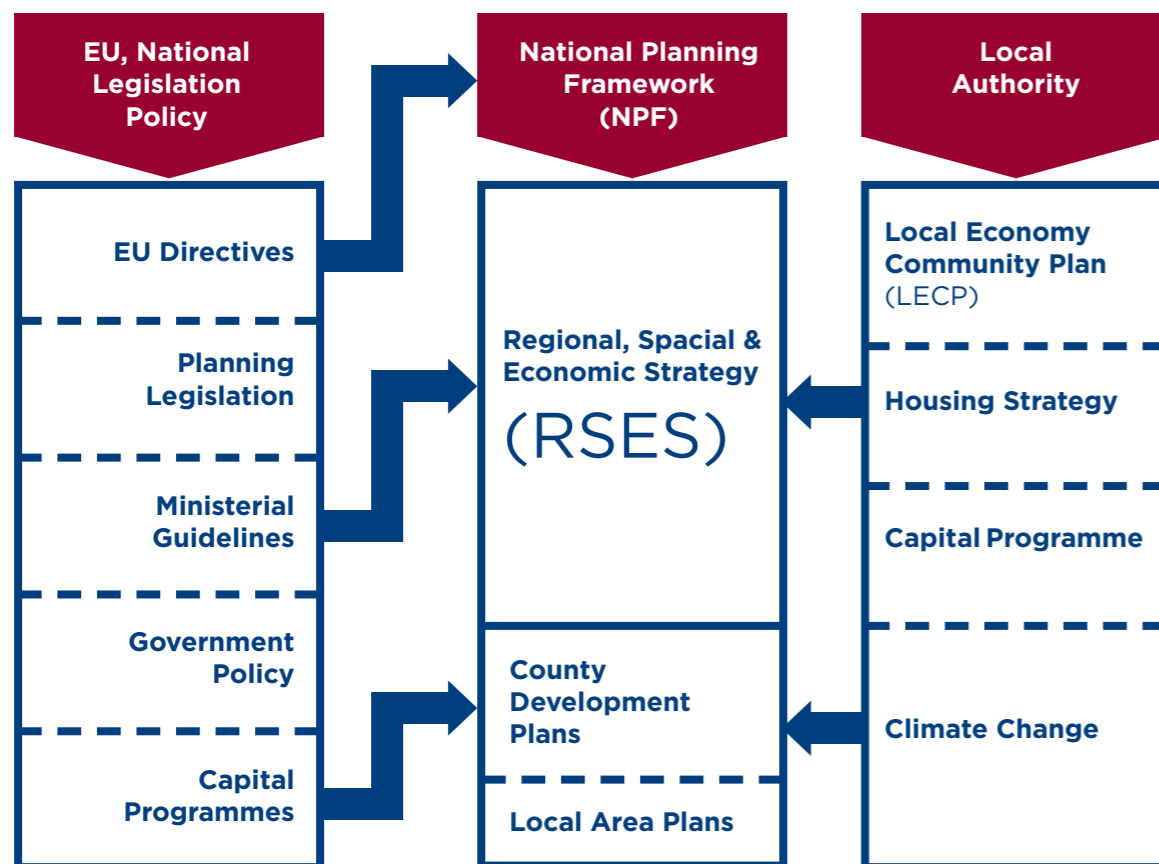


Context of the Plan

National and Regional Policy

The Government have published Project Ireland 2040 (National Planning Framework and National Development Plan 2018 - 2027). Galway now forms part of the North West Regional Assembly. The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the

North-West came into effect on 24th January 2020 and includes a Metropolitan boundary encompassing Oranmore, An Bearna and Baile Chláir. It is envisaged that these areas as key economic drivers within Metropolitan Galway will accommodate significant population increases and jobs within the lifetime of this new Galway County Development Plan 2022 - 2028.



The diagram above illustrates the position of the Development Plan in the Irish Planning system hierarchy. This Issues Paper is the first step in the preparation of the new Development Plan. The County Development Plan must be consistent with national and regional policies and guidelines and objectives.

Key Challenges We Face!

- Developing a unique identity and building on the strengths of the County.
- Growing the metropolitan area and other settlements within the County to achieve Compact Growth.
- Living in the future and how it will be different.
- Reducing our carbon footprint and achieving the national target of zero emissions by 2050.
- Living sustainably without compromising future generations.
- Accommodating the needs of an ageing population.
- Providing sufficient physical and social infrastructure to support economic development and to enhance our quality of life.
- Promoting town and village centre vibrancy and vitality with multi-functional uses including entertaining, living, gathering, working, shopping etc.
- Building on the provision of high-quality employment and economic opportunities at appropriate and sustainable locations.
- Delivering a balance between social and private housing.

