

Appendix A
AMENDED DRAFT GALWAY METROPLITAN AREA STRATEGIC PLAN

1.1 Introduction

The Galway Metropolitan Area has been identified by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, which includes Galway City administrative area and the settlements of Bearna, Baile Chláir and Oranmore in the county administrative area. The figure below illustrates the boundaries as provided by the Department.

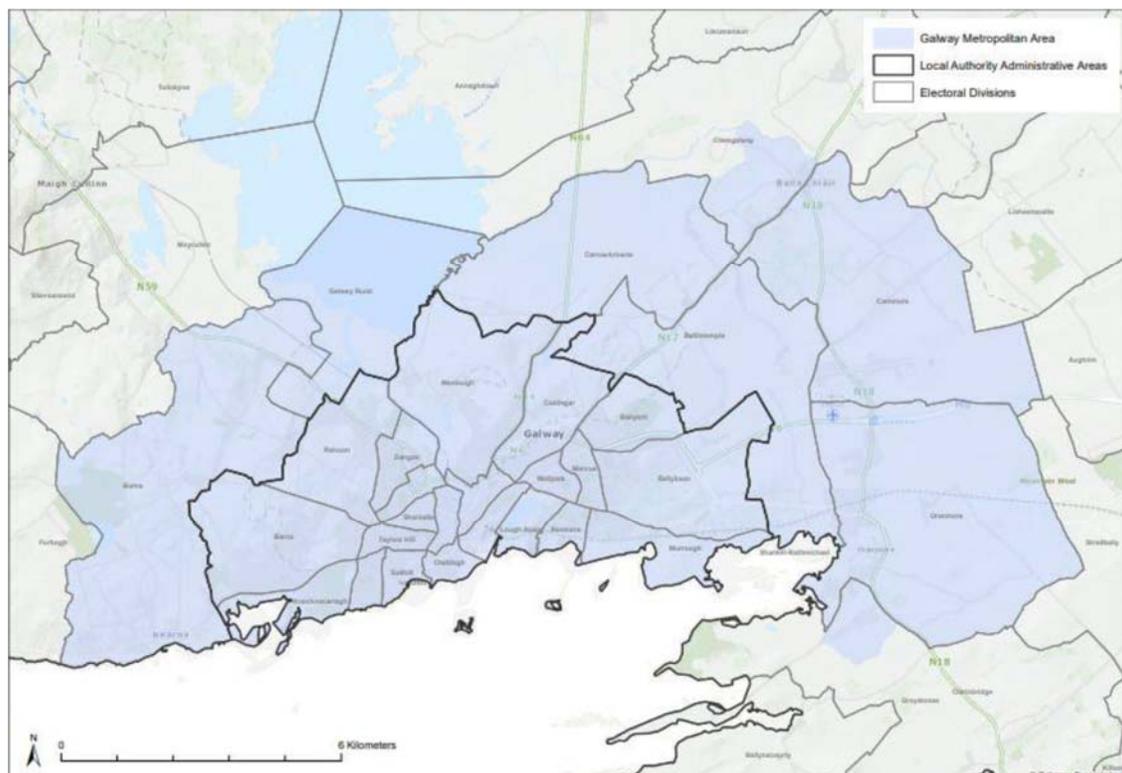


Figure 1.1-Galway Metropolitan Area

The Galway Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan, forms part of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) which is a twelve-year strategic planning and investment framework for the region.

The Galway Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan will set out clear and concise strategy to:

- *Identify the key change parameters for this area i.e population, employment, housing, retail, travel patterns and key renewal, development and amenity areas;*
- *Work out a sequence of infrastructure prioritisation, delivery and co-ordination;*
and
- *Deliver compact regeneration and growth.*

2.2 Vision

In order to achieve these strategic issues, the following vision will need to be achieved and implemented for the Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan:

The Galway Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan will continue to be a sustainable, competitive, compact and accessible driver for the north-west region, of a scale that supports employment, population growth and a high quality of life, maintains its distinctive identity and supports its rich heritage, language and cultural experience

2.3 Strategy

As identified in *Project Ireland 2040-The National Planning Framework* the main thrust of the metropolitan area is to focus on the strategic framework and mechanism in the delivery of growth in population and development potential in terms of residential, employment, industry retail and transport infrastructure. It is considered that the ten *National Strategic Outcomes* will be key in the delivery of the new metropolitan areas:

- Compact Growth;
- Enhanced Regional Accessibility;
- Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities;
- Sustainable Mobility;
- A Strong Economy Supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills;
- High-Quality International Connectivity;
- Enhanced Amenities and Heritage;
- Transition to a low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society;
- Sustainable Management of Water, waste and other Environmental Resources;
- Access to Quality Childcare, Education and Health Services.

