



GALWAY CHAMBER SUPPORTING ECONOMIC GROWTH IN GALWAY CITY AND COUNTY

Submitted to Galway City Council's Draft Development Plan

2017 - 2023

March 2016

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This document is a summary response to the Galway City Draft Development Plan. It reflects the perspective of the Galway Chamber of Commerce and the members it represents and specifically asks the City and County Executive to create one Development Plan that is ambitious and supports a new economic growth within the region that is equal to or better than the other two larger cities of Dublin and Cork. This document also reflects the Chamber's commitment to the development of an Atlantic Economic Corridor and the creation of a "city of scale" effect by unifying the larger urban centres from Limerick, through Galway, to Sligo.

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INTRODUCTION

Galway Chamber of Commerce has reviewed the Draft Galway City Development Plan 2017 to 2023 and appreciates the significant effort that is required to create such a plan. The review of this plan in no way seeks to diminish this effort or the professional integrity of those who have contributed to it. We do however fundamentally differ in our perspective on the basis and key drivers on this economic plan.

The City Executive should be aware that Galway Chamber of Commerce submitted an input on economic development within the city and identified key areas of development that we believe are necessary for economic growth within the City, County and indeed the region. This is not noted within the document and appears not to have been considered as part of the LECP process. The LECP does not contain an economic model for Galway (City or County). It rather contains high level descriptive goals. As such this draft plan uses other references including CSO figures and historic data and in the absence of an economic model the plans supports the status quo. The Galway Chamber do not support this approach and specifically call for an economic model that supports accelerated economic growth.

The Chamber is of the view that the Draft Galway City Development Plan 2017 – 2023 must be based upon a robust economic model for Galway City and County. While several existing documents including the Local Economic Development Plan, Galway Economic Sustainability Strategy, Galway County and City Enterprise Plan (2015), Galway LEO Plan, provide direction, they do not provide an aspirational economic plan, including defined growth targets.

Furthermore we have just completed, with our Chamber colleagues in the region, an economic strategy for the Atlantic Economic Corridor. This sets out our collective ambition to address the most significant challenge of the Western region/s and to reverse the high levels of unemployment and the endless migration and emigration of people from this part of Ireland. Ireland has the highest percentage (17.5%) of people (born in Ireland) living abroad out of all OECD countries. One out of every six Irish-born people currently resides in another country. While this is due in part to the recent economic crash, it is a reality in the Western part of Ireland that has continued since the foundation of the State. In addressing this challenge the AEC seeks, not only to reverse this completely unacceptable reality, but to make the region/s a significant driver of National and EU growth over the coming years.

In a Galway context the Chamber has set out its strongly held view that the City and County should lead this response and develop an economic plan that will underpin the accelerated growth that is necessary in the region. In this regard it believes that it is incumbent on the City and County acting together, with the support of the business community to develop a plan that has ambition, clarity of purpose and capacity to support the kind of economic growth necessary to make the region/s successful.

While the Chamber represents 500 companies employing in excess of 10,000 people, within the city and county, it, together with the other Chambers of the AEC, represent 2,500 companies with > 75,000 employees. The Chamber is clearly focused on the economic health and prosperity of the city, county and region and is fully aware that the ongoing success of this business and employment base creates the basis for healthy Communities (rural and urban).

Fully understanding the economic challenges and opportunities, the Chamber is committed to creating a new economic reality within the City, County and Region. It is committed to reversing the negative

economic trends and specifically the continuing migration and emigration of people, especially young people, from this region/s. It proposes a new a paradigm that takes account of global population trends, that fully endorses the need for sustainability, enthusiastically promotes a quality lifestyle for all those choosing to live here, and ambitiously proposes that this region/s can be a significant economic pillar of the National economy.

It is with this perspective that the Chamber believes that the Vision, Scale and Objectives of this Plan fall far short of what is needed, due in large part to the lack of a robust aspirational economic model for the City and County, within a regional and national context. Further we believe that one plan is required for the City and County and that it should have ambition equal to the two larger cities and provide to its region the leadership necessary to make that region successful economically and socially. It is with this in mind that we have set out our perspective on how this plan should be developed and the Vision and Scale that we believe is necessary for regional success. We do this with the intent of meaningful engagement in the development of a strategically focused plan that seeks to address the key and significant challenges and we are committed to working with both the City and County Executive to secure the necessary coalition of regional, national and EU stakeholders (public and private) to create this new reality.

