

## Review of Draft RSES for the Northern and Western Region February 2019





## Introduction by President of Galway Chamber



*1 Dave Hickey, President, Galway Chamber*

Galway Chamber welcomes the publication by the Northern and Western Regional Authority of the draft Regional Economic and Spatial Strategy (RSES) as well as the opportunity to comment on and make suggestions for inclusion in the final version of the RSES.

As detailed in the National Planning Framework (NPF) and Project Ireland 2040 (PI2040), it is the responsibility of the Regional Assemblies to create regional level strategies that identify the metropolitan boundaries of their cities, and key Regional Centres.

Galway is one of only five cities in Ireland, and as such it received special mention in the NPF as one of the country's key locations for the sustainable economic and spatial growth that is envisaged for the coming decades. The NPF emphasises the importance of the cities as engines of economic growth for their

regions and recognises that, with the global trend towards urbanisation, they will become more vital in that regard in the future.

Accordingly, the NPF makes provisions for the creation of 'Metropolitan Area Strategic Plans' (MASPs) by the relevant Regional Assemblies, which they subsequently undertook and released as part of the Draft RSEs. The MASPs form a 12-year strategic plan for each City Region, identifying key locations of employment and future growth, along with vital infrastructure requirements.

Each MASP defines a metropolitan catchment, or boundary, for each city and these catchments form the units of analysis and locations for future growth patterns and infrastructural developments. It is, therefore, imperative that these boundaries are defined in such a way that ensures the entire functional urban area of a city is accounted for and included.

In the opinion of Galway Chamber and its members the Metropolitan Area defined for Galway is inappropriate as it does not include large settlements such as Moycullen and Athenry which have proven and deep-rooted economic as well as social links to Galway City.

Galway Chamber commissioned Future Analytics Consulting to prepare a review of the Galway Metropolitan Area and this is attached as a separate report. The Chamber fully supports the report's conclusion that the Metropolitan Area should be extended as detailed therein to reflect the city's true economic footprint.

It's recognised that the geography of the Northern and Western Region with its only city, Galway, being at the southern end makes balanced regional development more challenging and that is why PI2040 identified Letterkenny, Sligo and Athlone as centres for regional growth.

Nevertheless, Galway Chamber believes that the draft RSES significantly undervalues the role that the Galway Metropolitan Area must play in the Region's economic development. It appears that there was little meaningful consultation with Galway's Local Authorities, its HEI's or the business community in preparing the draft.

The Chamber's response to the draft RSES therefore focuses on Galway City's role within the RSES, as that is what we know best. It is not intended to minimise the role of any other sector or part of the region, however, we strongly believe that the creation of a cross-border 'City Region' is outside the terms of the NPF.

Galway Chamber calls for, as a priority, meaningful consultation by the NWRA with key stakeholders in Galway City and County based on their submissions to the draft RSES. Without such meaningful discussions any further versions of the RSES and particularly the MASP will lack a mandate from those who will be ultimately responsible for its implementation.

We look forward to working closely with the NWRA and other key stakeholders in the Galway area as well as across the region so that we can jointly deliver an ambitious RSES and MASP of which we can all be proud, and which will lay the foundations for the economic prosperity of all the region for future generations.

***Dave Hickey***  
***President, Galway Chamber***  
***8<sup>th</sup> February 2019***

## Chapter 1.0 Setting the context

- 1.1 This sets out the 10 National Strategic Outcomes (NSO's) outlined in Project Ireland 2040 (PI2040) but does not identify any over-arching Regional Objectives which feed directly into the NSO's.

The full report identifies almost 200 Regional Policy Objectives throughout its 10 chapters but does link these back to the NSO's. A much clearer hierarchical structure is needed.

- 1.2 Page 15 identifies that Galway should be the regional driver for growth in the region as outlined in the NPF and PI2040. However, throughout the draft the focus of the RSES appears to be the development of a newly-created city-region focused on Letterkenny & Derry/Londonderry. This is not consistent with Project Ireland 2040 (PI2040)/NPF.

We acknowledge the geography of the region with Galway being at the southern end makes balanced regional development more challenging and that is why PI2040 identified Letterkenny, Sligo and Athlone as centres for regional growth.

PI2040 did not provide for the creation of a new City/Region based on Letterkenny, Derry/Londonderry and Strabane, or call for a MASP for this region. It does acknowledge the North West alliance of Letterkenny & Derry/Londonderry as an important element in planning in the area. However, as most of this area will be outside the EU in the next few years, if not sooner, it is difficult to see how this can be progressed meaningfully in the timeframe of the RSES.

- 1.3 Page 18 identifies five objectives for economic development in the region. These are at best very top level and at worst vague and meaningless. For example, objective number 3 refers to leveraging 'our strengths in disruptive technologies' without identifying what these are.

The five objectives, or hopefully more clearly articulated ones, need to be linked to actionable objectives throughout the later chapters, particularly in Chapter 4.0

The RSES does not provide a basis for any sound economic strategy either in the MASP/Key Town strategies or under the sections for economic development.

- 1.4 Page 18 also identifies that 115,000 new jobs will be created in the region over the period, but these are not linked to any of the objectives outlined in the preceding section or later in the report.

Of these jobs, 30,000 will be created by government. There is nothing to indicate in what areas these will be, how they will be funded, etc.

- 1.5 The use of images and graphics throughout the report seem to be unrelated to the relevant topics in many cases. Or if they are, their relevance is not made clear. The diagram on Page 19 is an example.

- 1.6 There are many recognised bodies and organisations operating in the region focussing on needs specific to the region such as Údarás na Gaeltachta, The Atlantic Economic Corridor, Chambers of Commerce and The Western Development Commission. These organisations are not unique to the NWR but, locally, they often deal with issues which are. They can be key enablers in the implementation of the RSES and this structure should be outlined and emphasised here.

## Chapter 2.0 Strategic Analysis & Vision

- 2.1 This doesn't set out a vision for the RSES, the economic or spatial development of the region. It should.
- 2.2 The Environmental Assessment starting on page 36 is a good summary but does not draw out the implications for spatial strategy in any detail either here or anywhere else in the draft RSES.
- 2.3 Page 39 outlines the first four Regional Policy Objectives (RPO's). Having environmental RPO's is welcome but these are vague (e.g. 'the Assembly support (sic) the process whereby all applications...') and would appear to call for further bureaucracy in the planning process rather than streamlining it.
- 2.4 Pages 44 to 46 are headed 'Galway in Focus' but deal primarily with regional issues not specific to the Metropolitan Area.
- 2.5 Page 47 is headed 'Growth Framework'. We would have thought this would deal with topics such as how the objectives and implementation of the RSES would be monitored and reported on.

With the NWRA stating its ultimate responsibility for 'delivering the RSES and providing the framework for decision making and resource allocation for the NPF & NDP future activities' it is necessary for NWRA to publish the proposed Management structure that will be charged with this task. Topics to be addressed include:

- Who are the NWRA accountable to?
  - What monitoring process will be put in place to ensure that the final version of the RSES is adhered to?
  - There should be advance agreement on the 'considered Indicators' that the NWRA will report against in their Annual Report. The Indicators referenced in the RSES are by no means all-encompassing, but they do need to add a measure on 'inclusivity' to their list.
  - There is mention of 'alignment and coordination' with outside agencies (Govt. Private Sector, Institutions, Non-Govt. organisations & The Community) but no detail on how this will be achieved.
  - This should contain a milestone delivery plan so that the implementation of the RSES is fully transparent to the public and the funding & consulting agencies.
  - Who will coordinate the delivery of the 3 RSES's across the Regional Assemblies? As each Regional Assembly will likely encounter many of the same challenges during planning and delivery of the RSES what is the process for determining Best Practice that all will follow?
  - For the 'Projects' that the NWRA see as cross-border how will the already (and new) allocated funding work in the event that there is not a corresponding fund in Northern Ireland. In light of Brexit how will this be viewed or managed by Irish Govt. and the EU?
- 2.6 Page 47 also mentions that the NWR is now classified as a 'transition region' for the purposes of some European Funding. This is an important consideration, but its positive implications are not drawn out here or elsewhere in the draft.
  - 2.7 The Growth Ambitions outlined on pages 48 and 49 are reasonable but not elaborated on elsewhere or linked specifically to RPO's.

## Chapter 3.0 People and Places

- 3.1 The NWR is the most geographically challenged in terms of achieving the key goals of PI2040 especially that of concentrated urban growth. That's because Galway, the only city in the region, is at its southern edge rather than being more centrally located as in the other two regions.

Galway has been Ireland's fastest-growing city over the past few decades and the economic and social impacts of that have had a largely beneficial effect to County Galway as well as parts of Mayo, Roscommon and Clare. However, its impact does not reach all parts of the region and Galway Chamber welcomes the creation of regional growth centres based on the towns of Letterkenny, Sligo and Athlone.

PI2040 did not provide for the creation of a new City/Region based on Letterkenny, Derry/Londonderry and Strabane, or call for a MASP for this region. It does acknowledge the North West alliance of Letterkenny & Derry/Londonderry as an important element in planning in the area. However, as most of this area will be outside the EU in the next few years, if not sooner, it is difficult to see how this can be progressed meaningfully in the timeframe of the RSES.

- 3.2 A more detailed analysis of the demographics of each of the counties, Galway Metropolitan Area and the three regional centres of growth is needed on pages 52 and 53 – including population trends, workforce trends as well as an analysis of the reasons behind these trends. This will more clearly set the scene for the detailed plans to follow.
- 3.3 Similarly, analysis is required on where the anticipated population growth across the region will come from. How much will be due to migration or re-migration from within the State? How much will be linked to immigration or natural population growth.

Just as importantly an understanding of how much of the population is at risk of emigration should another prolonged recession hit the economy.

- 3.4 Use the settlement hierarchy established in the NPF to classify the city, towns, villages and rural areas according to their attributes, policy level etc. e.g.

Category	Attributes	Place	Policy Level
Cities – Metropolitan area	Metropolitan areas – accessible with national and international connectivity, strong business core, attractive to FDI, innovation, healthcare, education, retail and cultural roles	Galway	NPF RSES MASP Development Plan
Key Towns	Large or strategically-located towns which have an accessibility and influence in a regional or sub-regional context	Athlone Letterkenny Sligo Ballina Ballinasloe Castlebar Cavan Carrick-on-Shannon Monaghan Roscommon Tuam	RSES Development Plan
Towns and villages	Towns and villages of over 1,500 providing a housing, employment or service function. Includes commuter towns and more remote locations	e.g. Athenry, Westport To be identified in Development Plan	Development Plan
Rural	Rural villages of less than 1,500 and the wider rural area	To be identified in Development Plan	Development Plan
Networks	Groupings of towns and villages, including g cross-boundary, which share geographic, social or economic resources which if combined provide an opportunity to drive the regional economy	To be identified in Development Plan	Development Plan



- 3.5 Before outlining the Regional Policy Objectives (RPO's) on page 55 the RSES needs to set out the principles underlying the NWRA's planning framework. An example, taken from the SRA RSES is:

- Scale of population, and existing performance;
- The extent to which a settlement is located inside or outside the defined City-Region catchment;
- Scale of employment provision, number of jobs, jobs: resident workers ratio and net commuting flows;
- Extent of local services and amenities provision i.e. administration, education – particularly higher education institutes, health, leisure and retail;
- Extent to which trips may be made by sustainable modes of travel, i.e. walking, cycling or public transport;
- Rate and pace of past development and the extent to which there are outstanding requirements for infrastructure and amenities;
- Accessibility and influence in a regional or sub-regional context;
- Sub-regional interdependencies, for example, where a settlement may be in relation to several nearby settlements and scope for collaboration including settlements closely adjoining Local Authority boundaries for cross boundary collaboration;
- Character of local geography and accessibility as a service centre for remote and long-distance rural hinterlands;
- Track record of performance and delivery, as well as ambition and initiative and scope to leverage investment;
- Environmental and Infrastructural constraints;
- The appropriate density and scale of development relevant to the settlement scale and location including the differing rates and nature of development experienced;
- The need to provide attractive alternative options to rural housing within smaller towns and villages.

- 3.6 RPO's need to be aligned with these principles and with the 10 National Strategic Outcomes. The RPO's need to be more specific than those currently in the RSES and address particular infrastructural and development requirements including those already identified in PI2040.

- 3.7 The RPO's outlined on pages 55 and 64 are very generic, repeating what was in PI2040 rather than making them specific to the NWR, Galway Metropolitan Area, Key Towns, etc.