2.4 National Strategic Outcomes

2.4.1 Compact Growth

2.4.2 Galway Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan:

Galway city administrative area, and the identified settlements of Bearna, Oranmore and Baile Chláir have considerable land capacity that can significantly contribute to meeting the housing demands based on population targets up to 2026 set out in the NPF and the RSES.

The current population of the settlements within the MASP boundary are:

Galway City	79,000
Oranmore	4,990
Bearna	1,998
Baile Chláir	1,248

The population of Galway City and County is 258,000 as per the census from 2016. The population allocation for Galway contained in the National Planning Framework suggested that Galway City and County would grow to between 300,000 and 308,500 by 2026 and to between 322,000 and 334,500 by 2031. However, there is no indication on the suggested split of this population growth between City and County.

The NPF also contains the following objectives:

- Deliver at least 50% of new city housing within the existing built up footprint of Galway City and suburbs;
- Deliver at least 30% of all new housing within the existing built up footprint of settlements with a population of over 1,500 (excluding Galway Metropolitan Area);
- Identify and develop quality green infrastructure within and adjacent to the Cities, Regional Growth Centres and Key Towns.

Therefore taking the upper value of population growth, Galway City and County are expected to grow by a combined 50,000 in the period to 2026, it is anticipated that the Galway City administrative area will accommodate 25,000 of this increase. It is noted that this figure for population growth is a target and not a limit.

The strategic sites identified are of a scale that present the opportunity and capacity to deliver the quantum of housing on the appropriate sites, subject to the adequate provision of infrastructure and waste water services. They are summarised as follows:

2.4.2.1 Galway City

- (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) Eyre Square East.

2.4.2.2 Metropolitan Area within County Administrative area:

- (vi) Baile Chláir,
- (vii) Bearnna,
- (viii) Oranmore,
- (ix) Garraun,
- (x) Briarhill.

(i). 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.

(ii) Development of Regeneration Lands

Regeneration Lands at Ceannt Station Quarter (circa 6Ha) and 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.

(iii) 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 co-ordinated with essential services and community facilities. It has 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 addition, the Ardaun area extends into the county administrative area providing further future development opportunities.

(iv). 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 which will be reserved for residential and other uses (11ha).

(v). Eyre Square East

There are a number of key opportunity sites that have potential scope for residential development. These include Eyre Square East which comprises a significant block of properties assembled for redevelopment as a new commercial quarter in the city centre.

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.

2.4.2.2 Metropolitan Area within County Administrative area:

The metropolitan area of the county identifies the existing settlements of Bearna, Oranmore and Baile Chláir. Bearna and Baile Chláir have recently been the subject of new settlement plans incorporated into the Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021. The Oranmore Local Area Plan 2012-2022 is currently in situ. These three plans

have identified residential zonings with an approximate quantity of 55ha residential phase 1 zoned lands.

(vi). Baile Chláir

Baile Chláir is a Gaeltacht settlement and is located to the north of Galway City. There is a quantum of 7.12ha of residential phase 1 lands identified in Baile Chláir. In addition to residential zoned lands there are lands identified as mixed-use and employment uses in the village. Based on the waste water infrastructure there is capacity to enable Baile Chláir to accommodate further development.

(vii). Bearnna

Bearnna is located to the west of Galway City on the R336. There is a quantum of 14.36ha of residential phase 1 lands identified in Bearnna. It is considered that there is potential for Bearnna to accommodate increased population. The village of Bearnna is serviced through the Mutton Island Waste Water Treatment Plant.

(viii). Oranmore

Oranmore is located to the east of Galway city. There is a quantum of 33ha of lands identified for Residential Phase 1 lands in Oranmore. In addition to residential zoned lands there are lands identified as mixed-use and employment uses in the village. Oranmore is serviced through the Mutton Island Waste Water Treatment Plant. There is potential for Oranmore to accommodate an increase in population allocation.

(ix). Garraun

The lands at Garraun, Oranmore have been identified as a Strategic Reserve Area in the Oranmore LAP 2012 – 2022. This area is served by the Galway-Dublin/Limerick rail service and could accommodate high density compact development over the term of the MASP. These lands represent a sequential and progressive development step beyond the existing City boundary and could accommodate residential and employment uses with circa 25ha of lands with potential for development.

(x). Briarhill

Briarhill is located to the immediate east of the city administration area. There is significant potential for residential development along with further employment opportunities that would complement the existing business/employment uses that are currently located in this area. The construction of the N6 Galway City Ring Road (N6 GCRR) and the implementation of the policies/objectives of the Galway Transport Strategy will support the development of the lands at Briarhill.

