

Draft text and scope for review

The Greater Galway 2070 Charter *for sustainable urbanism in Ireland*

Foreword

The purpose of this charter is fourfold:

1. To set out a **core philosophy and future vision** for Galway's future that draws on its own identity and characteristics alongside practical lessons from other places.
2. To offer this up/out to **wider civic audiences across Ireland** as a 'charter for sustainable urbanism', drawing from the approaches to the Charter of Athens (CIAM and ECTP versions), and AoU Freiburg Charter,
3. To provide a **general stimulus for discussion** about the best use of land, buildings and transport modes within a changing national, regional and global context.
4. To provide a **rallying point for sustainable urbanism** that professional and other civic urbanists can sign up to.

Version 5, 26 April 2023

Part A Galway Charter 2070 - Anchoring Principles

Following detailed discussion between those with longstanding knowledge of Galway and its hinterland, working with input from others who have undertaken similar, long term transformational visions elsewhere, we have devised a Greater Galway 2070 Charter that is:

Sustainable: by looking long term, across generations, with a particular regard to physical, environmental and cultural assets, at a local, national and global scale.

Inclusive: by considering all sectors and ages of the current and future population, both as 'internal' residents, occupiers and businesses, but also as 'external' commuters and service users, tourist visitors and investors.

Prosperous: looking to support the long-term economic wellbeing and community prosperity of a confident, outward-facing Galway, alongside a regard for the quality of place that will support such economic wellbeing.

Proud: supportive of the special identity, heritage and positive 'brand' of Galway as an international, Atlantic-facing Irish city with deep roots in the Gaeltacht and many facets of Irish culture.

Part B Galway Charter 2070 - Propositions

Proposition 1 **Densification and ‘Intelligent Growth’:** we believe Galway should follow the model of a ‘compact city’, reinforcing its ‘gentle density’ and intensity of activity, minimising unnecessary sprawl across its rural hinterland, with all the negative social, economic and carbon implications.

Over the next half century we advocate accommodating a population of up to 250,000 broadly **within the city’s 2020 ‘footprint’**, inside the perimeter established by the Galway orbital route.

This means making the best use of our land resource by intensifying all existing parts of the city and only developing greenfield sites that adjoin the existing city envelope.

Proposition 2 **Liveable Neighbourhoods:** we propose that the key city ‘building blocks’ should be a series of walkable, liveable neighbourhoods with easy access to local facilities and services, and good access to the city centre. This ‘city of short distances’ should enable essential daily services, and some employment, to be readily accessible within a twenty minute walk.

We advocate the locating of new public services – schools, primary health care, libraries and local authority facilities – alongside private investment in commerce and shopping, in identifiable local neighbourhood centres or larger district centres, each with their respective catchments to support shopping, leisure and employment facilities.

Proposition 3 **Vibrant, Living Core:** we advocate that Galway should have a diverse, lively and occupied city centre, as a safe, energised place that includes residential occupation, alongside commerce and a ground floor level with active use, surveillance and interaction through windows and doors.

We propose conserving and curating the existing historic city centre by creating a pedestrian core which is the commercial, cultural and social centre of the region.

We advocate redeveloping the Headford/Tuam Road areas as a mixed use extension that links to back the historic core,

Galway University, the Corrib River, the old dock area and the urban hinterland in all directions.

We also support redevelopment of the inner harbour facilities for recreation, housing and as a base for marine activity and wind energy harvesting; and the sensitive incorporation of new teaching, research and student housing into the city core by the two universities.

Proposition 4

Sustainable Access and Transport: to sustain access to the constrained historic city, including its centre and many functions, we advocate minimising the impact of vehicle trips and traffic congestion, while ensuring greater opportunity to invest in and use mass public transit.

We support the investment in transport infrastructure necessary to remove private vehicular traffic from the city core, including an integrated public transport network where most dwellings are within 200 metres of a frequent, dependable service.

We support the development of safe, traffic-segregated active travel corridors linking the neighbourhoods and city core with the river, canals and coastal edges; reducing car dependence where possible, aiding to the transition to a carbon neutral city.

Proposition 5

Range of Affordable Accommodation: we advocate continuing to employ mechanisms ensure a fair and functional city through the provision of affordable premises to rent and to own. This applies not only to housing, retail and business premises, but also to cultural and community space.