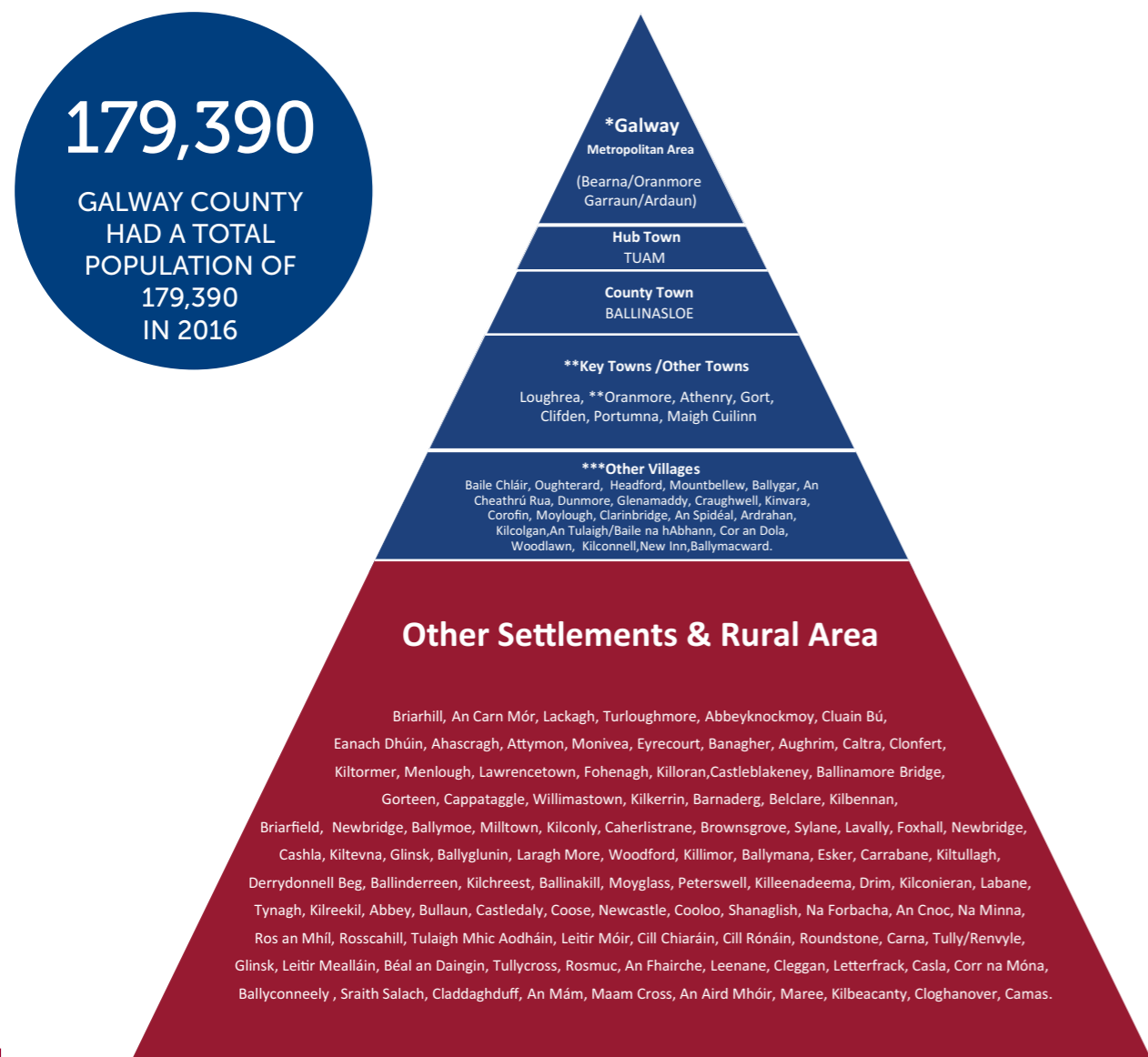




Core Strategy and Housing

The Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) introduced the requirement for an evidence based 'Core Strategy' to be included in County Development Plans. The Core Strategy of the Galway County Development Plan will aim to identify where future residential development should be prioritised and reserve an appropriate amount of land in those locations to meet housing and population targets. The Plan will support this Core Strategy through a range of services and

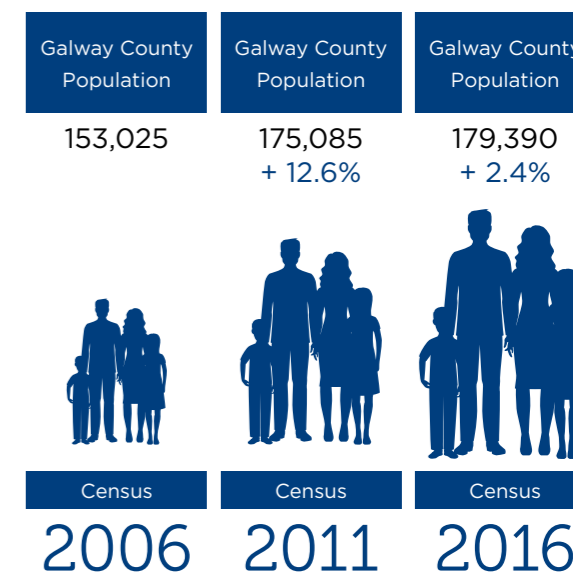
the provision of appropriate infrastructure in areas identified for growth. The Core Strategy will respond to, and be consistent with other policy documents, guidelines and plans such as Project Ireland 2040, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) and the Water Framework Directive for example. The 'Settlement Hierarchy' will form part of the Core Strategy of the Development Plan, which will provide a framework for the development of the settlements in the County.