### 3.8 Galway Metropolitan Area

The Galway Metropolitan Area should be expanded to include Moycullen village to the north and Clarenbidge to the south as both villages are inextricably linked to the city in terms of commuting for education, work, retail and social activities.

Galway Chamber has commissioned a separate report on the expansion of the MA which is being provided under separate cover.

The first, and most obvious omission in the Draft RSES is the failure of the Assembly to adequately explain the rationale behind the selection of the current MASP boundary. Although the Southern Assembly Draft RSES offers very little in this regard, it at least provides a statement which specifies the DHPLG as the responsible body for the creation of the Limerick and Waterford boundaries. Similarly, it is understood that both Cork and Dublin have metro zones created during previous studies involving the NTA and DHPLG. The failure to provide an explanation as to the creation of the Galway MASP boundary means the legitimacy of the boundary itself is open to question.

Furthermore, a comparative study of all five MASP boundaries offers an indication as to their creation. Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Waterford all possess boundaries that correspond to Electoral Division boundaries, however, Galway’s MASP does not, with additional areas that go beyond the ED boundaries included. It appears that SAs were utilised to manipulate the boundary in alternative ways to the ED method. In itself, this is not a significant issue, but it does beg the question as to why the same methodology employed to create the other MASP boundaries was not utilised for Galway.

### 3.9 Galway Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP)

The MASP as contained in the draft RSES is not fit for purpose. It lacks detail, coherence, data and meaningful objectives.

A proposed structure and content for the Galway MASP is contained at Appendix 1. Further detail is required to complete this.

## Chapter 4.0 Growth Ambition 1

### Economy & Employment – Vibrant Region

- 4.1 Page 160 – ‘...the focus should be on maintaining favourable conditions for existing vibrant sectors as a priority action and, for those sectors of the economy that are considered to have significant untapped potential, the focus should be to unlock this latent potential.’

This is an admirable goal and will help build on our existing strengths however, we also need to have a process – possibly working with the HEI’s, IDA, AEC, etc. to identify emerging industries which could be suitable for the region. For example, what low carbon, high value activities would offer employment and add value to the NWR’s economy? Establishing such a body now should be an RPO.

- 4.2 Page 162 – The graphics here look interesting, but they are too small to read and are not referred to in the text.

- 4.3 Page 163 identifies six sub-regions with the NWR:

- a. Galway Catchment – including south Mayo, Roscommon and north Clare
- b. Sligo Catchment
- c. Letterkenny & Derry
- d. Mayo Catchment
- e. Monaghan/Cavan Catchment
- f. Athlone Catchment

The section goes on to recognise that global trends show that city and urban regions are the focal point for growth, particularly for FDI. ‘High value-added services are attracted primarily to urban areas and cities competing with other cities internationally.’

However, the following pages appear to ignore this statement and seek high-value FDI across the sub-regions, as if the NWRA can somehow change this trend. Balanced regional development is important and this is particularly challenging in a region like the NWR. But reality can’t be ignored. For the NPF’s growth targets to be met the focus on job creation needs to be in urban areas, including Letterkenny, Sligo and Athlone, but with Galway leading the way because of its strengths in current growth sectors, its clusters and the global trend towards cities of scale.

- 4.4 Section 4.5.1 focuses on tourism and this is the one sector which can have a positive impact across the entire region. It’s agreed that this should be an area of focus and, with the collaboration of Fáilte Ireland, Údarás and the local authorities, this will create economic value across the region. However, no matter how hard we try to make it otherwise, this is a seasonal business and the jobs created in this sector will not help increase the GVA of the region to the national average.

Galway’s role as a destination city in itself and also as a starting point for Wild Atlantic Way tours should be included here. Similarly, other destination locations such as Sligo, Westport, etc should be given ample scope.

It calls out that just 2 of the top 20 visitor attractions are within the region yet makes no real suggestions, apart from Ballycroy bog, as to what we should be promoting (Galway Medieval City centre, Connemara National park etc.).

- 4.5 Section 4.5.2 deals with Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Future and rightly identifies this is a potential growth area for the region. This is also the key area of focus for the AEC.

The RPO's in this section lack clear goals and timelines e.g. How many jobs can be created? How much capacity can be added to the National Grid?

It should also deal with how existing sites which have planning can be brought on stream as quickly as possible.

One of the RPO's should include extending the delivery of Natural Gas from the Corrib Field to Galway city for commercial and possibly domestic use.

Offshore wind and wave energy should be included here as well as under the Blue Economy.

- 4.6 Section 4.5.3 deals with Agri-Food. It makes no mention of the Bia-Innovate campus being developed at Athenry. This should be a core element of any policy for the Region.

- 4.7 In section 4.5.4 RPO #62 is 'To support the sustainable expansion and upgrade of Galway Harbour & Galway Port (under IROPI) as part of the overall vision to grow Galway as a City Region subject to environment, visual, economic viability and transportation requirements.'

This should be expanded to include firstly upgrading Galway to a Tier 1 Port under TEN-T.

- 4.8 Given the scale of employment offered by the ICT sector, particularly in Galway, Section 4.5.5 is underwhelming, with the exception of the case study on Pramerica.

Analysis is required on what attracts these companies and start-ups; what needs to be done to encourage them to stay and expand; and much more detail is required on how to prepare the region for the next generation of ICT businesses e.g. AI, IOT, Data Analytics.

In particular, focus should be given here on what the HEI's need to do to ensure they're producing sufficient STEM graduates with the appropriate skills for these newer technologies as well as re-skilling their alumni.

The benefits a Technological University could bring to this should be illustrated and emphasised.

- 4.9 Section 4.5.6 deals with the Med-Tech sector. Needs to explore how this can be expanded and in particular how newer technologies can be attracted. As Med-Tech begins to overlap with ICT and with Pharma, how will the NWR be poised to take advantage of this?

The skills needs of employers will be better met through targeted education and training programmes co-developed by enterprises with the region's HEIs and the planned Technological University.

- 4.10 Entrepreneurship and start-ups aren't addressed in this chapter, and they should be. The NWR can become a location where entrepreneurs are welcomed and thrive – through funding, suitable premises, rates relief, etc.

The success of PorterShed, TechInnovate, BioInnovate, etc. in Galway demonstrate that with the right funding and supports high-value start-ups can thrive in the region. The number of recent med-tech start ups acquired by FDI companies in the Galway area alone shows how nurturing different sectors can work.

The RSES should include RPO's covering the creation of a network of innovation labs and enterprise start-up clusters across the region, some of them dedicated to specific sectors (e.g. Med-Tech, Ag-Tech, Food, Marine, etc.)

## Chapter 5.0      Growth Ambition                          Environment – Natural Region

- 5.1      The ambition to have sustainability at the heart of all development initiatives is laudable and should be woven into all objectives in the RSES and MASP.

## Chapter 6.0 Growth Ambition

### Connectivity – Connected Region

- 6.1 The opening statement “This Growth Ambition focuses on Connectivity and demonstrates how we plan to manage our transport and digital infrastructure over the next 20 years, etc. etc.”

the follow-on content to this statement lacks any detail or plan as to how this gets delivered

- 6.2 The whole of section 6 is very general and full of high level commentaries and really lacking in calling out for key elements to be delivered and where projects are referenced there is no specific timeline for their delivery only “within the lifetime of the RSES” – examples include;

- 6.3.1 Page 224 – this cites GTS as the model for others to follow, yet it does not call out for it to be funded or give any inclination of a timeframe for its delivery

- 6.3.2 Page 225 – “Transport investment priorities” – this is just a list of headings with no supporting detail

- 6.3.3 Page 226 – Need a bold statement here calling out for Ten T designation – Calling it “desirable” is very weak

- 6.3.4 Section 6.5 Road Networks – this is just a restatement of what is contained in NPF and NDP – we need to see more detail here in terms of a plan and timeframe to deliver on all projects

- 6.3.5 Page 236 – “Enabling LTP’s – there is no plan just some policy objectives – at minimum it needs to state who/when these LTP’s will be delivered

- 6.3.6 Section 6.10 – Digital Infrastructure – Lots of the content is background information and needs to Strongly Articulate the absolute essential need for delivery of the NBP

- 6.4 The availability of high-speed reliable broadband across the region is vital for the economic development of the NWR. The current availability of broadband in many areas – including in Galway city is unacceptable.

Not only does the Broadband plan of this RSES need to address lack of connectivity in rural areas it should include steps to upgrade the speed and reliability of broadband in urban areas where in many cases it is no more than 2mb.

- 6.5 The Northern and Western Region includes most of the inhabited islands of the State. The RSES should address connectivity to all of the islands including continued or expanded air access and high speed broadband for these isolated communities.

## Chapter 7.0 Growth Ambition

### Quality of Life – Inclusive Region

- 7.1 ‘Quality of Life is directly influenced by access to services (education & Healthcare), shops, parks, leisure facilities, social interactions and the prospect of securing employment’

Again, in this chapter there are a lot of laudable statements, but no detail on how this improved ‘Quality of Life’ can be delivered other than the usual tangible assets of transport & housing.

- 7.2 The RSES points out that ‘there is clear evidence that employment creation and economic growth in a community do not in themselves necessarily directly reduce unemployment or increase prosperity and wealth’. While the RSES cannot legislate for Social Inclusion, ‘inclusivity’ should be one of the Indicators used in measuring the success of the RSES implementation.

- 7.3 The Connacht Ulster Alliance is working towards the implementation of a Multi Camus Technological University:

The RSES, while it acknowledges this, does not identify any opportunities to deliver on this plan in the Galway MASP. It does however call out the opportunities to convert existing IT campuses in other regions (Athlone, Sligo, Letterkenny) to TU campuses. The RSES needs to be more tangibly supportive of the TU concept that will deliver a broad range of high quality and easily accessible education, training and research/Innovation.

The RSES recognises that in order to deliver on the NPF for the region ‘growing our 3<sup>rd</sup> level Infrastructure, access to skills and to research, development and innovation’ is a key objective. The policy is to support the improvement and expansion of the Education Sector within the city.

- To this end, there needs to be an allocation for addition 3<sup>rd</sup> level Campuses and not depend on the morphing of the GMIT Galway Campus into a Technological University. New sites within the Galway Metropolitan Area should be identified for these satellite TU campuses. The Eyre Square East site should be considered for this purpose as oppose to commercial /industrial development
- The MASP acknowledges that the Merlin Park area ‘could house a 21<sup>st</sup> Century facility’. There is an opportunity here to co-locate a 3<sup>rd</sup> Level Medical Research and teaching campus (a component of the TU) alongside the proposed new Acute Hospital facility.

- 7.4 When addressing ‘Tourism & Creative/Cultural Sector’ the plan should include the construction of a world class Cultural/conference Centre/Concert Hall. What the MASP sees happening as part of the Galway 2020 effort is not sufficient. The RSES acknowledges that there is ‘considerable scope’ for the establishment of the Metropolitan area as a hub for the creative and cultural industries.

- 7.5 The RSES sees a growth of 115,000 jobs in the timeframe to 2040. Of these 30,000 are projected as Government jobs. To support this and build on the Historic Maritime status of the City there is potential to relocate the ‘Marine’ component of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine to the City as part of the extension and development of the Harbour or Ceannt Station Quarter.



Likewise, 3<sup>rd</sup> Level TU Marine Innovation & Research campus could be located in the Harbour area.

Taking this approach of selectively co-locating 3<sup>rd</sup> Level campuses with related relevant Institutes, will deliver on the commitment (RSES and Connacht-Ulster Alliance) for a Multi-Campus TU.

7.6 When referencing The Health and Wellbeing of our citizens, the RSES seems to rest on the initiatives we currently support as a city. The RSES sees ‘public spaces and physical places’ as key to ensuring integrated economic growth. Supporting this and to make Galway a World Class Metropolitan area why not consider the addition of a World Class Sports Campus towards the outer perimeter of the Metropolitan boundary. Again here, opportunity for the co-location of 3<sup>rd</sup> Level TU Sports Science Campus.

7.7 What will be the impact of BREXIT on the number of Irish students that attend 3<sup>rd</sup> level in the UK and apply through the UCAS process? Should we plan for this growth for Irish 3<sup>rd</sup> level institutes while still retaining the challenging entry level points requirement?

The need for Apprenticeships is referenced a few times in the RSES – but the emphasis is put on apprenticeships in the Construction Industry. This view is too limited and the RSES needs to support a broadening of Apprenticeship programs. As Technology changes with ever increasing speed, apprenticeships across all sectors become more relevant and important.

The RSES points out that our workforce is aging and mobile and our education system is not producing sufficient workers with the appropriate skills. Per the document the population over 65 will more than double by 2040.