2.5 Infrastructure

It is considered the current infrastructure in relation to waste water services is currently adequate to accommodate the projected growth up to 2026 in the metropolitan area. In the event that further capacity is required, delivery of the (Galway East Main Drainage Scheme) referred to elsewhere in the Strategy will be required to meet this demand. The provision of road and rail infrastructure is key if the projected populations identified in the National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic

Strategy are to be fulfilled. Investment in the rail network and the dualing of the tracks between Athlone and Galway and the construction of the N6GCRR are key to the successful delivery of the metropolitan plan.

2.6 Enhanced Regional Accessibility

The MASP area has access to Galway's motorway network, which will include the Galway City Ring Road. The importance of access to the wider region is essential and in recent years the investment in the motorway network has resulted in greater access to the East and South of the country. This improved access has resulted in the region becoming more accessible to national and international markets. The regional airports of Knock and Shannon are now accessible within a one hour driving range.

2.7 Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities

The population projections identified in the National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial Economic Strategy will ensure that the Galway Metropolitan area will develop in a cohesive and coordinated manner. The rural areas outside of the metropolitan area will also be identified to grow in a co-ordinated manner and population allocations will be identified for towns and other rural settlements. The success of the Galway Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan will have an indirect impact on the growth of the rural areas in the county.

2.8 Sustainable Mobility

A key objective of Project Ireland 2040, is to reduce journey times to work and promote multi-modal transport options for inhabitants. The Galway Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan, will primarily focus on growth parameters in terms of populations and employment. The completion of the M6 motorway in 2009 considerably reduced travel times from Dublin to Galway and has made the City more accessible nationally.

The addition of the motorway network also adds to the accessibility of the Metropolitan Area and improved strategic linkage within the whole region. The areas of Oranmore and Baile Chláir are readily accessible to the M6/M18 motorway network. Completion of the Galway City Ring Road will provide motorway access to the settlement of Bearna and allow greater east-west traffic movements.

The objective is to continue to improve the road network, bus corridors around the city and in particular to support the delivery of the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS) including the 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.

2.9 A Strong Economy Supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills

Galway city and environs 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 and environs. There is an established employment centre in the Briarhill/Parkmore area. It is considered that these employment centres in addition with lands identified will provide impetus for growth in this sector. 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 and areas such as Briarhill/Parkmore and the former Galway Airport site are ideally placed to meet these future demands. The Galway Airport Site is also a key opportunity site in the ownership of Galway City Council and Galway County Council with significant development potential for a number of uses. A number of options for its future use are emerging and will be progressed. Garraun has also been identified as a strategic site and with a train station is ideally located to accommodate growth in population and employment potential.

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 co-ordinated 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, Oranmore 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 co-ordinated development strategy for this area.

Significant IDA lands are also available on the IDA lands at Parkmore (38ha) and Oranmore (58ha) which have huge potential to accommodate future large-scale employment. Baile Chláir has an existing business and enterprise facility with capacity for further employment development.

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. Galway Harbour is ideally placed along the western seaboard to tap into emerging marine enterprises, 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 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 linked with the environmental, marine and energy research at the Ryan Institute NUIG are key players in the future growth of this sector in the Northern and Western Region. The Socio-Economic Marine Research Unit (SEMURU) 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.

2.10 High-Quality International Connectivity

The investment in Knock Airport by Galway City and County Councils and other Local Authorities in the region and the increased expansion of the Airport in terms of additional flights will increase the international connectivity of Galway City and metropolitan areas. The location of Galway City and Metropolitan Area, with the successful implementation of the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS) which includes the provision of the N6 GCRR will ensure that the growth parameters as identified will be realised. With the construction of the N6 GCRR there will be instant access to the established motorway network and as such international connectivity via Knock, Shannon and Dublin airports can be easily achieved.

2.11 Enhanced Amenities and 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.

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.

2.12 Transition to a low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society

Climate change represents a significant challenge for the MASP area 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 Galway Metropolitan area 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. The existing Plans of Bearna, Baile Chláir and Oranmore have had Stage 2 Flood Risk Assessments carried out in accordance with *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management-Guidelines for Planning Authorities, November 2009*. There are a

number of objectives included in the plans that address climate change and adaptation.

2.13 Sustainable Management of Water, Waste and other Environmental Resource

The delivery and success of the Galway Metropolitan Area will be based on the delivery of a sustainable management of water, waste and other measures. With the expected growth figures outlined in the RSES there will be an urgent requirement for the delivery of the East Galway Main Drainage Scheme which has been identified as a key future growth enabler for Galway as identified in the National Planning Framework. In addition, there will be requirement for improvements in the development of the Galway City Drainage Area Plan and Strategic (water supply) Network Plans for the East Galway area.