Galway CDP 2015~2021

How and where we plan to meet our housing targets must be set out in the Plan's Core Strategy and Housing Strategy. We need to ensure sufficient housing is available in the right places, with good infrastructure, services and amenities, if we are to improve the quality of life for our citizens. We must also provide for the right type and mix of housing to reflect the different requirements of all of our citizens which can change at the different stages of their lives. Galway has a diverse housing stock located in a wide variety of areas, both urban and rural. The towns, villages and rural areas have their own character which influences where people choose to live. Providing an appropriate scale and type of housing development which respects and enhances the character of our urban and rural areas will be a key challenge.

Galway County had a total population of 179,390 in 2016, 2.4% higher than at the last Census (2011). Galway County's population was 12.6% higher than a decade earlier (2006), a greater increase than occurred nationally (12.3%). The National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the North-West sets target populations for Galway County. The new County Development Plan will be in accordance with the NPF and RSES.



Key Questions

- How best can the County Development Plan cater for the projected population growth in the County over the lifetime of the plan?
- Where should the increase in population within the County be directed?
- Development land is a limited valuable resource. How best do we maximise the development of appropriate land to create sustainable communities?
- How can Council policy protect areas within the County currently under severe pressure for one-off dwellings?
- Where in the County should population growth be directed to achieve balanced growth as per the RSES?
- Is there a deficit in the provision of a particular type of housing that should be addressed eg. apartment, duplex etc?
- What contributes to an attractive residential environment?
- How can the plan best address increased residential densities?
- How should social housing be delivered and do we have the right balance between social and private housing?

DEVELOPMENT LAND IS A LIMITED VALUABLE RESOURCE

WHERE IN THE COUNTY SHOULD POPULATION GROWTH BE DIRECTED?



Urban Living and Placemaking

The National Planning Framework (NPF) states that provision will be made for a Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) that will focus on delivery of population and economic development. Within County Galway; Oranmore, Baile Chláir and Bearnna now form part of the (MASP) area. The metropolitan area straddles the boundary with Galway City Council which will require close collaboration in delivering housing and jobs within the metropolitan area.

Development on brownfield and greenfield sites closely integrated with public transport and other key infrastructure will be a priority. The quality of the urban places in County Galway listed above will be imperative in delivering economic growth and regional development. The Plan must ensure that there is a range of quality places where people will choose to live, work and invest.

The Key towns of Ballinasloe and Tuam play an important role in particular to the East and North East of the county in the delivery of key commercial, retail and higher order important services such as Portiuncula University Hospital which serves a regional population. A strategic aim in this new County Development Plan will be that these Key Towns develop as attractive, liveable, vibrant, and well-designed locations that ensure a high quality of life, which will promote a sense of place and personal well-being. -Other towns such as Loughrea, Athenry and Gort are key service centres and drivers of growth for their immediate and surrounding areas, each having a high degree of self-sufficiency.

Small Growth Towns and the villages collectively support the sustainable economic and social development of the county. They act as local development and service centres facilitating development commensurate with the nature and extent of the existing settlement and availability of public services and facilities. Other villages and towns in County Galway will be addressed in the main body of the County Development Plan with appropriately focused policies and objectives

The current Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021 contains thirteen chapters and has through variation's integrated the Galway Transport Strategy and the Bearnna and Gaeltacht plans. It is now envisaged that certain Local Area Plans (Populations less than 5,000 persons) and settlement plans that had previous plans in situ will be incorporated into the new Plan. These areas are county wide and have the necessary infrastructure to accommodate the growth as per the Core Strategy.

Key Questions

- How can the plan support the delivery of a robust (MASP)?
- How can we make our urban places more attractive for people to live and work?
- What parts of the urban places (Metropolitan areas, Town and villages) are most suitable in your view for people to live and work?
- How can we make our urban places (Metropolitan areas, Towns and villages) more attractive and connected for pedestrians and cyclists?
- Should we facilitate a better mix of employment and housing in our urban places?



Rural Place Making and the Countryside

It is anticipated that the remaining population targets will be directed towards small settlements and the rural areas. There are numerous small settlements, which are predominately rural in nature and have limited capacity to service the local community through their existing facilities such as post office, schools, small retail outlets and public houses.