- Extending the duration of active teaching in our educational institutes by providing ‘made to measure’ continuous education programs sponsored by Industry and business that extend through the summer months. These upskilling opportunities will have the advantage of extending the productive working life of those over 66+ that may have otherwise been forced to retire from their specialist area while at the same time extending the use of the 3<sup>rd</sup> level facilities over normal term holidays.

Reference to Education and the need for highly skilled workforce occurs in many places throughout the RSES. It is also acknowledged that this highly skilled workforce will bring greater social and economic benefits to the region, but nowhere is there a commitment on how the implementation of the proposed RSES will help to deliver this highly skilled and versatile workforce. The RSES looks to outside influences to look after the production of the ‘skilled resources’ but it needs to do more.

Lifelong learning falls below the EU average. The RSES needs to address this through active collaboration with the Regional Skills Fora. Lifelong Learning promotes ‘resilience’ in the workforce.

- To drive and support this fundamental need the RSES should commit to targeting Galway as a ‘Learning City’. UNESCO defined this as: *a city which effectively mobilises its resources across all sectors to maximise the opportunity for Life Long Learning*
- To deliver on the designation of Galway as a ‘Learning City’ there is a need for the four pillars to work closely and collaboratively: (i) Government (ii) Higher Education (iii) Business/Industry (iv) Civic society/communities.

- 7.8 Investment in ‘Place’ alone will not drive the increased attraction for Businesses if the skilled talent does not exist. We need the Higher Education Institutions (HEI’s) to keep pace and coordinate closely with the Regional Assemblies during the implementation of the NPF. We also need more robust and tangible commitments from the NWRA to an active partnership with the HEI’s.
- 7.9 More jobs that will rise per capita income are badly needed in the Galway MA. So, which come first – the jobs or the highly skilled workforce? There is a need for greater collaboration between Business/Industry and the HEI’s. Delivering Industry-Sponsored undergrad and post graduate programs. This is not a new initiative as such, but it is one that needs greater and broader involvement from both sides. The MedTech industry are active in this space – but could be more involved.
- The Regional Skills Fora have already done a lot of work in this space – so they would be a key contributor to this initiative – ensuring that the medium- & long-term skills profile is given visibility.

**General comments on Section 7.7, Childcare, education and life-long learning:**

- 7.10 Previous sections of the document are peppered with references to the needs for education. This gives rise to some expectation of strategies being presented to address these needs. However, in Section 7.7, the only RSES section specifically purporting to present education strategies, we find:
- just four paragraphs reiterating need,
  - one paragraph restating that a Technological University might emerge, and,
  - just one regional policy objective.
- 7.11 That objective is passive, nebulous and non-specific, assigns no responsibilities, and presents no measurable outcomes. Stronger action focussed objectives are required. Responsible agencies should be identified. Enabling actions should be defined. Responses required of central government agencies and departments should be identified.
- 7.12 Overall, this is a thoroughly underwhelming response to what should be a crucial element of the RSES: The development of talent in, and for, the region.

## Chapter 8.0 Growth Ambition

### Infrastructure – Enabling our Region

- 8.1 This section, confusingly is entitled ‘infrastructure – enabling our region’ but it is in fact limited to the electrical, gas, waste water and water services infrastructure.
- 8.2 The link between these ‘utility’ infrastructure projects and the road and rail infrastructure is limited to the stated objective of incorporating services such as water, broadband, electricity and gas within the same corridors as road or rail transport in the future. In other words, our transport infrastructure should become infrastructure corridors for our other utilities.
- 8.3 Electrical grid networks: This section fails to link the policy objectives for the area to strategies to implement those objectives. For instance, Galway should be identified as a strategic location for data centres in Ireland and detail the resulting electrical grid infrastructure that needs to be put in place in order to support such a business model. A new energy infrastructure needs to be put in place for the region to plan for economic development along the AEC. EirGrid, ESB networks and other key agencies must ensure that the energy needs of population for the future can be delivered in a sustainable and timely manner.
- 8.4 Gas networks: In urban areas, natural gas and renewable gas must be made available to fuel economic development which will also have the resultant benefit of supporting decarbonisation in the energy sector. There must be a continuing extension of the gas network by Gas Networks Ireland into the regions currently not serviced. This also has the added benefit of enhancing energy security for the future. There is significant potential for the region to be a lead in the biogas sector with many businesses in the region generating renewable and environmentally friendly gas products which could supplement the network.
- 8.5 Water supply: Irish Water is currently preparing a national water resources plan which will evaluate water resources nationally which will identify high priority water supply areas and help to meet potential shortfalls and minimise environmental impacts. It should be an objective of Galway to seek to have Irish Water to revise its investment plan to align with the requirements and demands for the supply of water in the Galway MASP area. Delivery / phasing of services and planning should carefully reference and consider environmental impact assessments so to avoid any adverse impact on the integrity of our water network. Local authority strategies will need to show compliance with the DHPLG water services guidelines for planning authorities and demonstrate phased infrastructure growth to meet the current demands the region.

- 8.6 Waste water collection and treatments: It should be an objective to seek to have Irish Water revise its draft investment plan (2020 – 2024) and subsequent investment plans to align with the supply of waste water treatment facilities with the settlement strategy and objectives of the RSES. It should be an objective of the RSES to support investment and the sustainable development of strategic waste water treatment facilities by Irish Water. For the purpose of the management of waste water, the population of growth and clustering should be planned on a phased basis in collaboration with Irish Water and local authorities so as to ensure that we do not exceed safe levels of waste water discharges which would contribute to the degradation of water quality in the region. There must be a continual objective to support investment in the sustainable development of rural waste water treatment programmes in order to identify sustainable options and funding structures for this infrastructure into the future.
- 8.7 Surface Water: It should be an objective to support Irish Water and local authorities to eliminate untreated discharge from settlements in the short time. There should also be a separation of foul and surface water networks so as to accommodate future growth in the region. There should be a need to improve the storm water infrastructure and improve sustainable drainage and reduce the risk of flooding in urban regions (which is a particularly acute concern in Galway city) and this should be a priority both for Irish Water and for local authorities.

## Chapter 9.0 All Island Cohesion

- 9.1 The importance of all-island initiatives is recognised as being a vital part of the economic prosperity and development of the border counties of Donegal, Monaghan and Cavan.

Common infrastructure projects and co-ordination of initiatives on both sides of the border will benefit both communities.

The current Framework for Co-operation on Spatial Strategies between Ireland and Northern Ireland will play an important role in this regard, providing the climate for co-operation continues post Brexit.

## Chapter 10.0 Implementation

10.1 With the NWRA stating its ultimate responsibility for ‘delivering the RSES and providing the framework for decision making and resource allocation for the NPF & NDP future activities’ it is necessary for NWRA to publish the proposed Management structure that will be charged with this task. Topics to be addressed include:

- Who are the NWRA accountable to?
- What monitoring process will be put in place to ensure that the final version of the RSES is adhered to?
- There should be advance agreement on the ‘considered Indicators’ that the NWRA will report against in their Annual Report. The Indicators referenced in the RSES are by no means all-encompassing, but they do need to add a measure on ‘inclusivity’ to their list.
- There is mention of ‘alignment and coordination’ with outside agencies (Govt. Private Sector, Institutions, Non-Govt. organisations & The Community) but no detail on how this will be achieved.
- This should contain a milestone delivery plan so that the implementation of the RSES is fully transparent to the public and the funding & consulting agencies.
- Who will coordinate the delivery of the 3 RSES’s across the Regional Assemblies? As each Regional Assembly will likely encounter many of the same challenges during planning and delivery of the RSES what is the process for determining Best Practice that all will follow?
- For the ‘Projects’ that the NWRA see as cross-border how will the already (and new) allocated funding work in the event that there is not a corresponding fund in Northern Ireland. In light of Brexit how will this be viewed or managed by Irish Govt. and the EU?

# Appendix 1 – Revised Galway MASP

## **Draft Galway Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) Contents**

Introduction

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## Introduction

Galway is one of Ireland’s oldest cities and is the largest urban area in the Northern and Western Region. Over the past 40 years it has been the State’s fastest growing city driven by investment from overseas and the growth of its two Higher Education Institutes.

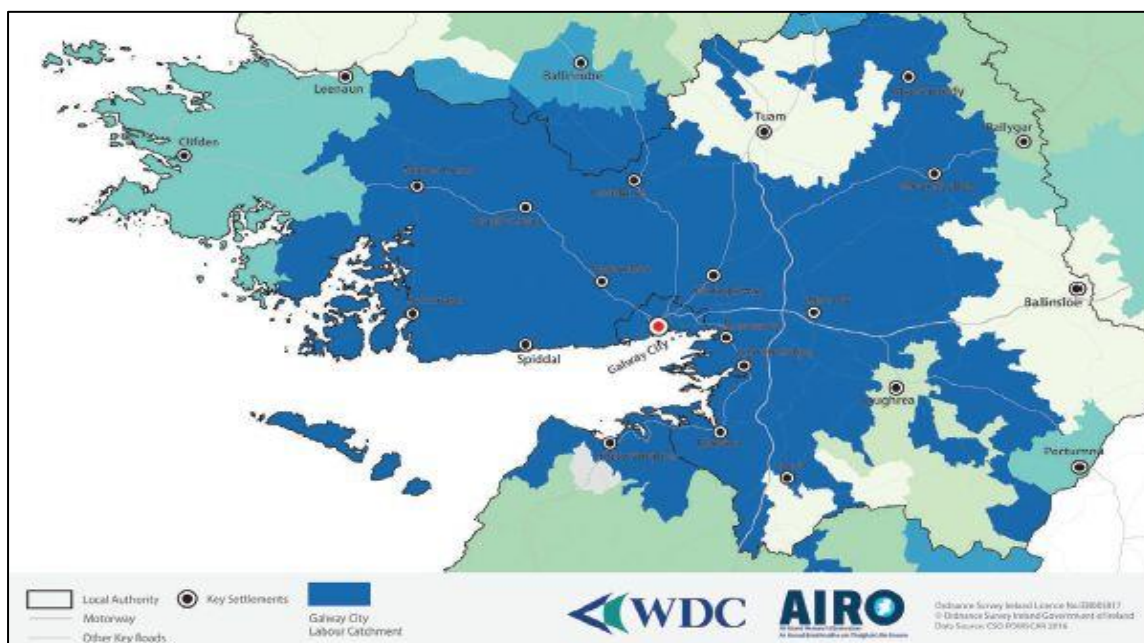
### 1. Spatial Definition

#### 1.1 Overview

This Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan provides a strategic focus on Galway City and sets out how it is envisaged that the Local Authorities and the various stakeholders will implement the National Planning Framework within the regional context of the RSES. It sets the key change parameters for the city of Galway, enabling it to continue to be the major growth centre and influencer in the region, creating synergies to enable wider prosperity within its city region hinterland. It addresses the critical challenges facing Galway around housing, transport and infrastructure provision that will determine the continued success of the city for the period of the RSES.

#### 1.2 Galway City & surrounds

The Galway City region has an extensive reach at a pivotal location on the Atlantic Economic Corridor, from where its influence spreads south to Limerick and Cork, north towards Sligo and Letterkenny and east in the direction of Athlone and Dublin.



This map, taken from the Western Development Commission’s Insight Report of May 2018 shows the extent of Galway City’s labour catchment with towns such as Oughterard, Headford, Athenry and Kinvara sending between 30% and 45% of their workforce to the city.