VISION AND STRATEGIC GOALS

The Strategic Vision Galway as set out in the draft does not, in our view, provide a clear succinct vision of a future destination that is different to what exists. The aspiration embodied within the vision is agreeable and laudable but is not sufficient or compelling. The Chamber perspective is that the paradigm shift required is so significant that the vision itself must be compelling and the Strategic Goals should indeed be both a “goal” and should most definitely be “strategic”.

In order to do this we believe that a new context that will set out the scale of this plan is important. The plan should identify in both qualitative and quantitative terms what will be achieved. The critical consideration from the Chamber’s perspective is the projected population growth within the city and the adjacent county area. The projection of 98,700 for the city by 2022 and the associated profile of residential units required, suggest that the city will grow at its current rate which is below the current requirement and certainly below the requirement to achieve levels of employment necessary to end migration out of the region. The greater city population growth required to ensure that the region can reverse the current negative trends i.e. unemployment rising and significant migration and emigration from the region, must be estimated. It should be projected over a longer period than five years (up to 30 years) and should profile that growth within the five years. At a minimum the growth in this period should be equal to 50% of the projected migration from the region and should take consideration of 25% of the population that migrated and emigrated during the last 7 years, returning.

This growth in population must be targeted at the educated cohort emerging in the next five years and their retention. It should also focus on attracting back an educated and experienced population that will form the backbone of growth during this period. This must be reflected in the Strategic Goals which should look to a number of tangible (albeit difficult) targets including an increase in employment that

gets the region back on the trajectory of the East Coast and a GVA/person target that will move the region closer to the national average and the greater city area above the national average. The strategic goal should be a construct that clearly shows the effect of the city on the region.

Clearly this increase in population will be significant and exponential in nature, allowing time within the plan to “prepare”. This increase as it pertains to the growth in the indigenous base will effectively be a student population transition to work with an associated increase in accommodation and transport. The attraction of more experienced people back to the region will create an additional challenge of accommodating young families and while it may not be immediate, it will put further pressure on associated infrastructure beyond transport and accommodation including schools, primary and secondary care centres, and recreational facilities. As this increase in population affects both city and county it re-enforces the need for one plan for the city and county.

Again, the strategic goals associated must indicate the planned (target) growth trajectory and profile and the associated required build out of utilities, infrastructure and effect on residential and retail assets.

Of most importance to the Chamber is the provision of infrastructure including transport to support enterprise and industry. Within our previous submission the Chamber identified a number of specific initiatives including the new Port, an associated Marine Technology Park, an Innovation District, the creation of a new Food Market within the district, and the regeneration of the Medieval City as part of that district, the development of an inner Enterprise and Business Park, the development and extension of the outer Parks, and the development of the Airport asset as an enterprise and technology park. All of the initiatives proposed are necessary to provide the scale of employment necessary over the next thirty years.

The Chamber believe that the Development Plan must clearly identify within the Strategic Goals what the intent will be in terms of economic impact, including increase in people employed, increased GVA or GDP, impact on retail and impact on accommodation assets and transport.

FUTURE CITY DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

In setting out the Vision and Strategic Goals the plan must seek to deliver some portion of the intended new reality. It is necessary, in our opinion, that the city and county have a future view of Galway that is driven by the imperative of economic growth, driving employment, vibrant communities and attracting talent. That future view of Galway is absent and without it Galway and the region of which it is capital will decline.

It is the strongly held view of the Chamber that the City and County Executive should engage in an economic strategic planning process that is business and community led to create a shared view with an agreed economic model for the City and Region and one Galway Economic Plan to achieve that. In suggesting this we would draw attention to the work done over the past number of years by Derry City and County, which included its nearest neighbor Letterkenny/Donegal in the creation of their One Plan. This successful form of collective planning and excellent broad communication is a useful model to

study and given our collective ambition to achieve “City of Culture 2020” status may have other useful parallels to learn from.

The Chamber does not believe that the burden of preparing the Economic Model for the City and County should fall solely on the City Executive. **We recommend that an Economic Forum be created with mandate to develop the Economic Model for Galway.** We believe that this forum should be established as soon as practically possible, with the goal of issuing a model by the June of 2016. The work undertaken by the Forum must be appropriately staffed and funded.