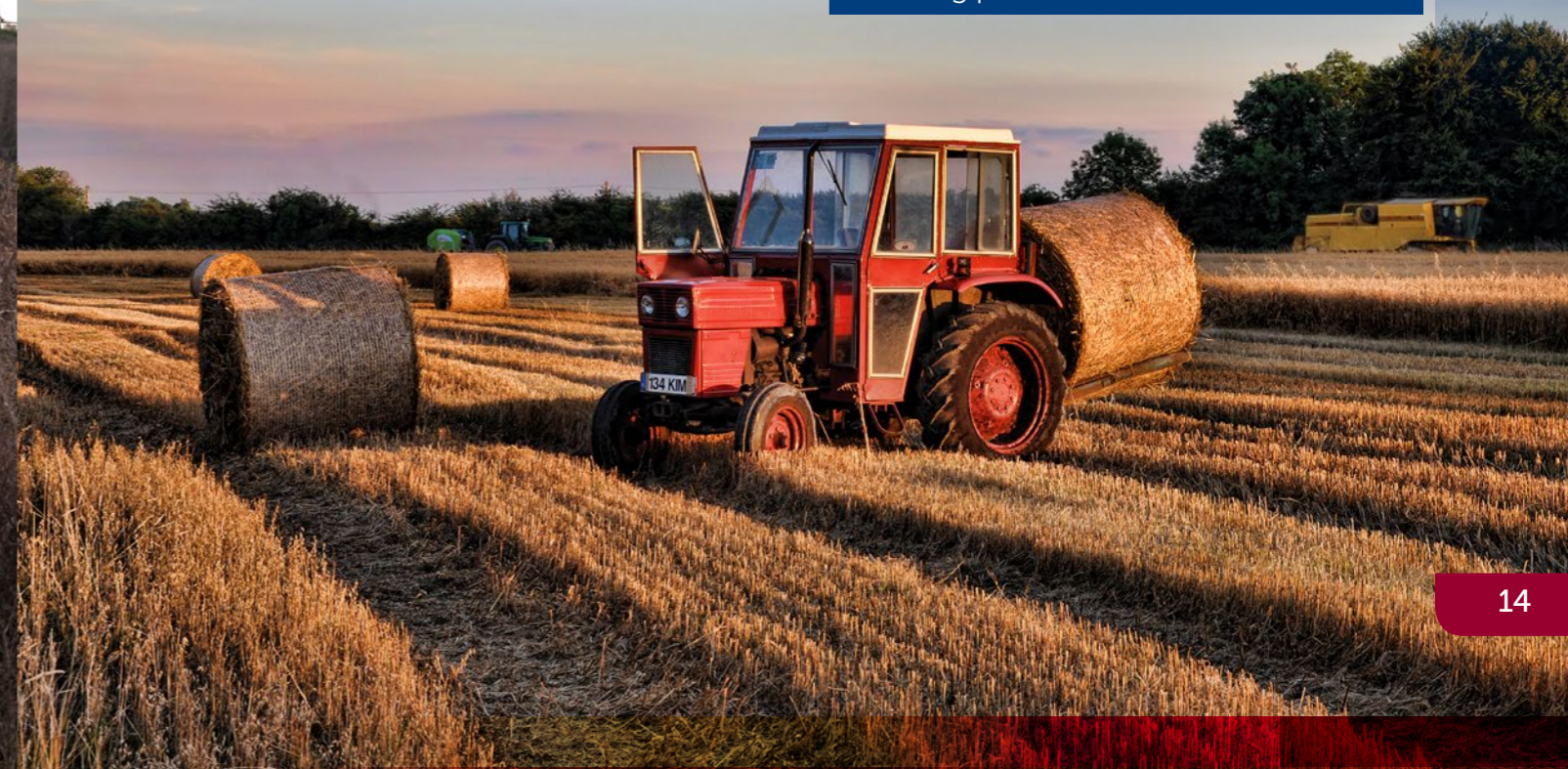
The County Development Plan will try to balance the need to accommodate rural generated residential development for a growing population, support communities and increased rural based commercial activities against the equally important need to protect its countryside from excessive and inappropriate development.

PROTECT THE COUNTRYSIDE FROM EXCESSIVE & INAPPROPRIATE DEVELOPMENT

Key Questions

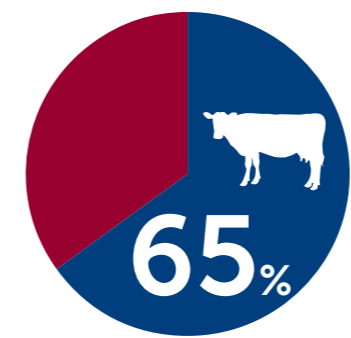
- How should the countryside be enhanced through better design?
- How can the County Development Plan promote improvement in the quality of the built environment in rural areas?
- How can the County Development Plan ensure that development is appropriate to its location?
- How can rural housing be designed to a high standard?
- How can the new County Development Plan support development within the smaller settlements that do not have zoning plans?

Rural Place Making and the Countryside





Economic, Enterprise, Tourism and Retail Development



65% of Galway farms are involved in beef production

Galway has a strong and diverse economic base which is characterised by high levels of investment in areas such as Medical Devices, IT, agriculture, tourism and culinary, retail, arts and craft.