2.14 Access to Quality Childcare, Education and Health Services

The Galway Metropolitan Area is served by a number of primary and secondary schools along with 3 third level colleges as well as 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 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. In addition, the new areas identified for residential growth will also identify additional lands for educational requirements.

The National University of Ireland, Galway (NUIG) and Galway Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT) are huge assets to the city, with the latter having the potential to develop as a Technological University as part of the Connaught /Ulster Alliance. They add significant value to Galway City in terms of being a significant employer, playing a major role in education provision and though the development of a knowledge economy. Both NUIG and GMIT have collaborative research and training roles with industry which is supported also by national investment research programmes such as REMEDI and GMedTech. Research competencies have been growing particularly in the life sciences area in NUIG and in the medical technologies research group at GMIT.

Having third level institutions of such calibre in Galway City is a key factor for companies choosing to locate in Galway as they have access to a very highly educated and skilled workforce at their doorstep. They are also responsive to the research demands of industry. The presence of a third level student population of over 24,000

is also a significant contributor to the local economy and adds to the vibrancy of diversity of the City and this needs to be built upon. It should be noted that this quantum of students within the cities educational facilities places great pressure on the existing housing stock. 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.

A significant element of employment in the city is concentrated in the hospitals. Galway is a centre for regional health care services for the whole Region with Galway University Hospitals (Merlin and UHG) providing a secondary, regional and supra-regional service in respect of cardiology and cancer services. They are also one of eight major academic teaching hospitals in Ireland. The Bon Secours and the Galway Clinic are also important private health care providers. The capacity for hospital expansion through intensification and re-development of their existing sites and/or buildings needs to be supported. There is sufficient undeveloped lands in the Merlin Park Campus with the potential to deliver a 21st Century facility to serve the MASP and increased population planned for the region.

2.15 Objectives to achieve Ten Strategic Outcomes

Compact Growth MASP Policy Objective 1

(a). Within the Galway Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan, the Planning Authorities will support the delivery of more compact residential-led mixed urban communities of appropriate scale and density in conjunction with associated infrastructure requirements.

(b). Within the Galway Metropolitan Area, the Planning Authorities will identify key sites for regeneration and growth and develop strategic plans in the form of masterplans for these identified areas where necessary and appropriate.

Enhanced Regional Accessibility MASP Policy Objective 2

Support the delivery of the Galway City Ring Road as identified as a key future growth enabler for Galway within the National Planning Framework which will provide access to and from Galway city and county and the wider region.

Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities MASP Policy Objective 3

Support the growth of the Galway Metropolitan Area in a manner, which will sustain the adjoining rural areas in the county, including in relation to providing an increased concentrated employment base in the MASP area.

Sustainable Mobility MASP Policy Objective 4

(a). Support the improvements in public transport as contained in the Galway Transport Strategy;

(b). Support increased capacity on the Galway Dublin rail line, including a dual track from Athlone to Galway;

(c). Support the development of a strategic cycleway network linking the periphery of the MASP area with Galway City and including the Dublin-Clifden greenway.

A Strong Economy supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills MASP Policy Objective 5

Support and facilitate the delivery of lands for employment uses including foreign direct investment and link in with the third level institutions in Galway, improving the existing relationship between the employers and these institutions.

High-Quality International Connectivity MASP Policy Objective 6

Support the importance of the Regional Airports to the economy of Galway Metropolitan Area and the central role that connectivity to international markets plays in the development of the local economy.

Enhanced Amenity and Heritage MASP Policy Objective 7

Support and facilitate the enhanced amenity and heritage of Galway's natural and built environment, which would include the provision of greenway infrastructure in the Galway Metropolitan Area.

Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society MASP Policy Objective 8

Emphasis will continue to be placed on creating a low carbon economy, making resource efficiency a priority and encouraging innovation and new enterprise especially in the area of renewable technologies.

Sustainable Management of Water, Waste and Other Environmental Resources MASP Policy Objective 9

- (a) Support the delivery and implementation of Irish Water's Network reinforcement of water services infrastructure serving Galway City and Metropolitan Areas;
- (b) Support the delivery of the Galway East Main Drainage Wastewater Treatment Plant as a key growth enabler for the delivery of future development in the Galway Metropolitan Area.

Access to Quality Childcare, Education and Health Services MASP Policy Objective 10

Support the provision of childcare facilities in close proximity to existing and new residential and employment sites within the Galway Metropolitan Area.