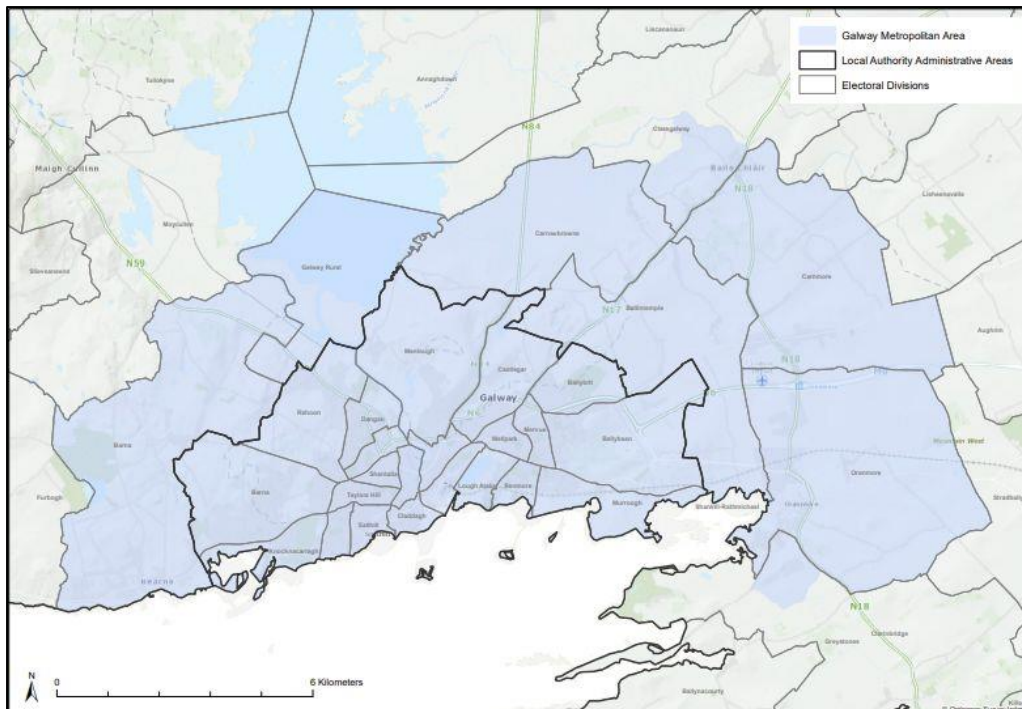
Galway city attracts commuters for work from across Galway county as well from Counties Mayo, Roscommon, Clare and even parts of Leitrim and Westmeath.

Both of Galway’s HEI’s also attract significant commuter traffic from the city’s hinterland in the county.



### 1.3 Galway Metropolitan Area

The Galway Metropolitan Area is defined by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government (DHPLG) circular ‘Implementation Roadmap for the National Planning Framework’ and is shown in the figure below.



The Galway Metropolitan Area should be expanded to include Moycullen village to the north and Clarenbridge to the south as both villages are inextricably linked to the city in terms of commuting for education, work, retail and social activities.

The rationale for this is borne out by the figure in the previous section which shows that areas which provide between 30% and 45% of their working population to Galway city extend far beyond this.

It is understood that Galway City Council has already made a detailed submission in this regard.

Galway Chamber has prepared an accompanying submission on the need to extend the boundary of the Metropolitan Area.

#### Galway MASP Policy Objective No 1

- a.** Strengthen the role of the Galway Metropolitan Area as an international location of scale, a complement to Dublin and a primary driver of economic and population growth in the Northern & Western Region.
- b.** Promote the Galway Metropolitan Area as a cohesive metropolitan area with (i) the city centre as the primary location at the heart of the metropolitan area and region (ii) compact growth and regeneration of Galway city centre and suburbs, (iii) active land management initiatives to deliver housing and employment locations in a sustainable, infrastructure led manner.
- c.** Seek co-ordinated investment and delivery of holistic infrastructure packages across State Departments and infrastructure delivery agencies as they apply to the Galway Metropolitan Area and seek further investments to deliver on the Metropolitan Area Goals (see section A ‘Overall MASP Goals’).
- d.** Any reference to support for all plans, projects, activities and development in the Draft MASP should be considered to refer to ‘sustainable development’ that shall be subject to appropriate feasibility studies, best practice site/route selection (to consider environmental constraints), environmental assessment including EcIA to support development management and where required, the completion of statutory SEA, EIA and AA processes as appropriate
- e.** The MASP seeks to protect, manage and through enhanced ecological connectivity, to improve the coherence of the Natura 2000 Network in the Northern & Western Region.

## 1.4 Galway City

Galway City has a significant competitive advantage being located at the centre-point of both the Wild Atlantic Way and Atlantic Economic Corridor.

It is well connected nationally and internationally for trade and tourism with two international airports less than 90 minutes from the city centre, the Port of Galway in the city centre as well as road and rail connections to other major cities.

It is home to internationally recognised world class clusters in Medical Devices and ICT. It is becoming a major technology hub, particularly around internet and collaborative working technologies. Galway City and the County hinterland alone are home to 9 of the world's top 10 Medical Devices companies. All of this is supported through third level institutions embedded within the city, providing for a highly educated and young workforce.

With a population of almost 80,000 (Census 2016) the city hosts 44,376 jobs within the current city boundary (excluding the business parks immediately adjacent to that boundary), drawing a significant part of its workforce from across the county and surrounding counties.

Galway city is one of the most culturally diverse cities in Ireland with 20% of the population born outside the state according to the 2016 census. They are attracted by the lifestyle offered by the city and the job opportunities within multi-national companies many of which have their European operations based in Galway.

### Galway MASP Policy Objective No 3

- a. The Galway MASP recognises that for the Metropolitan Area to prosper and develop in a sustainable manner a strong Galway City is paramount.
- b. The MASP supports the continued regeneration of Galway City as a key economic driver of the entire region.

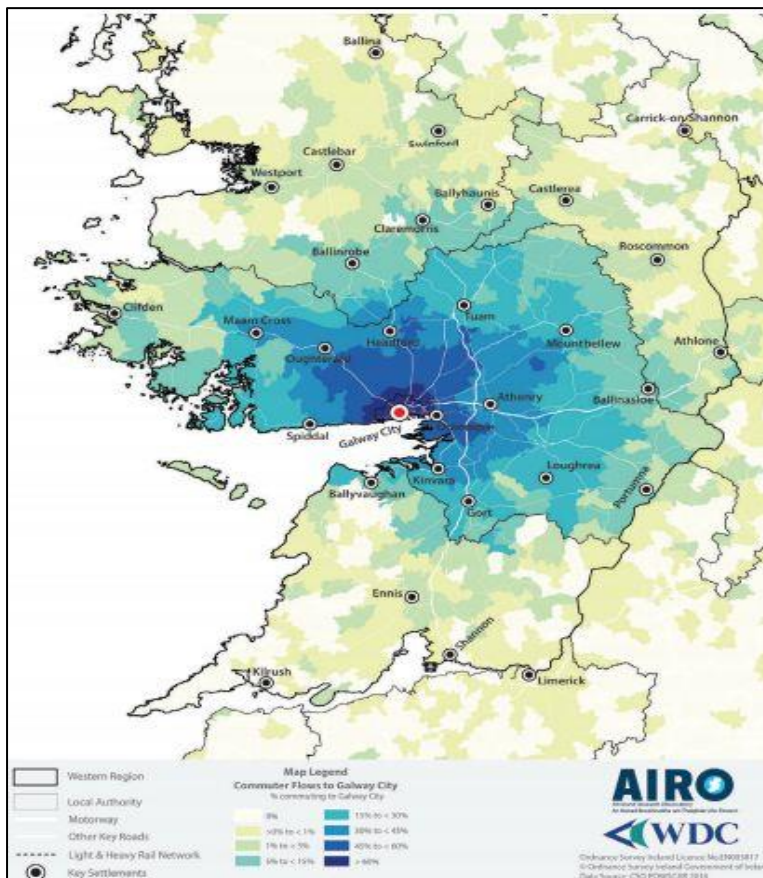
The city hosts two Higher Education Institutions: National University of Ireland, Galway and Galway Mayo Institute of Technology. Between them they produce 8,000 graduates per year and house over 2,000 post graduate students engaged in research and development, many in close collaboration with industry.

The MASP supports the following key transformative projects for Galway City.

- Extension of Port of Galway to accommodate larger vessels and development of Inner Harbour area as part of a master plan for Galway city centre.
- Development of a comprehensive master plan for residential, commercial, retail and hospitality within Galway city centre on brownfield sites including, Inner Harbour, Ceannt Station, Eyre Square East, Nuns Island, Dyke Road/Headford Road, Liosban and Mervue.
- The development of the Ardaun LAP.
- The creation of an SDZ at Galway Airport.
- A review, in the light of the master plan above, and implementation of the Galway Transport Strategy.
- The completion of the N6 Galway City Ring Road.
- Public realm improvements in the city centre including an expanded pedestrian area, improved surfacing and further shared public spaces.
- The planning and building in Galway City of a Conference/Exhibition/Performance centre to enhance Galway's role as a cultural and business destination.
- The retention of retailing as a prime function of the city centre.
- Delivery of a new acute hospital for the region at Merlin Park.

## 1.5 Galway MASP and Region

Competitive cities drive competitive regions, by promoting growth and employment and by joining up separate business hubs, infrastructural assets and clusters, to expand existing markets and create new ones.



An analysis by the WDC based on Census 2016 shows the extent of Galway’s impact on the southern part of the NWR (see map on left).

The sphere of influence of the Galway MASP will extend north towards Sligo, south towards Ennis and Limerick/Shannon, and east towards Athlone.

There is need for a complementary focus to enable those areas outside of the metropolitan boundary to pursue a greater degree of self-containment of employment, services provision and patterns of commuting.

Development of self-contained economic roles in settlements and rural areas in the catchment area will reinforce the economic strength of the metropolitan area.

The MASP recognises and supports the role of Castlebar, Tuam, Athlone and Ballinasloe as Key Towns well connected to the Galway Metropolitan area.

Other settlements (e.g. Athenry, Loughrea, Gort and Clifden) and rural areas have potential for complementary roles, interacting economically as well as socially with the Metropolitan Area and benefitting from the economic spread from larger centres of scale, nurturing local enterprise growth, local jobs and developing strong roles that contribute to the success of the metropolitan area.

There are also opportunities for networks of settlements, harnessing specialist roles and driving shared strengths to generate stronger economic interactions with the metropolitan area. This is particularly relevant to the south Connemara area which has several commercial/industrial hubs, supported by Udarás na Gaeltachta, with strong connections to the Galway city’s business hubs.

Enhanced connectivity (transport and digital) between the metropolitan areas and between other settlements (especially networks of settlements) and the metropolitan areas is an essential enabler to strengthen these opportunities.

## 2.0 Galway MASP – Attributes, Visions and Guiding Principles

### 2.1 Demographics

The population of the currently defined Galway Metropolitan Area in 2016 was 94,075 with 79,900 of that within the current Galway City Local Authority Area.

Expanding the Metropolitan Area to include Moycullen, Clarenbridge, etc. as suggested would increase the population to around 100,000.

The population of the existing Metropolitan Area increased by 3.8% between 2011 and 2016 – an annual increase of slightly more than 0.7%. To achieve the projected growth to 2040 (i.e. from 94,075 to 145,816) the annual rate of increase will need to increase substantially to 1.84%.

Galway has a relatively young population with approx. 19% of the population aged between 13 and 24 in 2016 compared the State's average of 13%.

71.1% of the population are engaged in the workforce with just 11% in the Old Age Dependency sector compared to the State's average of 20.5%.

This age profile indicates a strong future labour supply and population growth in the Galway Metropolitan Area.

The percentage of the Non-Irish born population residing in Galway City (20%) is above the State (11.5%) average. This highlights the ability of the Galway Metropolitan Area to retain this new population, which is an important factor in expanding the growth potential of the economy.

The changing demographics and spatial distribution of migration are key drivers of demand for housing, employment, transport and services. The Galway Metropolitan Area will need to deliver more family friendly and age friendly accommodation and services to plan for these changes.

Galway Metropolitan Area has considerable land capacity that can significantly contribute to meeting the housing demands based on population targets set out in the NPF and the RSES. The targets are that:

1. Population of Galway MASP to grow by 25,000 to 2026 and by 38,300 to 2031 with the population of the City and Suburbs accommodating 19,200 to 2026 and 28,000 to 2031.
2. Deliver at least half (50%) of all new homes that are targeted within the MASP to be within the existing built-up footprint.

### 2.2 Education

Within the city there are 31 primary schools, 12 second level schools and 3 third level colleges and there are also a number of private colleges and language schools. In recent years four new schools and a number of extensions to existing schools have been accommodated. These schools serve wide catchments well beyond the city boundary and even beyond the current MASP area which has an impact for commuting and travel into the city. Policy to support the improvement and expansion of the educational sector in the city recognises the significant city, regional and national role played by this sector.

Within the MASP there are currently zoned lands that are suitable for additional new schools where required. To accommodate emerging populations on the east of the city, lands are available at Ardaun to accommodate schools.

# Summary Insights

## GALWAY CITY COUNTY GALWAY

Summary demographic review of the town to establish the socio-economic profile of residents, population change, relevant housing, household composition and significant physical and environmental assets.