The Medical Devices and ICT Industries are a significant contributor to employment and economic activity in Galway. According to the 2016 census, the Industry sector is significantly more important to employment in Galway County than nationally, 16.3% of all employment compared with 11.4%; the fourth highest share working in Industry of all counties.

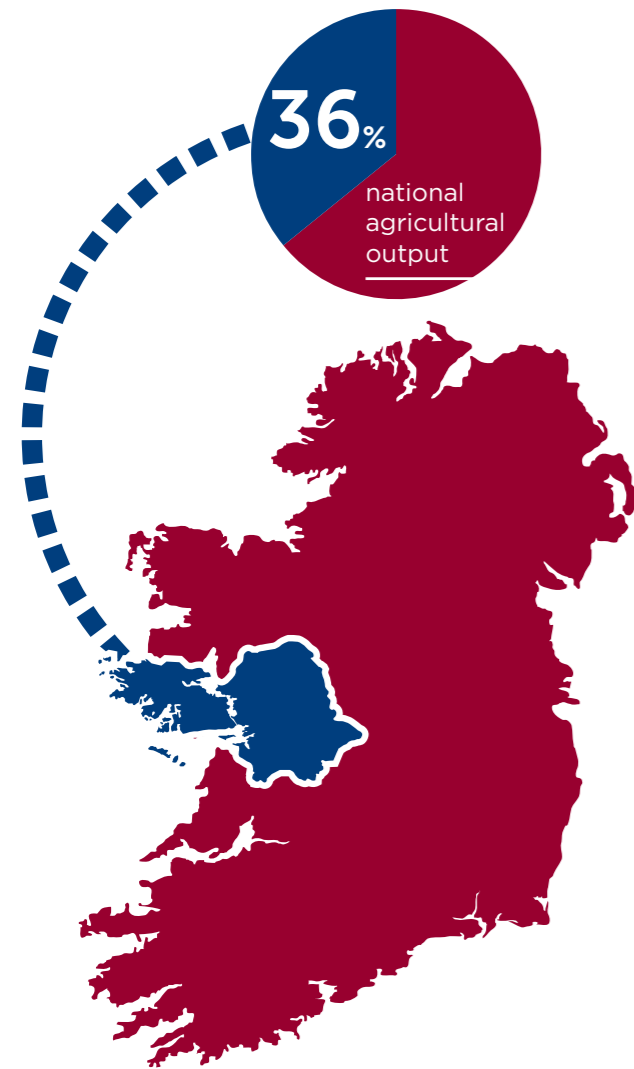
The agri-food sector has become a very important industry in Galway, which accounts for almost 36% of the national agricultural output. The agri-food sector includes primary production (agriculture or farming), forestry, fishing, food, drink and wood-processing. Galway has the highest number of farms in the West of Ireland with an average farm size of 25.8 hectares. 65% of these farms are involved in beef production, with limited dairy farming activity taking place.

The West of Ireland, and in particular County Galway, is one of the most unique parts of Ireland. Galway is the regional capital for the



North-West Region and has a very successful brand domestically. The Wild Atlantic Way has been a successful tourism initiative for the counties along the Atlantic seaboard. The Wild Atlantic Way stretches almost 2,500km from Donegal to Cork, and includes almost 700km of Galway's coastline. This tourism initiative has been very effective in marketing and promoting tourism, in particular Galway City, Conamara, including Oileáin Árann and Inishbofin, resulting in tourist numbers increasing annually.

The agri-food sector in Galway, accounts for almost 36% of the national agricultural output



THE RETAIL ENVIRONMENT IS CHANGING WITH SIGNIFICANT MIGRATION TO ONLINE SALES

A key tourism infrastructural requirement for the county would be the delivery of the Dublin to Clifden Cycleway. The Conamara Greenway - a section of the cycleway between Ballinasloe and Clifden, spans approximately 84 kilometres. This greenway will for the most part utilise the former Clifden to Galway rail line which closed in 1935. A 6km section of the greenway from Athry to Cloonbeg opened in 2018. It runs close to the route of Ballynahinch Castle and Ballinafad graveyard, north of Cloch na Rón. To the east of the county there is untapped potential for the development of the Lakelands brand, which comprises of Lough Derg and an interconnected lake system on the Shannon and the Hidden Heartlands tourism brands.



The retail environment is changing and significant migration to online sales is posing significant challenges to all High Streets. This change in the retail environment, in combination with the limited opportunities for modern 'living over the shop' type housing may be at the heart of increases in dereliction and reductions in footfall in many towns throughout Ireland. As such it is important to develop quality retail and commercial environments that will improve the vibrancy and enhance traditional on street experiences in all our towns.

Key Questions

- What are County Galway's strengths and weaknesses regarding future enterprise and employment growth?
- How can the County Plan support inward investment and job creation in the County and where should it be directed?
- How can the Plan best support new and evolving work patterns which reduce the demand to travel to work, including e business and home-based activity?
- What areas of the County have the potential to become sustainable key tourism attractions?
- What areas within Galway have the potential to form part of the development of a comprehensive tourist trail within the County?
- What policies should be introduced to further support town centre retailing and commercial activities that enhance the vitality and vibrancy of our town and village centres?
- How can the Plan policies help integrate enterprise land uses with other uses such as residential, transportation and tourism, etc?



