



Galway Chamber
Ag caitiú gnó le chéile



Galway Chamber Local Election Manifesto 2019



Galway: A world city for living, working and visiting

A chara,

Local authorities play a far bigger role in our lives than many of us realise. Decisions and actions by our councils inform where and how we live; how we move around; how we utilise resources; and how our communities can thrive – or not.

Our local authorities are accountable, in most part, to their elected representatives, in our case Galway City Council.

That's why Galway Chamber hopes to continue working closely with Galway City Council and its elected Councillors as we each have a common aim of making Galway the best place in Ireland in which to live, work and to visit.

Our collective challenge is to make Galway a world city for living, working and visiting.

You have put yourself forward for election to Galway City Council and for that, on behalf of Galway Chamber, I thank you and wish you well in your campaign. We recognise that the demands on the time of effective city councillors can be a significant burden.

Galway Chamber represents the business community of the City and the wider region. Our members pay rates which every year funds over a third of Galway City Council's budget. Being such a substantial contributor to the Council's funds, Galway's business voice should be heard.

Earlier this month we asked our members' opinions on the top issues facing the incoming Galway City Council and, considering their priorities, we prepared Galway Chamber's Manifesto for Local Elections 2019 which is set out on the following pages.

Not surprisingly, transportation tops the list with the N6 Galway City Ring Road and increased end-to-end public transport corridors both highlighted as being urgent.



Incorporating our members' views, Galway Chamber's manifesto has six key themes:

- [Get Galway Moving](#) addresses the key traffic and transport issues including cycling and walking.
- [Make Galway a More Liveable City](#) looks at social as well as affordable housing, density, public realm and education.
- [Create a Structure for Growth](#) outlines the need to develop a shared vision for the Metropolitan Area which will inform planning and also looks at advancing the urban agenda.
- [Attract and Retain Jobs](#) makes proposals on commercial rates and local property tax as well as calling for more enterprise space in addition to measures to promote Galway.
- [Value our Visitors](#) addresses promoting Galway and the urgent need for a municipal conference and cultural centre.
- [Become a Sustainable City](#) suggests measures to address climate change, flooding and water supply.

Galway Chamber consulted with other business groups in the city and has received backing for this manifesto from Galway's West End and Galway City Business Association.

We are encouraging our members to raise many of these issues with you as you canvass over the coming weeks.

Galway Chamber looks forward to working with the elected members of City Council 2019-2024.



**Dave Hickey,
President,
Galway Chamber**

Get Galway Moving

- Urgent implementation of Galway City Transport Plan, particularly public transport corridors, park & ride and cycle-ways as well as improved pedestrian routes to actively encourage shift from private to public transport. To be done in parallel with, not after, planning and completion of N6 Galway City Ring Road.
- Open support of the plans for N6 Galway City Ring Road as a key enabler of Galway City Transport Plan.
- Immediate completion of short-term measures to reduce traffic congestion in Parkmore.
- Support expansion of Galway Port to facilitate larger vessels and free up inner Harbour lands for development.
- Improved facilities for visitor coach parking in Galway city and Salthill.
- An increase in the frequency of commuter rail services from County Galway locations to Ceannt Station.



Make Galway a More Liveable City

- Galway City Council to assume direct responsibility for the provision of social housing until housing waiting lists are reduced to an acceptable level. This should include refurbishment of existing unoccupied Council-owned or leased properties.
- Encourage development of affordable housing in Galway City Centre by, for example, partnering with state or semi-state landowners and developers to achieve the density goals required by Project Ireland 2040.
- Re-surfacing of pedestrian areas in city centre and paving throughout the city to be completed as quickly as possible.
- Public realm projects across Galway city should utilise social and community resources with the aim of creating a more 'liveable' environment.
- Develop closer working relationships with Galway's Higher Education Institutions, the Education and Training Board and the Regional Skills Forum with a particular focus on diversity in the development of enterprise training strategies.



Create a Structure for Growth

- Establish Galway City Development Agency with a remit to develop – in consultation with local communities – a detailed vision for the city-centre, Salthill and suburbs, identifying locations for development of high-rise buildings, affordable housing, offices, retail, tourism, leisure and hospitality. This will take account of the Galway City Transport Plan and its remit will include urban regeneration sites across the city in public as well as private ownership.
- Galway City Council to collaborate with Galway's civic and business groups to ensure that the Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) and Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy being developed by the NWRA prioritise Galway as the engine of economic growth for the North & West. Confirm that the MASP is consistent with the City's economic, social and

infrastructural goals; that it includes key infrastructural projects; and sets out an achievable vision for the sustainable increase in population in the existing urban footprint as well as the Metropolitan Area.

- Ensure that Galway's Metropolitan Area is extended to included feeder towns.
- Encourage wider participation from the business community in the Council's Strategic Policy Committees, LCDC, etc. Ensure that SPC's consider and report on views of all members.
- Work with City Councils in the four other cities to ensure that the 'urban agenda' – particularly urban redevelopment – continues to be the primary driver of the country's economic well-being.

Attract and Retain Jobs

- No increases in commercial rates over the term of the incoming Council. 3% increase supported by businesses for Galway 2020 to be re-applied to an Economic Development Fund from 2021 onwards.
- Water charges to be frozen at current level at least until leakage in the system is brought under control.
- Unrated commercial premises such as recently-built (e.g. since 2014) properties to be levied with an annual service charge until rates valuation is complete.
- Rates of Local Property Tax to increase at no more than the annual Consumer Price Index.
- Promote and assist in the creation of further enterprise spaces across the city so that Galway becomes a recognised innovation hub for ICT, Med-Tech, Food and other sectors.
- Actively engage with Galway's sister cities to develop closer economic ties which will increase export opportunities for local business in addition to attracting inward investment.
- Take active steps to encourage wider use of Irish in commercial as well as social life so that Galway lives up to its title as a bilingual city.



Value our Visitors

- Allocate resources to promoting Galway as an economic as well as tourist destination. Work with Galway Chamber and other bodies to develop and implement a comprehensive marketing plan for the city.
- Immediately recruit a suitably qualified and experienced professional for the currently-vacant position Galway City Council's Tourism Officer.
- Increase funding for strategic visitor attraction and engagement such as free Galway Wi-Fi, a business and visitor digital engagement strategy and Light Up Galway at Christmas.
- Identify a location and secure planning for a Municipal Cultural and Conference Centre. Work with semi-state bodies, European agencies and local as well as international businesses to develop a capital and operational funding model for a successful venue which will attract visitors to Galway.
- Continue to back the development of Connacht Rugby's Sportsground to attract increased visitors to Galway and create a new conference venue for the city.
- Support Galway 2020 European Capital of Culture and ensure it delivers a value-for-money cultural programme and an identifiable, positive legacy.



Become a Sustainable City

- Implement long-term flood defence strategy as outlined in CFRAM plans for Galway and Salthill.
- Create a road-map for the replacement or conversion of all carbon-emitting municipal vehicles (owned, hired, leased or used by sub-contractors) to renewable energy with 24 months.
- Incentivise businesses to improve their sustainability efforts as well as encouraging them to maintain their premises to a high standard.
- Develop a medium and long term-plan, aligned with the MASP, for sustainable as well as secure water supply and treatment in co-ordination with Irish Water. Prioritise reduction in leakage in existing network across Galway.



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