### 1 POPULATION TARGETS SOURCE: CSO & FUTURE ANALYTICS CONSULTING

POPULATION, 2016 SETTLEMENT AREA  
94,075



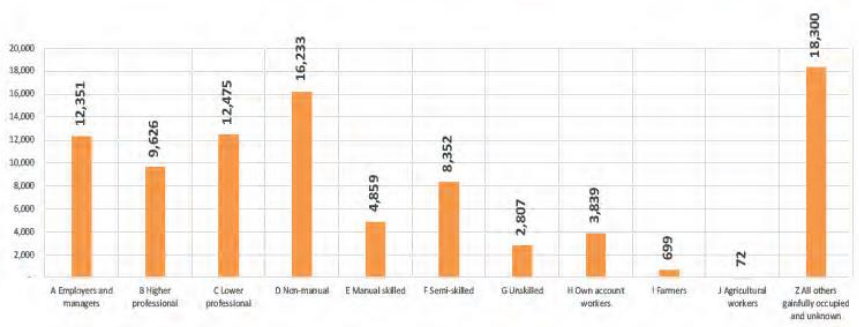
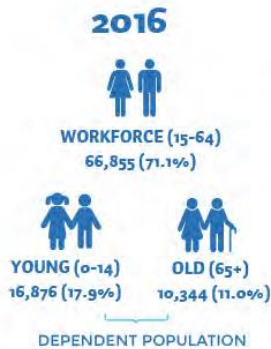
INCREASE IN SETTLEMENT POPULATION BETWEEN 2011-2016  
3.8% +3,476



\*Population data for MASP areas was generated based on Small Area Population Statistics (SA) from the Central Statistics Office. Small Area data was compiled for Census 2011 and Census 2016 only.

### RESIDENT POPULATION

### AGE PROFILE & SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUPS, 2016 SOURCE: CSO & FUTURE ANALYTICS CONSULTING



The Galway Metropolitan area is home to two of Ireland’s most prestigious third level academic institutions: National University of Ireland, Galway and Galway Mayo Institute of Technology. Between them they produce 8,000 graduates per year and house over 2,000 post graduate students engaged in research and development, many in close collaboration with industry.

These are critical drivers of economic growth and both work closely with industry to develop undergraduate courses and modules to meet the ever-changing needs of Galway’s key sectors of Med-Tech and ICT.

56.2% of the city’s workforce are third level graduates, the second-highest level in the State while the concentration of STEM graduates in the labour force, at 13%, is the highest in the country.

However, as one moves out of the city to Counties Galway, Mayo and Roscommon, these fall (to 43%, 38%, 37%) and (7%, 5%, 5%) respectively.

Both NUIG and GMIT have collaborative research and training roles with industry which is supported also by national investment research programmes such as CURAM and Medical and Engineering Technologies Gateway (MET).

Research competencies have been growing particularly in the life sciences area in NUIG at CURAM and the Insight Centre for Data Analytics, for example as well as GMIT in the Medical and Engineering Technologies Gateway (MET) and also in its aquatic and environmental research centres.

### 2.3 Social Inclusion

There are significant issues relating to social deprivation in parts of Galway City and therefore a requirement for focus and investment in ensuring long term measures to address these issues systemically.

### 2.4 Travel patterns

Private vehicles remain the dominant mode of commuting for work or education in Galway city with 63.4% of commuters driving themselves or passengers in others’ cars. According to the 2016 census.

There is a need to ensure proper integration of land use and transportation policies to promote more sustainable modes of travel.

The popularity of the rail commuter service from Athenry and Oranmore into Galway city illustrates that the addition of further capacity would be viable, particularly as the Arduan residential corridor develops to the east of the city.

The most utilised bus route in the city is the 404 from Roscam/Doughiska which benefits from the longest stretch of bus corridor to the city centre – although this is not continuous. This illustrates the provision of dedicated bus corridors and increased services will have a positive impact on modal shift.

#### Galway MASP Policy Objective No 3

- a. Secure funding and planning for the implementation of the Galway Transport Strategy, including the City Centre Transport Corridor.
- b. Complete the N6 Galway City Ring Road.

The introduction of bus corridors, greenways and increased as well as safer pedestrian routes are key elements of the Galway Transport Strategy which was prepared in 2016 but has yet to be implemented. The funding and implementation of this strategy together with the completion of the N6 Galway City Ring Road are key to the economic development of the Metropolitan Area.

## 2.5 Arts, Heritage and Culture

Culture and creativity are at the heart of life in Galway City and it has a global reputation as the home of Druid Theatre Company, Galway International Arts Festival and Macnas. There is also a vibrant community arts sector that gives a strong cultural identity to the City and the wider area.

The strength and potential of the creative sector is evidenced in particular by designations such as the UNESCO City of Film and European Capital of Culture 2020. There is considerable scope for the establishment of the metropolitan area as a hub for the Creative and Cultural Industries, building on the distinctive culture and creative legacy in the City environs. The development of film, media and entertainment, design and craft have potential to add significant value to the overall economy and strengthen the identity of the MASP area.

A significant area of the MASP has Gaeltacht status – parts of the city, Bearna, Maigh Cuillinn and Baile Chláir - and Galway is a bilingual city and is a service centre for the Connemara Gaeltacht. The use of the Irish language is part of everyday life in Galway and the drive to achieve official status for the City as ‘Bilingual Capital of Ireland’ reflects the strong Gaeltacht culture and identity within the City

The strong tradition of organised community and cultural activity with an array of structures and initiatives within the City contributes to the City as a successful place. The image of Galway, paralleled with an inclusive community, local distinctiveness and attractive lifestyle, is a critical asset for sustaining communities and good placemaking as well as for the attraction of inward investment. The Cultural Sustainability Strategy 2016-2025 highlights the uniqueness of Galway culture and its richness and diversity and its importance to the future of the City and County enhancing the lives of those living and working in Galway and the surrounding region. The implementation and further development of this strategy is a key objective of this MASP.

## 2.6 Vision

The Vision of this MASP is that Galway will be a leading global city, renowned as a successful, sustainable, competitive, compact and accessible city of scale that supports a high quality of life, maintains its distinctive identity and supports its rich heritage, language and cultural experience.

### Galway MASP Policy Objective No 4

**a.** Seek the identification of investment packages across State Departments and infrastructure delivery agencies as they apply to the Galway MASP and seek further investments into the Galway MASP to deliver on the Metropolitan Area Goals

**b.** Ensure quality infrastructure and quality of place is prioritised as an incentive to attract people to live and work in sustainable settlement patterns in the metropolitan area.

A Metropolitan area that is environmentally responsible, resilient to change and that attracts and retains talent and skills and fosters innovation and creativity.

An Area that offers sustainable choices in housing, work, transport and lifestyle opportunities for its communities, while supporting the health and wellbeing of its people.

## 2.7 Guiding Principles

The future growth and ambition for the Limerick Shannon MASP is based on the principles of a Sustainable Place Framework as identified in the RSES Settlement Strategy.

To achieve the vision of the Galway Metropolitan Area the MASP has identified several Guiding Principles for its sustainable development:

**A Living City and Metropolitan Area** - Investment must be supported in revitalising and reinvigorating Galway City for higher density living and high-density high value jobs. The Metropolitan Area should be a well-functioning and energising place providing residential, employment, health, business, political, recreation, educational, commercial and transport functions driving the region. The high capacity transport corridors needed to support this scale of growth will be delivered incrementally in line with growth and intensification of the city.

The metropolitan area needs a dynamic, diverse and high-profile city centre to function and the city centre needs a fully functioning and progressive metropolitan area to prosper.

**Galway as a global gateway** – Competitive, properly resourced and well-functioning international airports at Shannon and Ireland West as well as an expanded Tier 1 port at Galway are essential to facilitate their growth and to ensure excellent international access.

**Compact sustainable growth** – The development of brownfield and infill lands to achieve a target of at least 50% of all new homes within the existing built up area in Galway City and 30% in other settlements.

**Integrated transport and land use** – Target growth along high quality public transport corridors and nodes linked to the delivery of key public transport projects.

**Accelerate housing delivery** – Activate strategic residential development areas such as Ardaun and support the steady supply of sites to accelerate housing supply, supported by better services and public transport.

**Employment density in the right places** – Re-intensify employment in Galway City and activate strategic employment locations to complement existing employment hubs in the city centre and near third level institutes.

**Social regeneration** - Realise opportunities for social as well as physical regeneration, particularly in areas with pockets of deprivation.

**Future development areas** - having regard to the long lead in time for planning and development, identify future growth areas that may be delivered beyond the lifetime of the draft RSES but within the long term 2040 horizon of the NPF.

**Metropolitan scale amenities** – Provision of regional parks and Strategic Green Infrastructure including greenways/blueways along the Corrib, the city's canals and the seashore. The creation of a lasting physical infrastructure for Galway's vibrant cultural communities.

**Enabling infrastructure** - Identify Infrastructure capacity issues and ensure water services needs are met by national projects. Improve sustainability in terms of energy, waste management and water conservation.



### 3.0 National Enablers

The NPF and MASP identifies the following key future growth enablers which will be supported by the MASP

- Implementation of an economic strategy to create modern, city centre office accommodation and a series of transformational city centre public realm projects
- Identifying infill and regeneration opportunities to intensify housing and employment development throughout inner suburban areas including the expansion of the Port of Galway and the subsequent availability of Inner Harbour lands for commercial, residential and amenity use
- Enabling enhanced opportunities for existing communities as development and diversification occurs, particularly through employment, learning and education support
- Progressing the sustainable development of new greenfield areas for housing and the development of supporting public transport and infrastructure, such as at Ardaun
- The continued expansion of the City's third level institutions and integration with the wider City and region
- Provision of a Citywide public transport network, with enhanced accessibility from the City Centre to the employment hubs in Parkmore and Oranmore
- Development of a strategic cycleway network with several high capacity flagship routes
- Enhanced regional connectivity through improved average journey times by road to Sligo and Letterkenny
- Ensuring that water supply and waste-water needs are met by new national projects to enhance Galway's water supply and increase waste water treatment capacity
- Improving sustainability in terms of energy, waste management and resource efficiency and water, to include district heating and water conservation

#### Galway MASP Policy Objective No 5

##### National Enablers

**a.** It is an objective to deliver the investment priorities as identified in the NDP for the Galway Metropolitan Area and to seek progress and co-ordination between the principal stakeholders for the delivery of the priorities as identified in the NPF. Identification of suitable sites for regeneration and development should be supported by a quality site selection process that addresses environmental concerns.

**b.** It is an objective to implement innovative and collaborative projects through funding mechanisms such as the Urban Regeneration and Development, Rural Regeneration and Development, Climate Action and Disruptive Technologies funds.

## 4. Integrated Land use and Transportation

### 4.1 Connected city

Inter-urban and inter-regional connectivity has progressed in recent years. The completion of the M6 motorway considerably reduced travel times from Dublin to Galway and has made the City more accessible nationally.

The completion of the M17/M18 Gort to Tuam motorway has significantly reduced travel time to Shannon Airport and has made considerable time savings between the City and IWAK. It also adds to the accessibility of the City and improved strategic linkage within the whole region. The objective is to continue to improve the road network around the city and in particular to support the delivery of the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS) including the N6 Galway City Ring Road (N6 GCRR), this is also referenced elsewhere within the objectives of the RSES (RF Growth Ambition 2 – Connected Region

Galway city has a significant commuter population. This reflects the important regional economic role of the City and demonstrates that people are willing to travel long distances to access education and employment in the City owing to the quality and range of job opportunities. It also indicates the synergies that exist between the City and its hinterland. However, commuter travel patterns indicate a heavy dependence on car usage. At a local level, travel patterns in particular travel to work and school trips also indicate a high level of car usage. These patterns give rise to significant congestion on the road network particularly during peak times which negatively impacts on the economy and the experience of the urban environment.

The main transportation components which are particularly relevant for the MASP are as follows:

### 4.2 Galway Transport Strategy (GTS) and City Centre Transport Management Plan (CCTMP)

Within Galway City and environs, the promotion of integration of land use and transportation is reflected across all plans and strategies, including in particular the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS) which is a joint Galway City Council and County Council 20-year strategy prepared in partnership with the National Transport Authority.

#### Galway MASP Policy Objective No 6 Galway Transport Strategy – Public Transport

- a.** Development of a cross-city network of bus services which can serve the major trip attractors with 5 core bus routes to provide a minimum 15minute frequency service during the peak periods and sustain a high frequency service throughout the day.
- b.** Provision of the Tuam Road Bus Corridor and Dublin Road Bus Corridor
- c.** Provide for Park and ride facilities on the periphery of the city linked in with the bus network to reduce the amount of commuter traffic entering the city.

The strategy includes traffic management, giving priority to walking, cycling and bus movements, modifications to the traffic network, management of parking activities and heavy goods vehicles, improvements to the public realm and use of 'smarter mobility'.