This Economic Model will provide the context for the development of the City/County and set out a future basis for tackling the significant challenges with respect to transport, the adequate provision of utilities and the adequate provision of residential and commercial assets, will be best addressed by a longer term plan to redesign and extend the city. In this regard the **Chamber also recommends that a new “Master Plan”, based on the Economic Model, is necessary for the future development of Galway and that it must underpin the Economic Development Plan for Galway.**

CITY DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

The successful future development of Galway should have a major emphasis on the long term goal for its people, the city and the county. It is suggested that Galway city population and workforce will double by 2030 and that by 2050, Galway will have responded to the international trend and expectation that 85 percent of the world's population will be urban dwellers. This makes it imperative that we plan the future, specifically, in relation to city's development and work towards a 'Green', 'Smart City' which will improve the quality of life for Galway citizens and will be all-inclusive. To achieve this vision, a long term Galway Development Plan is required which would be progressed socially in feasible, planned phases.

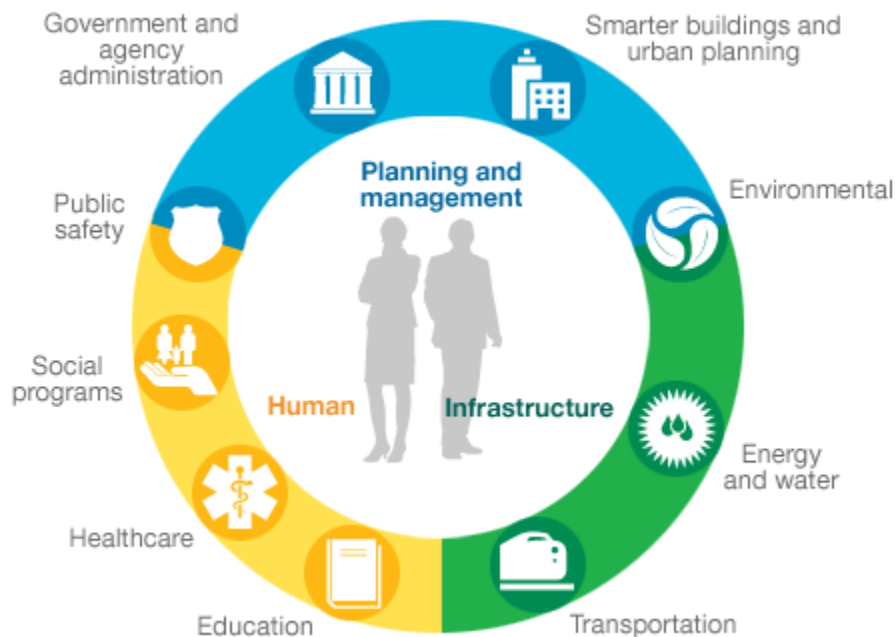
The initial phase should be focused on the immediate economic deficit in suitable buildings and infrastructure to support new enterprise investment. It should seek to provide Galway with a much needed international business campus to accommodate those wanting to invest and work here. As an example, and learning from the success of Chiswick Park in London, Galway could create its own city based, sustainable Business Park. Before redevelopment, Chiswick Park was originally a brown field site and has now incorporated vast business opportunities along with open, green communal spaces, enhancing the community in every aspect.



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A prime, underutilised site that could provide for Galway's rising demand for business space is that of Mervue Business & Technology Park. This area, when integrated to the Chamber's proposed inner Innovation District and expanded outward toward Ballybrit, could accommodate up to 45,000 jobs between the city centre and the outer ring. Mervue Business & Technology Park and areas adjacent including the Crown and Eircom sites in turn, are in great need of transformation to support urban rejuvenation. Its location would provide a much needed and vibrant city core based international business hub. This development and integration creates an increased population density and need for a public transport link with pedestrian hierarchy, along the lines of a SIEMEN's integrated transport solution, powered by local green energy, i.e. wind turbines - which would be a unique selling point of major interest to international companies.

Galway's new Development Plan has the opportunity to enhance the involvement and contribution of residents to urban development. At present, Barcelona's City Council is using public-private partnerships to encourage innovation in certain sectors. This parallels areas where Galway requires focus and revitalisation, such as transport, infrastructure, shopping, street lighting and environmental impact awareness. Barcelona is an excellent example of an innovative, all inclusive 'Smart City' and makes a perfect case study for Galway to base its future development on. Barcelona's journey towards becoming a smart city began over 30 years ago and was achieved in phases with a long term goal. It was voted European Capital of Innovation 2014.



An excellent comparison for Galway to follow is that of Barcelona's 22nd District. This seaside district incorporates educational, residential and industrial buildings in an energetic and dynamic area and has been chosen for the implementation of smart solutions, which are currently ongoing. Other smart cities to case study include Lisbon, Portugal, whose public transport network is extremely far-reaching and reliable.