Infrastructure and Transport



Key Questions

- How can the plan support agencies in the provision of Water and Wastewater?
- Are there significant factors leading to deterioration in the quality of groundwater or rivers and how can these be addressed?
- What towns and villages should be prioritised for water/wastewater improvements?
- How can the County Development Plan make sure that there is a better co-ordination between land use and transportation facilities in order to achieve more sustainable development?
- How can the plan best promote walking, cycling and the use of public transport?
- How can rural transport and accessibility be improved?
- How can the concept of “Smarter Travel” be incorporated into the plan to reduce dependence on the private car?
- Should parking standards for new developments reflect the need to reduce car dependency?
- How can the safety of vulnerable road users (cyclists/ pedestrians) be improved?

THE NEW N6 GALWAY CITY RING ROAD (N6 GCRR) IS CURRENTLY AT PLANNING STAGE

The provision and maintenance of high-quality service infrastructure is vital to attracting and retaining economic development and improving the quality of life in the County. Population growth will be identified in areas with public services and facilities. Close collaboration with Irish Water in relation to the investment and upkeep of these facilities will be a key aim contained within the new Development Plan.

The Regional Spatial Economic Strategy (RSES) lists a number of infrastructural projects in the county, which Galway County Council are fully supportive i.e the progression and development of the East Galway Drainage Scheme. Investment in new or additional capacity in water services will be informed by national, regional and local planning policy and addressed through Irish Water’s Capital Investment Plans.

County Galway has undergone significant growth over the last 30 years which has resulted in a major increase in travel demand

within and through the County. The provision of transportation infrastructure including road and rail together with public transport projects must be integrated with a sustainable settlement strategy.

The provision of road and rail infrastructure has improved greatly in recent years. The main transportation corridors from the South to the North and the West to the East of the country pass through Galway and includes the M6 and M17/M18. The new N6 Galway City Ring Road (N6 GCRR) is currently at planning stage, when constructed will enhance the accessibility to Galway city and surrounding areas.

The railway infrastructure with the Galway-Dublin and Galway-Limerick line provides improved links to the east and the south from Galway. Increased train frequency, especially on the Galway to Athenry trainline will require dualling of the tracks as identified as a growth enabler in the National Planning Framework.





Environment, Renewable Energies and Communications

The County Development Plan must ensure that a balance is achieved between land use and development and the protection of our environment. It is critical that the natural environment is protected and adverse impact on climate change is minimised. The County Development Plan will be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) to consider its potential effects on the natural environment and on EU protected sites (Natura 2000 sites) and their networks. A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) will also be carried out.

The Government's Climate Action Plan 2019 (CAP) recognises that the impact of greenhouse gas emissions has accelerated in recent years. Ireland is supporting the ambition that is emerging within the European Union to achieve a net zero target by 2050. County Galway must play its part in delivering

on the climate change actions as per the CAP. This can be achieved by examining how best to provide for sustainable living across the County. This may be achieved by supporting large populations with sustainable transport services which would reduce the level of carbon emissions through reduction of private car usage.

Comprehensive consideration of flood risk is now a key requirement in the preparation of development plans and determining planning applications. The 'Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines' emphasise the importance of identifying areas at risk of flooding and protecting these areas either by preventing further development or mitigating against the effects of possible flood events. Strategic flood risk assessments will be carried out as part of the preparation of the new County Development Plan.

The existing Wind Energy Strategy for County Galway will be replaced with a new Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategy (LARES) as part of this County Plan process. LARES will form an appendix of the County Plan providing details on the various renewable energy options available in County Galway and it will identify the most suitable locations for renewable energy across the County. Guidance and options for incorporating renewable energy systems into existing and new residential development will be included in the LARES.

The Council recognises the importance of the telecommunication sector, including its availability, price and quality and acknowledges its role in attracting inward investment. Antennae and support structures are necessary to facilitate a high-quality communications network. However, their location is an important planning consideration. The Council will continue to work closely with the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment to implement the National Broadband Plan in Galway. It recognises that high speed broadband is essential as an economic facilitator in a knowledge-based economy.

2050

GREENHOUSE GAS
EMISSIONS NET ZERO
TARGET BY 2050

Key Questions

- What are the main environmental issues that currently face Galway?
- What additional measures should be taken to protect the environment?
- How can the County Development Plan address matters such as adaptation to climate change?
- What methods should the Council encourage to maximise renewable energy provision, both for developments and individual homes?
- Where should wind turbines be encouraged / discouraged?
- What should the Council be doing to promote bio-energy production from waste streams, agri-food effluents, manures, municipal solid waste, sewage sludge and purpose grown energy crops?
- How can the plan support the provision of telecommunications & broadband providers?