As part of the GTS a detailed, City Centre Transport Management Plan is being prepared and will provide for the implementation of a city centre access network with measures for bus priority routes, bus only routes, cycling and pedestrian links through and within the city centre with opportunities for enhanced public realm. The development of park and ride facilities on the approaches to the city is an important part of improved connectivity.

### 4.3 N6 GCRR

The provision of a new N6 Galway City Ring Road (N6 GCRR). This road is classified as part of the TEN-T road network in Ireland functioning in accordance with the European Unions (EU) TEN-T transport policy which aims to create connectivity between regions, remove bottlenecks that hamper access to markets and that promotes a sustainable multi modal network. The N6 GCRR will support the economic and social development of the region and connectivity and accessibility to the city and to areas west of the city. It also will focus on supporting trips that cannot be facilitated by measures such as City bound, cross-City and cross County movements. This will relieve congestion in the city and in turn improve the quality of the city environment and increase opportunities for reallocation of existing road space for sustainable transportation.

### 4.4 Parkmore

Parkmore Business Parks currently host over 8,700 employees but currently have just one entry/exit point. This leads to very lengthy delays accessing and leaving the businesses there. This in turn has resulted in loss of staff (due to lengthy commute times) and loss of expansion opportunities among the existing businesses.

Some work has been done to relieve this over the past two years and ultimately it is planned that the N6 Galway City Ring Road will provide a permanent solution. However, completion of this will not be before 2025 at the earliest so it is vital that further action is taken by both Councils to address this issue in the medium term.

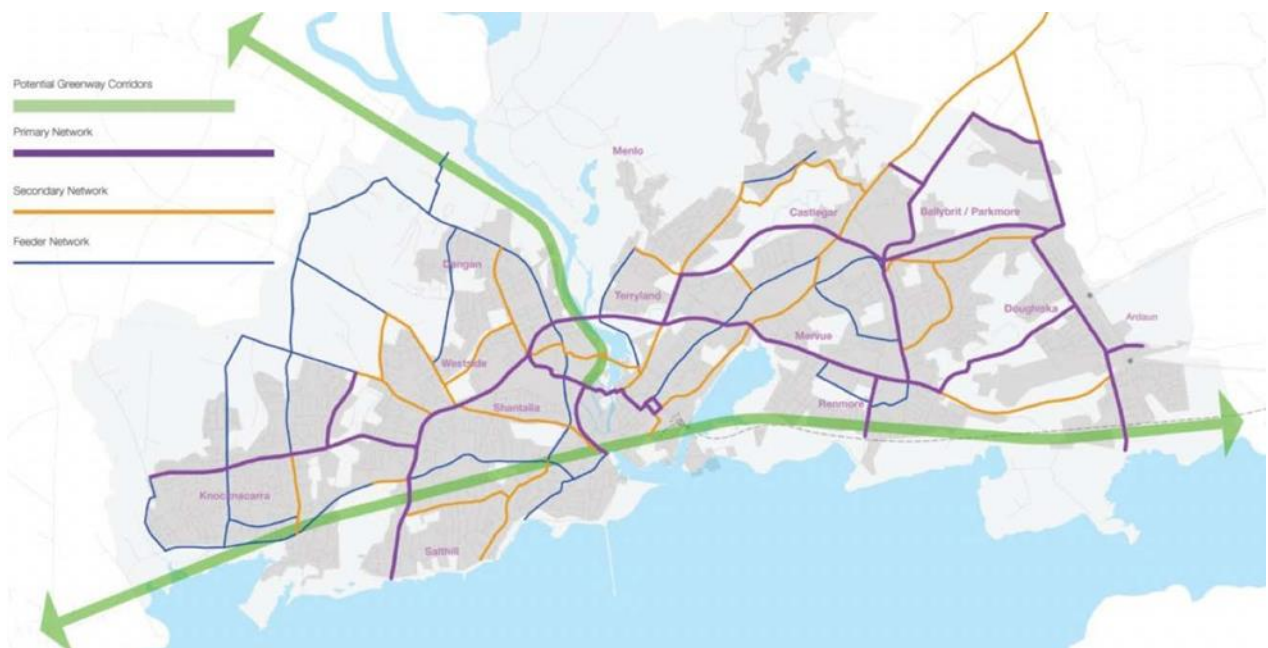
*Core bus routes (GTS 2016)*



**Galway MASP Policy Objective No 7**  
**Galway Transport Strategy – Cycling & Walking**

- a.** Provision of a core, secondary and feeder cycle network which includes segregated cycle routes, on-road cycle lanes and /or wide bus lanes to cater for both buses and cyclists along the same route.
- b.** Provision of a primary network of cycle routes comprising of two greenways connecting into the county settlements – the Oranmore to the City Centre and onwards to Bearna Greenway and City Centre to Oughterard Greenway.
- c.** Provision of additional primary routes including cross-city routes to the north of the city and some key north – south links.
- d.** Develop a secondary cycle network that will comprise connections from residential areas and areas of employment to the primary network accessing key destinations.
- e.** Provision of measures to reduce traffic volumes in the city centre core, additional pedestrianisation and pedestrian priority, improvement of pedestrian facilities in particular safe crossings, improvements to the public realm and use of universal design.
- f.** Provision of new river crossings - a new bridge adjacent to the Salmon Weir Bridge, a new link from the Headford Road area to NUIG campus via a bridge on the piers of the old rail line and a new crossing linking Newtownsmyth with Gaol Road.
- g.** Improvements to permeability within suburban residential areas, improving the pedestrian networks and increasing connectivity and permeability within and to places of employment, in particular the business and technology parks on the east side of the city at Parkmore and Ballybrit.

*Proposed cycle network (GTS 2016)*



#### 4.5 Rail

The City is a significant rail destination with direct intercity services to Dublin via Athlone and to Limerick via Ennis. It also provides a valuable commuter service to towns such as Ballinasloe, Athenry, Craughwell and Oranmore.

It is envisaged that the long-term redevelopment of Ceannt Station Quarter as a new major multi-modal transport interchange will involve rail services expanding in frequency where there is sufficient passenger demand and usage.

The potential for double tracking of the railway line from the City to Athenry – which would allow more frequent inter-city and commuter rail services – or a more limited accommodation of stopping bays and the provision of a rail freight service from Galway harbour are also strategic projects that will enhance accessibility and connectivity in the region to 2040.

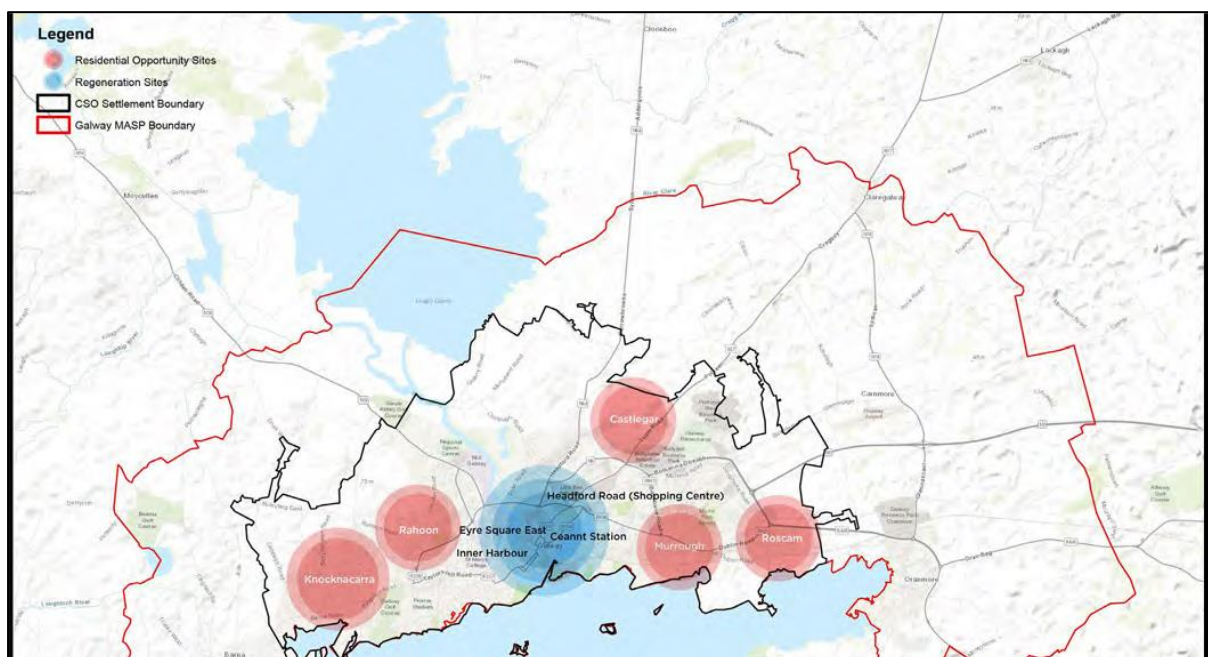
## 5.0 Housing & Regeneration

Galway Metropolitan Area has considerable land capacity that can significantly contribute to meeting the housing demands based on population targets set out in the NPF and the RSES. The targets are that:

1. Population of Galway MASP to grow by 25,000 to 2026 and by 38,300 to 2031 with the population of the City and Suburbs accommodating 19,200 to 2026 and 28,000 to 2031.
2. Deliver at least half (50%) of all new homes that are targeted within the MASP to be within the existing built-up footprint.

The strategic sites of scale that present the opportunity and capacity to deliver the quantum of housing on the appropriate sites, subject to the adequate provision of services are summarised as follows:

- i. Consolidation of the existing neighbourhoods of Knocknacarra, Ragoon, Castlegar and Roscam.
- ii. Development of Regeneration Lands at Ceannt Station Quarter, Inner Harbour and Headford Road
- iii. Ardaun
- iv. Murrrough
- v. Baile Chláir, Bearna, Oranmore, Briarhill



### 5.1 Consolidation of the existing neighbourhoods of Knocknacarra, Ragoon, Castlegar and Roscam

These areas have the potential to provide for approximately 170 hectares of residential zoned lands suitable for high density development. It is envisaged that a density of 35 units/ha will be the typical target for these areas.

## 5.2 Development of Regeneration Lands

Regeneration Lands at Ceannt Station Quarter (circa 6ha), Inner Harbour (circa 9 ha) and Headford Road (circa 15ha ) present opportunities to develop a significant quantum of residential development and importantly present scope for significant employment generation. Their proximity to the city centre, their scale, their links with key transport hubs (Ceannt Train and Bus station, Fairgreen Bus and Coach station and Eyre Square bus interchange) and their attractive waterfront locations gives potential for successful extensions to the city centre and creation of new residential communities.

Additional regeneration opportunities exist at Nuns Island, Eyre Square East, Crown Square, Liosban and Dyke Road.

There are also a number of infill sites available within the city that have potential for residential /mixed use development and publicly owned lands which may have scope for redevelopment for residential use.

## 5.3 Ardaun

To the east of the City, Ardaun will accommodate up to 25% of the residential growth anticipated for the city. Ardaun is a highly accessible location and is well placed to link through sustainable transport modes with the City Centre and key employment areas such as Parkmore, Ballybrit, Mervue and strategic IDA sites at Oranmore and Athenry.

Ardaun provides opportunities for high density residential development structured and coordinated with essential services and community facilities. It has currently a Local Area Plan which sets out a framework for development and is a designated Major Urban Housing Delivery Site under Rebuilding Ireland. It also has potential for a high level of connectivity, to the National Motorway Network and is close to the main line station at Oranmore (Garraun).

The Ardaun area comprises 2 main development phases. Phase 1 which is the lands south of the M6/ N6 including 29 hectares of residential zoned lands and 20 hectares of urban village centre zoned lands which will have significant residential content.

Phase 2 is the lands to the north of the M6/N6 comprises 61 hectares of residential zoned lands.

In the longer term, it is envisaged that Ardaun will expand eastwards.