Leading smart cities are beginning to embrace citizen co-creation models helping to progress the next generation of smarter cities. Vienna, for example, included citizens as investors in local solar plants as part of their 2050 renewable energy objective. It has also had a strong focus on citizen engagement in addressing affordable housing. And Vancouver engaged 30,000 residents in the co creation of the Vancouver Greenest City 2020 Action Plan with a collaborative strategy initiative.

With this new Development Plan, Galway has the opportunity to take small steps to get to a big future. However, examples discussed suggest that there must be a real commitment to an inclusive planning process. The international experience indicates that the economic, social and cultural consequences of poor citizen support and engagement within the formation of such significant democratic processes can only be societally onerous. All considered, this points toward a different approach to the planning process itself where Objectives, Policy, Standards,

Constraints, Strategies and Restrictions created through the application of traditional “administrative planning” must be managed within a new form of spatial governance that can lead to early and increased business and community support and endorsement.

Galway Chamber of Commerce proposes a new model of inclusive planning for the future development of the City and that it is adopted by both the City and County Council. We would encourage the Executive of both Councils to explore new planning models and indeed examples of transformational development including those mentioned. We would strongly suggest that the City Council should immediately adopt a policy of ensuring that all future Plans, Local Area Plans, Neighbourhood Plans and similar be developed using the “Charrette Process” ensuring broad representation of all community sections, including social, economic and cultural.

Narrative based policy unsupported by “form based masterplans” is a visible deficit of the current administratively centred approach to Development Plans. Masterplans focused on specific areas, sectors and communities etc. which emerge as an output of an “Urban Design Process” should demonstrate the strategic ambition of the Development Plan. Further, urban design masterplans should be created in response to clearly and democratically established community aspirations and needs using the “Charrette Process”.

In the longer term the Development Plan as a construct should become a consensus “bottom-up” business and community driven opportunity, which citizens can not only embrace but become the very authors and sponsors themselves. Here again, in the context of our collective commitment to the “City of Culture 2020”, we have an opportunity to demonstrate clearly our commitment to the civility of a city and its urban qualities and its use of the creative processes where this level of engagement is encouraged and democratically established in the creation of a future Masterplan that underpins the Economic Development Plan for Galway.

“Active citizenship and vibrant urban life are essential components of a good city and civic identity. To restore these where they are lacking, citizens must be involved in the evolution of their cities. They must feel that public space is in their communal ownership and responsibility. From the modest back street to the grand civic square these spaces belong to the citizen and make up the totality of the public domain, a public institution in its own right which like any other can enhance or frustrate our urban existence. The public domain is the theatre of an urban culture. It is where citizenships enacted, it is the glue that can bind an urban society”. - Architect Richard Rogers, winner of the RIBA Gold Medal, the Thomas Jefferson Medal, the RIBA Stirling Prize, the Minerva Medal and the Pritzker Prize

INPUTS TO THIS DRAFT ECONOMIC PLAN

The likely future design of the city will be driven by existing infrastructure, specifically the road and rail infrastructure, in particular to the East side of the city. This practical reality suggests an industry and enterprise corridor that will reach from the centre of Galway to Athenry. This corridor creates a backbone for the development of the city and immediately highlights challenges that must be addressed in any draft. The challenges will range from the current access and transport challenges at Parkmore to the need for new residential developments with increasing residential density on either side of the corridor. All protecting the beauty and value of the East side of the City including maximizing location with views to the South over Galway Bay on one side and West/North West over the Corrib on the other.

Protecting the centre and older parts of the city, with their rich heritage and cultural charm, is central to the development of the Innovation and Port district. However, the opportunity to create significant employment in this area requires significant and immediate new high density residential accommodation such that people can work and live within the heart of the city.

The development of the City has the advantage of planning on green or brown field sites such as the Mervue mentioned above. This opportunity together with an increase residential density will enable the expansion of the enterprise capacity in Galway and allow it to lead the West in the accelerated growth of jobs.

Importantly, it causes an increase in population density and movement, sufficient to support an urban public transport system. While the road and access network within the existing city requires immediate development, in addition to the proposed new ring, the longer term growth also requires a modern public transport solution. A longer term view of the city design will allow for the sensible planning of an urban light rail or wire system connecting West to East and integrating to the current rail backbone from City Centre to Athenry. This public transport system should be integrated with a revised road network that includes a number of new expressways radiating from the Port area to the planned out distribution ring. This must be part of any new Development Plan for the city.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The most significant deficit within this plan is the complete absence of an Economic Model on which an Economic Development Plan should be based. This in the context of the new responsibility of Local Government for economic development is so significant that the Chamber believes that the Draft Galway City Development Plan 2017 – 2023 should remain as a draft until a robust Economic Model has been created.