Architectural and Archaeological Heritage

County Galway has a rich and diverse array of historic buildings. Many of these have been protected in legislation by virtue of their inclusion onto the Record of Protected Structures (RPS). At present there are in excess of 1,500 buildings on the RPS. Its review and maintenance forms part of this statutory development plan review process. The protection and preservation of these historic buildings is of paramount importance. However, credence must be given to the needs of those who own and live in Protected Structures. As such, alterations and improvements to Protected Structures should be supported where the historic

significance of the building in question is not compromised. Therefore, a balance must be struck between adequately preserving the character and appearance of the historic buildings and facilitating modern living, which includes retrofitting energy efficiency measures in old buildings, such as adding solar panels or updating windows.

Architectural Conservation Areas (ACA's) protect the character and appearance of the wider street scene and not just the building itself. Very often the setting and the surrounding built environment forms an important feature of a Protected Structure.

As with Protected Structures, ACA's are assessed and reviewed as part of the County Plan review process. The Plan must create policies and objectives that will preserve our historic towns and villages while ensuring that they are an attractive and competitive place in which we live, work and visit.

Archaeological Heritage includes physical remnants that remain in place and form part of historic human activity. Many archaeological features may not be readily recognisable or visible as they can be partly concealed from plain view either underground or due to foliage growth. Like Protected Structures and ACA's, archaeology forms part of our past and therefore it needs to be preserved and remembered in this Development Plan review.

Key Questions

- Is the existing level of protection for Galway's Protected Structures, ACAs and archaeology adequate? How can it be improved?
- How can the new County Development Plan promote awareness of the County's past which includes Protected Structures, ACA's and archaeology?
- How can the new County Plan facilitate modern living standards and conveniences in some of our older buildings that are Protected Structures located in Conservation Areas?
- Can you name any parts of County Galway that you would like to see becoming a designated ACA?
- Can you identify any older buildings that you are aware of that are worthy of protection?
- How can we secure the protection of our archaeological features including landscapes into the future?





Social, Community and Cultural Development

Central to the development of the county's towns and villages are the provision of adequate community facilities for all sectors across society. Community facilities include the provision of libraries, schools, childcare facilities, open space, playing grounds, leisure facilities and health centres. The development of these facilities in our towns and villages will encourage people to live in these locations and will also create a sense of social cohesion.

Where new school buildings are developed the multi-use of assembly halls and playing pitches will be encouraged, this has previously worked quite well as a valued resource to the local community.

The county development plan review will examine each of the settlements within the county and identify suitable areas for community facilities. The expansion and redevelopment of existing community facilities such as schools and sports facilities

will be encouraged in the first instance before progressing to development of greenfield sites. Co-location of education and childcare facilities is considered to be the preferred choice among parents.

County Galway has a long established rich and varied cultural tradition. The 2020 Capital of Culture programme sees evidence of this in many of the County's towns and villages.

Key Questions

- Are you satisfied with the provision of community and cultural facilities in your area?
- What kind of community facilities would you like to see provided for in the new County Development Plan?
- Do you think that schools and childcare facilities should be co-located?
- What type of facilities in your view would be required in County Galway to support existing communities?
- How can the multi use of existing community buildings and facilities in your area be facilitated and encouraged?
- What type of cultural and arts facilities are needed in County Galway and how can the new county development plan deliver these?

THE COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW WILL EXAMINE EACH OF THE SETTLEMENTS WITHIN THE COUNTY AND IDENTIFY SUITABLE AREAS FOR COMMUNITY FACILITIES





The Galway Gaeltacht

County Galway has the largest Gaeltacht population in Ireland representing 49.7% of the national Gaeltacht population, where 49,524 people speak the Irish language daily (based on Census 2016). The Galway Gaeltacht stretches from Baile Chláir, which is east of the city to Cloch na Rón in west Conamara, a distance of approximately 100km, and from Oileáin Árann northwards to the Mayo border. The language and culture of the Gaeltacht is a unique and precious inheritance, which it is a National aim to preserve and protect. This aim is now enshrined in the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended). The strongest Irish speaking community in the country is located in County Galway, mainly in

the area from Bearna to Carna and including Oileáin Árann.

Chapter 10 - Cultural, Social and Community Development of the existing Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021 contains narrative, policies and objectives relating to the Gaeltacht. It is envisaged that there will be a chapter relating specifically to the Gaeltacht in the new Galway County Development Plan 2022 - 2028. A number of settlements in the Galway Gaeltacht have settlement plans in situ and these will appear in the Appendix referred as 'Settlement Plans'. A very small part of the Country is designated as being in the Gaeltacht and it must be preserved and promoted linguistically.



Key Questions

- How can we manage our cultural resources to ensure that the Gaeltacht economies and communities prosper in a sustainable manner?
- How do you think that the Plan can support the Gaeltacht area?





Natural Heritage, Landscape and Green Infrastructure

County Galway as the second largest county in Ireland has some of the most unique landscape types in the country, which are of great variance from the coastal landscapes in the west, bog lands to the north to the fertile plains in the east.