## 5.4 Murrough

The LAP lands at Murrough, although primarily designated for recreation and amenity purposes, will also sustain mixed uses including residential uses. The total area of these lands is 34ha, one third of

<b>LAND CAPACITY -LANDS AVAILABLE FOR HOUSING</b>	<b>APPROXIMATE LAND AREA</b>
<b>City Residential zoned lands –high density</b>	<b>172 ha</b>
<b>Regeneration Lands - min 30% residential content</b>	<b>10ha</b>
<b>Ardaun LAP Phase 1 –</b>	<b>49 ha</b>
<b>Ardaun LAP Phase 2 –</b>	<b>61 ha</b>
<b>Murrough LAP (one third mixed use)</b>	<b>11ha</b>
<b>Eyre Square East Quarter</b>	<b>c2ha</b>
<b>Baile Chláir</b>	<b>31ha</b>
<b>Bearna</b>	<b>8ha</b>
<b>Oranmore</b>	<b>31ha</b>

## 5.6 Wider Metropolitan Area - Oranmore/Athenry Municipal District, Moycullen, Bearna

The areas outside the city and suburbs including the established settlements of Bearna, Oranmore, Baile Chláir has zoned and serviced lands 53 and 70ha respectively. These are adequate to accommodate the projected growth out to 2026 as things stand. In the event that further capacity is required, delivery of the infrastructural plans referred to elsewhere in the Strategy will meet this demand.

The policy framework is to meet this projected demand through promoting the development of sustainable high-quality neighbourhoods, sustainable densities incorporating high design standards and key urban design principles.

The Strategy is to provide for integration of housing with transportation infrastructure fostering sustainable transport patterns. This provides for a co-ordinated approach with investment and the delivery of essential infrastructure, services and community facilities. It also must promote a range of house types, sizes and tenures suitable for households with different income levels or those who may have specific requirements

## 5.7 Student Accommodation

It is important to specifically refer to the student population of the city as it comprises a significant quantum of the city population (in excess of 24,000 students attend third level colleges in the city) and there is a particular demand for student niche accommodation in the city to meet their needs.

The objective of the MASP is to support the provision of purpose-built student accommodation both on and off campus at appropriate locations. Delivery of this type of accommodation can be met on a variety of mixed zoned sites and is beneficial in freeing up existing private house stock within existing housing developments. This type of accommodation also has the potential to meet tourism housing demands during summer.



## 6.0 Employment and Enterprise

### 6.1 Introduction

Investment in the creation of ‘place’ is key to realising the potential of the MASP area. Access to talent and the presence of an innovative and smart economy are key factors.

The enhancements of these factors and improvements in existing sectors such as retail and tourism will play an important role in creating a stronger economy. The development of the Port of Galway, improved and faster access to international transport hubs at Knock, Shannon and Dublin as well as further investment in and expansion of Third Level Education facilities is essential as future growth will be based on leveraging national and international connectivity, higher education capacity and quality of life to secure strategic investment.

### 6.2 Employment Generation

The delivery of the elements which attract business and enterprise is dependent on understanding and identifying the main economic drivers and removing obstacles to realising their full potential.

Employers and entrepreneurs are attracted to Galway by:

- The availability of talented staff and the ability of the Metropolitan Area to attract and retain employees nationally and internationally;
- Two world class HEI’s which produce over 8,000 graduates annually and are willing to work closely with industries to develop skills appropriate to their needs;
- The existence of clusters of expertise in the Med-Tech and ICT spheres as well as emerging strengths in Marine, Ag-Tech and Environment.
- The recent emergence of a Start-up/Entrepreneurial eco-system centred around the PorterShed, NUI Galway and GMIT as well as the growing GTEIC network promoted in rural areas by Údarás na Gaeltachta;
- Strong R&D capabilities centred around NUI Galway and GMIT as well as amongst some of the larger Med-Tech and ICT companies;
- Improving international connectivity via Knock, Shannon and Dublin airports;
- A significantly lower cost of living and cost of employment compared to Dublin;
- An excellent quality of life

The Galway MASP identifies strategic employment locations within the metropolitan area. However, achieving NPF growth targets will require consideration for new locations and initiatives by each Local Authority.

#### Galway MASP Policy Objective No 8 Strategic Employment Locations

Support the sustainable development of current and future strategic employment locations and to ensure the delivery of associated infrastructural requirements subject to the outcome of environmental assessments and the planning process.

It is thus accepted that additional locations may become available and this MASP

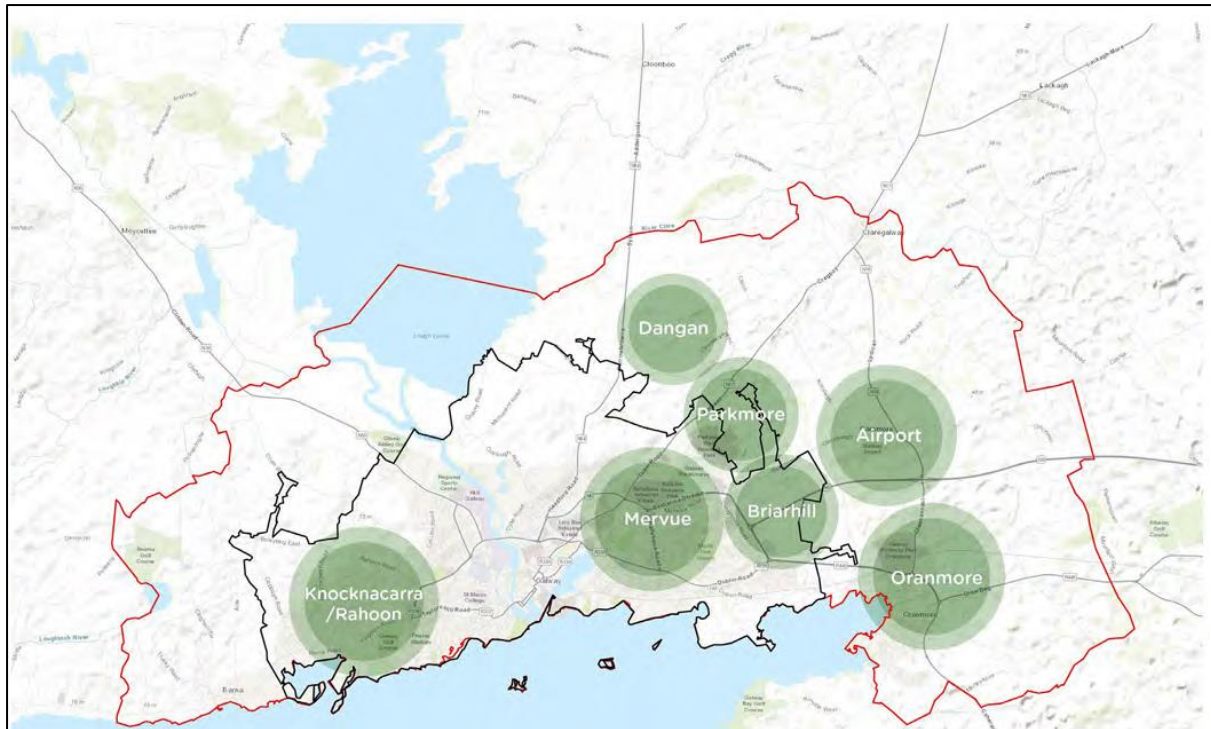
recognises the need to be flexible to accommodate opportunities and that future growth areas may emerge during the lifetime of the MASP.

Future growth areas proposals should be consistent and integrate with the Galway MASP’s aim of revitalising and reinvigorating Limerick City for higher density living and high density high value jobs.

### 6.3 Economy and employment locations

Galway city plays an important regional role in providing for a diverse range of economic activities, services and employment opportunities and has considerable potential for further development and capacity for new enterprises. The economic development strategy for the city is to focus on City Centre Regeneration and on strategically located industrial /enterprise lands throughout the city.

It is important that a comprehensive master plan for the city centre is prepared in more detail than herein or in the City Development Plan to ensure that development is balanced between residential, commercial, retail and hospitality. This process can not be left to developers to lead.



#### 6.3.1 City Centre

The objective of the MASP is to present a strong policy focus to preserve and enhance the city centre as the primary commercial area within the city supporting a range of retail, tourism, social and cultural activities.

This together with protection and enhancement of the historic core and making improvements to the city centre public realm, will contribute to the vitality and vibrancy of the city centre and reinforce the positive image of the city as a place to live, work, visit and shop. The historic core captures the character of the city and its continuation is of the utmost importance.

While there is scope for infill development and refurbishment of existing commercial space, the city centre is constrained being located in the historic core and cannot easily meet significant future commercial floor space demand. The Regeneration Lands are ideally placed to meet these future demands.

#### 6.3.2 Regeneration Lands – Ceannt Station, Inner Harbour and Headford Road

The Regeneration Lands at Ceannt Station and the Inner Harbour offer a sequential solution to the expansion of the city centre, linked with a transportation hub, reinforcing the prime role of the city centre in both the city, the Metropolitan Area and the wider region.

Work is due to start on the development of 300,000 sq. ft. of office space at Bonham Quay which is positioned between the Ceannt Station and Inner Harbour sites.

The Headford Road area is also a key area for expansion of the city centre. It has considerable potential for intensification and for increased retail floorspace and commercial office type employment opportunities. It also has the benefit of having a large publicly owned site with development potential (Dyke Road surface car park).

Expanding the city centre into these Regeneration Lands not only responds to future commercial floorspace demand but it also can, with good design solutions, enhance the image of the city, its regional tourism function and allow for an expansion to a scale commensurate with that envisaged under the National Planning Framework and this RSES.

Other locations identified for potential redevelopment within the City Centre include Nuns Island area and Eyre Square East.

### 6.3.3 Industrial and commercial lands

Lands are currently zoned that can meet the anticipated demand for a range of employment types and at locations that are integrated with the strategy for sustainable transportation and coordinated with the settlement strategy. Outside of the city centre, the focus is to prioritise investment and expansion in high tech manufacturing, research and development at existing strategic key locations at Mervue, Parkmore, Briarhill, and Dangan.

These areas have a strong FDI presence which is reflected in the manufacturing industries including the medical technologies sector and the internationally traded ICT services and software sectors.

These areas have potential for additional employment opportunities with good opportunities for expansion through densification and re-organisation. There are also opportunities for growth in the general manufacturing and commercial/trade sectors on these lands.

In Knocknacarra/Rahoon, lands are set aside also for a significant level of employment opportunities which will focus on the technology/office-based industries thereby providing potential employment close to this large residential neighbourhood linking land use and transport requirements sustainably. Development on these lands will complement the existing commercial/community developments associated with the designated Knocknacarra district centre.

There is also capacity for job creation within Ardaun as part of a coordinated development strategy for this area.

Significant IDA lands are also available on the IDA lands at Parkmore (38ha) and Oranmore (27ha) which have huge potential to accommodate future large-scale employment. The Galway Airport Site is also a key opportunity site in the ownership of Galway City and County Council with significant development potential.

A number of options for its future use are emerging from a feasibility study carried out on the site.

## 6.4 Port of Galway

The Port of Galway has submitted an application to An Bord Pleanála for the expansion of the harbour

### Galway MASP Policy Objective No 9

#### Port of Galway

- a. Support the designation of the Port of Galway as a Tier 1 port under the TEN-T framework.
- b. Secure permission and funding for the extension of the Port of Galway, the creation of a deep-water facility and the resulting availability of Regeneration Lands at the existing port

outward to accommodate larger vessels for both commercial and tourism purposes.

This will not only free up Inner Harbour lands for development close to the

city centre it will increase the capacity of the Port to handle larger cargo vessels to service local industry and the emerging Marine Exploration sector. It will also increase the State's port capacity and resilience particularly post-Brexit. To achieve this the Port of Galway must be re-designated a Tier 1 Port with the Ten-T framework.

## 6.5 Retail

The retail strategy for the city is to protect and enhance the city centre, designated as the most important shopping area in the city and county and to facilitate a mixed expansion of services including high order comparison retailing in conjunction with service retailing, cultural and entertainment facilities through appropriate and sensitive redevelopment, infill and the development of the Regeneration Lands.

### Galway MASP Policy Objective No 10

#### Retail

- a. Prepare a Joint Retail Strategy for Galway City centre and the wider Metropolitan Area
- b. The MASP supports the continued expansion of the retail core of the city centre so that it retains its dominant position as a retail destination.

The strategy is also to designate District Centres on lands near the main areas of population and anticipated

growth centres such as that at Knocknacarra, Doughiska, Westside and Ardaun to accommodate an appropriate range of retail, nonretail, community and leisure services. These scale and nature of these District Centres must be such that they will not threaten the prime function of the city centre core shopping area.

Neighbourhood Centres are designated at a number of locations including Salthill, Ballinboyle - Castlegar, Renmore. At these locations there are opportunities for a mix of local services and community facilities including retailing of a basic, predominantly convenient nature that are so located to be easily accessible by the catchment they serve.

At the lowest level of the hierarchy are small scale local shops in residential areas, they fulfil an important role in the provision of day to day convenience needs. It is considered appropriate that he MASP will fully embrace this hierarchy and adopt it as being the roadmap for the future development of its area.