There is clearly an immediate need to address this at every level within the document. The Vision as suggested earlier must be compelling, must point to a new end point and must be articulated in an

economic context. Likewise the strategic goals must include at least two or three specific goals that are critical to economic success.

The Chamber would like to suggest a number of specific high levels goals that should be included within the Development Plan. As mentioned earlier, the context must set out the scale as well as the vision. It should reflect an economic measure that is applicable regionally. It should profile that economy in terms of employment, GVA per person, spend within the city, and other socio demographics that may be relevant.

In addition to this context three new specific Strategic Goals should be added to this document including:

1. State an economic target that is regional and defines Galway's commitment to the region.
2. Creation, with the private sector, of a Regional Investment Fund and Development Company that will drive development in the greater City and Region. The Development Company would apply to the European Investment Bank to establish a Joint Economic Support for Sustainable Development in City Areas (JESSICA)ⁱ Fund.
3. Commit to an accelerated development of the greater city and region through the creation of a new City Design and Economic model.

In addition, the Strategic Goals as currently set out in the draft should be re-written to include the economic imperative, with the following example:

1. The City will differentiate itself by promoting its high quality of life and attracting 20,000 new people to live in the city over the next five years.
2. The City will accelerate its development as a Regional Capital ensuring the full development of the region's natural resources, a reversal of current negative economic trends and sustaining the required growth in jobs and investment required of a capital.
3. Develop the City as a "Green Energy" urban reality using local renewable energy to attract new enterprise, to power a privately invested public transport system, and reducing carbon footprint to below the national goal within five years.
4. Use a Transactive Planning approach to ensure that the development of economic assets and infrastructure is in-line with sustainable economic growth and engages communities and business fully in the planning and pre-planning cycle.
5. Ensure that >10% of all public assets and amenities directly and preferentially support social enterprise designed to achieve 100% employment/contribution or focused on social inclusion of disadvantaged people.
6. Provide 10% of the Purchasing Budget to Small Business Innovation schemes to address city deficits including lack of amenities, promotion of healthy lifestyle, protection of the environment, inclusion of unemployed, promotion of citizenship, and the general betterment of the City experience for those who live, work and visit.
7. Provide 10% additional enterprise support funding to startup companies that promote a unique set of social and economic values that outwardly demonstrate the strength of diversity and a visible demonstration of a policy of inclusion in work, education and citizen engagement.

Galway Chamber of Commerce believes that this plan, at a minimum, must be focused on economic development on a scale that reflects the reality of the challenge now faced by the West of Ireland. In the absence of a collaborative planning process and understanding the deficit of the national planning system the Chamber believes that the Executive must engage with the business community, through the newly formed Economic Forum, to ensure critical preparation for growth is included within this plan. Further that the plan has a regional and national context commits to a change in course to respond properly to the challenges articulated above and by the AEC (document attached).

Finally, we are determined, in the best interest of business in Galway and the West of Ireland and in the best interest of the healthy society and communities that it contains, to drive an economic growth agenda. We will do this with Galway in centre stage and leading that growth.

In this context the Galway Chamber of Commerce makes **four recommendations** specifically in relation to this Draft Galway City Development Plan 2017 -2023:

1. A Robust Economic Model, stretching to 2030 but with a shorter term focus on the next five years, for Galway City and County, taking into account Regional and National Development, must be developed.
2. The Galway Economic Forum should be established immediately with a mandate to develop the Economic Model for Galway. The model should be issued by June 2016. The work undertaken by the Forum must be appropriately staffed and funded.
3. Due consideration should be given by the Galway Economic Forum to the creation of a Development Company, which would apply to the European Investment Bank (EIB) to establish a Joint Economic Support for Sustainable Development in City Areas (JESSICA) Fund.
4. The Draft Galway City Development Plan 2017 – 2023 should remain as a draft document until the Economic Model has been created and adopted.

ⁱ A JESSICA Fund is a rolling development fund. The EIB loans 50% of the capital cost of a qualifying commercial project at low interest rates. The other 50% must be raised locally, preferably through private investment. The money is repaid from the income generated by the project, but the money does not go back to the EIB, instead it goes into the JESSICA fund and is used to finance 50% of the next commercial project and so on.