We advocate a range of housing types and tenures to strengthen established neighbourhoods and underpin the formation of new suburban centres. This should combine a mix of medium density apartments and lower rise housing on infill/brownfield and greenfield sites, that specifically include a proportion of affordable provision.

Proposition 6

Stronger Design and Placemaking: we seek a much higher standard of design of buildings, space and infrastructure in order to reinforce our special heritage and sense of place, address climate change and energy needs, and build

continuing confidence and pride in our creative city and communities, both internally and externally.

We advocate pursuing the highest standards in design and construction of all building work, including adaptive re-use and new build, with the design review processes necessary to ensure these. This should include a three-dimensional approach to planning and shaping city form, and a design strategy for the public realm which is attractive and inclusive, robust and safe, supporting the transition towards more active travel.

Proposition 7

Broadest Range of Services: we advocate retaining and expanding as widely as possible the range of services available to people within Galway, not only inside the central core, but across our liveable neighbourhoods, in order to serve the local, regional, and in some instances national, population.

We support initiatives and investment by public, private and voluntary sectors to deliver high quality services, particularly in health, education, childcare, recreation to residents and communities.

This advocacy extends from core services like retail, health and food, to tourism and culture, science and technology, property and financial services, and to visitors and occasional users of the city as well as locals.

Proposition 8

An Inclusive, Social City: we believe Greater Galway's future depends on the skills, culture and co-operation of its people, whatever their background, age, ability or ethnicity. We propose building the future strength from an appreciation of the place, its history and including all such people in the discussions about shaping the future.

We support mechanisms that promote the development of dialogue, shared events and experiences, encouraging a strong sense of a welcoming and connected city.

Proposition 9

Creative Cultural Capital: we advocate building upon the renowned creative assets and identity of Galway as a culturally diverse, dynamic and creative place.

To consolidate it as a leading 'Creative City' into the future, we advocate more venues, events and activities, including some landmark/signature ones. We also advocate more space and support for creative production across a range of studios, venues and different media.

Proposition 10

Supporting a Progressive, Renewing Economy: we believe Galway needs to keep renewing its economy every 10 to 20 years, with fresh talent, economic development and infrastructure to support that. Public and private sectors need to work in partnership to embrace a knowledge-based, digital economy that will attract inward investment and encourage indigenous entrepreneurship.

Currently our focus should include innovation and technology, education and skills, culture and the arts, health and services, though these may change over time. It will be important that the physical city and its component elements can support and underpin the attraction and retention of the companies, start-ups and workers we will need in these sectors, as well as international tourists and students.

Proposition 11

Greener Infrastructure: we propose the continuing development of a city-wide network of 'blue and green' infrastructure that links residents to the natural world, providing local amenity and identity, enhancing biodiversity, supporting leisure and wellbeing, and fundamentally underpinning climate resilience.

We advocate strong networks that connect existing green and blue biodiversity reservoirs with new provision to build up a wide range of parks and amenity/play space and which supports an increasing range of flora and fauna all across the city.

We also advocate policy and design measures to support and foster greater biodiversity within all new and retrofitted development in the city.

Proposition 12

Co-ordinated Delivery: We aim to communicate the Charter's Vision for Greater Galway 2070 to the widest possible audience and promote collaboration in delivering on the potential of the City and its hinterland, empowering

communities to take ownership of, and contribute to, the making of their future neighbourhoods and city.

The implementation of Charter themes needs to be supported and co-delivered by a grouping of 'place leader' agencies and actors in an inclusive manner. They should review the direction and actions regularly with civic organisations, local business and the wider citizens and stakeholders, who all provide cross-community capacity.

To ensure that Galway achieves success over time, we will need to collectively lever national, regional, even international support - in finance for land and public realm investment, economic infrastructure and development construction, as well as effective planning policy, placemaking tools (such as 3-d modelling) and delivery processes.

Part C Declaration (for sign up to finalised version)

WE, the undersigned, hereby declare our support for the **Principles and Propositions** of the **Greater Galway 2070 Charter**. We hold that it provides a compelling vision and sound guidance for the development of Greater Galway over the coming decades, serving as a tool to avoid the risks of sprawl and congestion, excessive gentrification, or loss of place identity.

We commend its content to the politicians and policymakers, community and businesses, investors and service providers of Galway, and indeed, where relevant, to other comparable towns and cities across Ireland.

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