## 6.6 Tourism

The policy to promote and support tourism in the city recognises the range of economic activities and employment opportunities associated with the tourism industry in the city. There is huge potential to develop tourism and extend bed nights as a gateway to the North and West Region with potential to further develop urban, culture/heritage/food tourism.

Galway is a destination city in itself. People visit for events such as Connacht Rugby, Galway International Arts Festival, Galway Races and the Christmas Market, or just for a weekend. This is a valuable part of the overall tourism economy for the region and needs further exploration.

The location of the City mid-way along the Wild Atlantic Way is also an opportunity for expansion of the tourist product.

The success of the City as a festival City is a significant tourism product, sustaining services and ensuring year-round bed nights with the Galway Races, the Arts Festival, the Film Fleadh and SeaFest

### Galway MASP Policy Objective No 11

#### Tourism

- a. Support the Galway Metropolitan Area as a tourism destination. This will require the promotion of the tourism assets of the Western Region which include, inter alia, Wild Atlantic Way, Connemara, Lough Corrib, etc.
- b. Ensure collaboration between Local Authorities and Tourism agencies to develop further attractions such as Galway City Museum and additional 'wet-weather' attractions.
- c. Ensure Galway's master plan includes provision for adequate tourist accommodation in the form of hotels, hostels, etc. covering all types and budgets of visitors.

being significant revenue generators. The designation as European Capital of Culture 2020, will raise the profile of tourism in Galway and will give opportunities for the

development of cultural infrastructure and enhance and diversify tourism in the MASP area.

The MASP recognises that there is currently a deficit in hotel and tourist accommodation in the city and surrounding towns and that this situation will worsen as the impact of the Capital of Culture designation is realised. Accordingly, the Masterplan for the city should include sufficient tourist accommodation to service the anticipated expansion in visitor numbers.

The absence of a conference/concert/cultural venue of sufficient size is restraining Galway's ability to develop further as a tourism destination for business as well as leisure travellers.

The unique environment of Galway City and the surrounding area also plays an important tourism role. The extensive coastline, Lough Corrib, River Corrib, waterways and the city canal system are unique assets in the MASP area. Silverstrand and Salthill beaches which have blue flag beach status and Salthill promenade are part of a range of important coastal amenities within the city. Rinville Park and adjacent Galway Bay Sailing Club (just outside MASP) play an important recreation and tourism role for Galway.

## 6.7 Marine

Galway has a strong maritime culture and tradition being located in an area with a long trading history.

This is reflected in policy support for the sustainable growth of enterprise activities associated with the Marine Sector. The Port of Galway is ideally placed along the western seaboard to tap into emerging marine enterprises in particular, in the sustainable energy sector and off shore renewable energy.

The harbour is an important facility serving the City and wider region. The proposals for redevelopment and extension of Galway Harbour includes for commercial quays, a deep-water docking facility, fishing quays and provision of marina and water-based sport facilities. Improvement of the harbour facilities is of strategic importance and has the potential to contribute significantly to the economy of both the City and the region, increasing connectivity and contributing to the tourism, enterprise and off shore energy sectors.

There is also considerable scope for marine diversification into new applications for health, medicine and technology. Marine research at the Marine Institute in Oranmore links with the socio-economic, environmental and energy research conducted by NUIG's Ryan Institute and Socio-Economic Marine Research Unit (SEMRU) and GMIT's Marine and Freshwater Research Centre (MFRC). Formal strategic partnerships have been implemented between Údarás na Gaeltachta, NUIG, GMIT, the Marine Institute, Bord Iascaigh Mhara and other key players to drive the future growth of the marine sector in the Northern and western region.

The Socio-Economic Marine Research Unit (SEMRU) in NUIG and Marine and Freshwater Research Centre (MFRC) in GMIT also play an important role.

There are also significant amenity benefits within the marine sector with a range of beaches, open spaces and walkways offering tourism and leisure opportunities and enhancing health and well-being.

Biodiversity and environmental benefits are significant also, with high quality bathing waters, and a rich and diverse range of habitats and species reflected by the presence Galway Bay Special Area of Conservation and the Inner Galway Bay Special Protection Area within the city.

## 6.8 Creative & Culture Sector

Culture and creativity are at the heart of life in Galway City and it has a global reputation as the home of Druid Theatre Company, Galway International Arts Festival and Macnas. There is also a vibrant community arts sector that gives a strong cultural identity to the City and the wider area.

### Galway MASP Policy Objective No 12

#### Culture

- a. Support investment in a cultural/performance/conference venue in Galway City of a scale to attract international acts, exhibitions and conferences.
- b. Support investment in a gallery/display space in Galway City.

The strength and potential of the creative sector is evidenced in particular by designations such as the UNESCO

City of Film and European Capital of Culture 2020. There is considerable scope for the establishment of the metropolitan area as a hub for the Creative and Cultural Industries, building on the distinctive culture and creative legacy in the City environs.

The development of film, media and entertainment, design and craft have potential to add significant value to the overall economy and strengthen the identity of the MASP area.

A significant area of the MASP has Gaeltacht status – parts of the city, Bearna, Maigh Cuillinn and Baile Chláir - and Galway is a bilingual city and is a service centre for the Connemara Gaeltacht. The use of the Irish language is part of everyday life in Galway and the drive to achieve official status for the City as 'Bilingual Capital of Ireland' reflects the strong Gaeltacht culture and identity within the City.

## 6.9 Education – Becoming a Learning City

Both NUI Galway and GMIT offer a range of undergraduate and graduate programmes to support the economic development of the Region and the Metropolitan Area. Both work closely with key industries to ensure that graduates have appropriate training and skills.

### Galway MASP Policy Objective No 13 Education

- a. Support the creation of a Technological University encompassing GMIT (including an expanded footprint in the Metropolitan Area), Sligo, Letterkenny and Athlone IT's.
- b. Target development and support for specific sectors to achieve the benefits of clustering leading to a pool of skilled workers for those sectors and related support services.
- c. Support Galway as a Learning City, and Galway's role in the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities and seek sustainable investment and funding in initiatives under the Learning City initiative.
- d. Support measures to develop Galway as a Learning City including community education initiatives and support for lifelong learning and skills training including the development of the necessary infrastructure and facilities as well as re-skilling people for new industries or technologies.

The proposed Technological University by the Connacht-Ulster Alliance of the Institutes of Technology in Galway-Mayo, Athlone, Sligo & Letterkenny will further strengthen this.

Given its strength as a centre of education Galway has the opportunity to become a Learning City where knowledge and skills are acquired not just through formal education but at work and in the community. Galway should become a Learning City in a Learning Region.

UNESCO define a Learning City as a city which effectively mobilizes its resources across all sectors to maximise the opportunities for lifelong learning for all its citizens. This is particularly pertinent given the fast pace of disruptive technology innovation and the growing need for workforce reskilling in the context of the timelines of the NPF when the population over 65 is due to more than double (to make up 23% of the population) while those aged under 15 will decrease by around 10%.

The UNESCO approach to Lifelong Learning is intentionally city focused. Focusing efforts on a city first allows for better integration with the political structures while also engaging with the educational/training ecosystem, the most significant elements of which are generally located in cities e.g. third level institutions, training centres, colleges of further education. It is considered that by firstly establishing and integrating Learning City principles in Galway, this approach can be adopted across the NW Region.

Building a learning city requires a concrete action plan with strong political leadership and steadfast commitment and participation of all stakeholders. All Organisations and citizens are stakeholders in a Learning city.

Learning must be made enjoyable, available and accessible to all citizens so that they are inspired and empowered to continue learning throughout life.

## 6.10 Innovative Metropolitan Area

Galway's Innovation eco-system centred around the Galway City Innovation District's PorterShed and the innovation hubs at NUI Galway and GMIT has sparked considerable national and international interest.

Recently US multinational Genesys acquired AltoCloud a start-up with about 30 staff which began in NUI Galway with two people and was nurtured in PorterShed. Genesys is actively recruiting to grow this to 200 people and has made Galway its global HQ for Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning.

Enterprise Ireland recently approved funding for the expansion of GCID.

The Biallnnovate campus, focussed on agriculture and food innovation will open in Athenry in 2019.

A network of Innovation campuses including the above across the Metropolitan Area, some focussed on specific sectors others more general, will significantly increase the attractiveness of Galway as a destination for Foreign Direct Investment and expansion as well for Irish businesses

Key to the success of such enterprises is the provision of high-speed, resilient broadband, not just to offices and commercial premises but to homes across the Metropolitan Area.

### Galway MASP Policy Objective No 14

#### Innovation & Connectivity

- a. High-speed broadband is a priority across the region. However, there are areas within the Metropolitan Area which currently have unacceptably slow services. High speed broadband must be made available across the Galway Metropolitan Area as a priority.
- b. Establish a network of innovation centres (like the Portershed) providing Incubation space, business supports & collaboration, links to training and skills development in HEI's, working in tandem with the Skills Fora



## 7.0 Environment

### 7.1 Living Environment – Built Heritage

Galway has strong links with the past which are evident in the built form, architecture and archaeology of the City, in particular the historic City Core, and which are significant elements in the definition and experience of the urban environment and engender a strong sense of place. The designation of Architectural Conservation Areas, Protected Structures and archaeological monuments including the remnants of the medieval town wall reflect the importance of the built and archaeological heritage in the city. These are part of the experience that is Galway.

### 7.2 Green Network

The City also has a rich diversity of natural resources including Galway Bay and an extensive coastline, woodlands such as Merlin Park, Bearna Woods and Terryland Forest Park and waterways such as the River Corrib and the canals. The City Council's Recreation and Amenity Needs Study (RANS) 2008 provides a coordinated framework for future planning and management of recreation facilities and activities within the city, based on current and projected future needs.

Galway, through the extent and protections offered to its Green Network fits well as a Natural Place (Urban) with the Growth Ambition 1 – Natural Place developed later in the Strategy. A fifth of the total land area of the City is designated as protected habitats, recreation and amenity open space and agricultural land and comprise a green network within the city.

These spaces are a vital part of everyday urban life in Galway and this high-quality environment contributes to the attractiveness of the City and the health and well-being of the population. As such there is strong policy support to protect and enhance recreation and amenity space within the city.

The development of regeneration areas has potential for significant amenity use with improvements to the waterfront within the city centre. The Headford road area has considerable potential for increased amenity use, having direct links with the River Corrib and Terryland City Park and has potential to link further into the MASP area. It is also anticipated that these areas will provide opportunities for cultural and civic uses that could serve the MASP area.

### 7.3 Public Realm

Investment in public realm adds to the attractiveness of the city and contributes to the quality of life of those who live and work in the city.

The development of a Public Realm Strategy for the City Centre shall be undertaken and used to inform the future management and use of the public realm in a manner that complements measures set out in the Galway Transport Strategy. It should set out the details of phased co-ordinated projects that will enhance and improve the way the city functions on a day-today basis, resulting in long-term socio-economic, cultural and environmental benefits.

### 7.4 Community and Culture

The strong tradition of organised community and cultural activity with an array of structures and initiatives within the City contributes to the City as a successful place. The image of Galway, paralleled with an inclusive community, local distinctiveness and attractive lifestyle, is a critical asset for sustaining communities and good placemaking as well as for the attraction of inward investment.

The Cultural Sustainability Strategy 2016-2025 highlights the uniqueness of Galway culture and its richness and diversity and its importance to the future of the City and County enhancing the lives of

those living and working in Galway and the surrounding region. The implementation and further development of this strategy is a key objective of this MASP.

### 7.5 Climate Change Resilience

Climate change represents a significant challenge for the city and the reduction in our carbon footprint must be embedded through, for example, the delivery of sustainable land use patterns, sustainable transportation initiatives, protection and enhancement of the green network and enhancement of biodiversity, promotion of renewable energy technologies and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems.

The city is vulnerable to the harmful effects of climate change, in particular sea level encroachment and extreme weather events. The CFRAMs study has set out a Flood Risk Management Plan for the city which identifies a range of measures to manage flood risk in the city. The implementation of these measures is an objective of the MASP and is important in the future development of the city.

## 8.0 Social Infrastructure

The Galway MASP supports ongoing collaboration with regional stakeholders to ensure that social infrastructure such as education, health and community facilities are provided and to ensure that opportunities for social as well as physical regeneration are realised.

### Galway MASP Policy Objective No 15

#### Health

- a. Support investment in a new critical care hospital at Merlin Park in Galway city to service the needs of the region.