The existing Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) for County Galway will be reviewed as part of the County Development Plan making process. The Landscape Strategy examines the various landscape character types across the County and how they were formed. The landscape is divided into regions, character types and units. Scenic routes and a sensitivity rating will also be defined. The protection and preservation of these landscapes needs to be balanced against the reality that these are living and working landscapes. Therefore,

a measured approach to changes in the landscape must be maintained.

The NPF now requires the integration of planning for Green Infrastructure (GI). The review of the County Development Plan will include an analysis of the (GI) that exists across the County and how it can be improved. This will result in a GI Strategy that will form part of the new County Development Plan. For reference GI includes the parks, walkways and trails, any green corridors and spaces that can be used to the benefit of the local community. GI can also provide a solution to flooding with open green spaces doubling up as a place that can retain flood water. It also protects our biodiversity. It is important to note that not all GI is publicly available. Delivery of large expanses of publicly available

GI such as greenways is usually carried out by collaboration and agreement between landowners. The benefits of GI can be far reaching. The new Plan must seek to support GI where possible as it offers a valued type of recreation and amenity. Buildings within the towns and villages along with public urban parks and squares, provide communities with a valued focal point for various events which provides alternative recreation and amenity options.

Biodiversity includes the variety of plant and animal life in County Galway which are to be considered important and desirable. The Heritage and Biodiversity Action Plan for County Galway 2017-2022 places heritage and biodiversity at the heart of public life. This would be achieved through the promotion of awareness of biodiversity and heritage within

the community through active participation, knowledge and understanding of our natural heritage.

The review of the County Development Plan will also seek to promote and protect our biodiversity and natural heritage as required by the NPF.

Galway has the highest number of Natura 2000 sites which include Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA). It is important to recognise the value of these protected habitats that form the natura network. Therefore, the review of the County Development Plan must give careful consideration to County Galway's rich biodiversity and wide ranging habitats and species that exist.

THE HERITAGE AND BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN FOR COUNTY GALWAY 2017- 2022 PLACES HERITAGE AND BIODIVERSITY AT THE HEART OF PUBLIC LIFE

Key Questions

- How can the new County Plan protect and enhance Galway's existing natural heritage and biodiversity?
- How can the new County Development Plan tailor its policies and objectives in a manner that will continue to protect the natural heritage including landscape while supporting sustainable development?
- Are there any pieces of GI that you are aware of in County Galway that could be developed further to benefit the community?
- How can the existing GI in County Galway be improved?



Agriculture, Fishing Marine and Forestry



Agriculture makes an important contribution to the County's rural economy. As such this industry is of great value to our economy and therefore merits protection and support where possible. However, the agricultural industry must adapt to the challenges that are posed in a competitive international market. The exit of the UK from the EU is one of the biggest challenges facing the agriculture industry. The preservation of the environment and designated sites across the County is also something that those directly involved in agriculture are required to consider. This requires careful planning and innovative ways of working around certain parameters.

The continued development of the agri-food sector is supported and encouraged as it is becoming increasingly important to the rural economy.

Combined the development of agriculture, fishing and forestry industries will not only sustain rural employment but also contribute to driving the national economy, a sentiment that it's expressed in the NPF.

NPO 39 of the NPF seeks to support the sustainable growth and development of the maritime economy and continue to invest in the seafood sector and our Fishery Harbour Centres, particularly in remote rural coastal communities and islands. This is of particular relevance to County Galway given our extensive coastline. This is a great asset to the rural economy which provides communities across the county the opportunity to become involved in maritime related industries.

The forestry industry makes an increasing contribution to the rural economy of County Galway. Nationally the direct and indirect

contribution to the economy has been calculated at €2.3 billion annually with some 12,000 jobs dependent on the sector in 2012. In the case of County Galway that has a quantum of land that would not be suitable to agricultural production, for example, this has been found to be suitable for afforestation. There are environmental benefits to forestry development as it contributes to our carbon sequestration potential which is welcomed and supported by national government as we are required to reduce our level of greenhouse gas emissions. However, increased planting can only be achieved as existing agricultural land that is not economically viable becomes available for forestry use.

Key Questions

- How can the Council support sustainable means of agriculture fishing and forestry related activities?
- How can the County Development Plan support and encourage the development of the agri-food and related sectors?
- How can the new County Development Plan encourage the use of land for afforestation where appropriate?
- Can you identify areas within County Galway that you would consider appropriate land for afforestation?
- How can the new County Development Plan manage County Galway's maritime resources ensuring a balance is maintained between social, economic and environmental issues?

Its Your Plan, Have Your Say...

Submissions/Observations can only be made between
18th June 2020 - 10th September 2020. The deadline for receipt of all
submissions is 4PM on Thursday 10th September 2020.

Where do I send my Submission/Observation?

In writing to Administrative Officer, **CDP Review**, Forward Planning Policy Unit,
Áras an Chontae, Prospect Hill, Galway

or

Email: **forwardplanning@galwaycoco.ie**

or

Online form: **www.galway.ie/cdpreviewsubmissions**



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council