



Chapter 1 Overall Strategy

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1.1 Strategy

Context

Galway has sustained the strong economic and population growth which has spanned the period of the last two development plans. The city has been consistently viewed as a very attractive place to live and invest. It has a very vibrant and high quality of life, cultural diversity and a significant natural and built heritage. The National Spatial Strategy (NSS) has identified the city as having reached a strategic threshold, a 'critical mass', in terms of its concentration of population, education, and job opportunities that is favourable for future growth. The designation of gateway status under the NSS has also acknowledged the potential the city has for achieving the national objectives of balanced regional development.



This plan has a key aim to maintain and build upon the city's critical mass in order to strengthen economic growth and competitiveness and address the negative impacts of recent growth. The principles of sustainability are fundamental to this approach, as is the need to correspondingly develop and improve the social, environmental and cultural aspects of the city.

Population trends and projections.

Population trends are critical to the development plan process. Changes in population, household patterns and spatial distribution of population are the basis on which estimates for land and services for housing, employment, retailing, community, health, educational and recreational needs are determined.

The population trends in Galway indicate that significant growth has occurred since the late 80's driven by the natural rate of increase and by significant net migration. This has been a national trend supported by a strong and rapidly developing economy. The other notable change has been the increase in household formations and the consequent reduction in household size. (See Table 1.1)

Table 1.1 Population and Household Nos. of Galway City

Year	Population	% Change*	Households Nos.	% Change
1986	47,104	----	12,458	----
1991	50,853	8%	14,572	17%
1996	57,095	12%	17,769	22%
2002	65,832	15%	21,053	19%

Source : Census of Population (* note % rounded off to nearest whole number)



The population projections for Galway City adopted a methodology which used assumptions regarding demographic trends in relation to fertility rates, mortality rates and migration. This work was carried out in the context of projections made in the National Spatial Strategy and the sub-regional study – Galway Transportation & Planning Study and therefore assumes active regional development policies which affect assumptions regarding migration. Student population, which is significant in the city, has been particularly accounted for in the projections as this group does not share the same demographic characteristics with other equivalent age cohorts. This is consistent with previous development plan projections. Another reasonable assumption was the expectation that the trend of falling household sizes will continue. This has been the pattern elsewhere where economic prosperity has been experienced coupled with significant social change.

Although the development plan will only be in place until 2011 it is necessary to have a more strategic long – term outlook which marries in with the GTPS plan up to 2016 and the NSS which spans the period up to 2020. The projections as stated previously have been made in the context of a strategy which extends beyond the spatial boundaries of the city.

The projections indicate that population growth within the city will decline gradually. However growth will still be significant. An essential element of the projections is the implementation of regional development policies and the growth strategy recommended in the GTPS (discussed in section 1.4). When viewed in this context it can be seen that growth immediately outside of the city in the planned county section of the Ardaun Corridor will be significant and complementary to the directed growth in the city section of the Ardaun Corridor.

Table 1.2 Projections of Households and Population up to year 2022

Year	Population	Households	Average Household Size	Population Change	Household Change
2002	65,832	21,776	3.02		
2007	69,372	25,503	2.72	3540	3727
2012	71,568	27,533	2.60	2196	2030
2017	72,677	28,347	2.56	1109	814
2022	73,188	29,198	2.51	511	851

1.2 Overall Goals

The overall goals of the development plan are the strategic priorities of the Council in respect of the future development and use of land in the city. They determine the approach taken to manage and plan for growth. The development of the city needs this focused approach which is in fact the vision of Galway and which has evolved through the public consultation process and through the goals in the Galway City Development Board Strategy (GCDB) Gaillimh Beo agus Briomhar 2002 – 2012 .

The strategic goals are –

- Promote balanced and sustainable economic development that will enable Galway City to fulfil its role as a national gateway and a regional centre.
- Provide for a built and natural environment that is of high quality and that contributes to providing a good quality of life for residents and visitors.
- Promote social inclusion and the implementation of the National Anti-poverty Strategy.
- Facilitate the achievement of the goals contained in the (GCDB) Strategy Gaillimh Beo agus Briomhar 2002-2012.





Strategic Aims

The overall goals are in turn integrated into strategic aims of what the Council seeks to achieve in the lifespan of the plan. These aims also form the framework for the formulation of policies and specific objectives that are contained in the next chapters. The strategic aims are –

- Facilitate the future development of Galway City within the strategic framework of the GTPS.

This requires that the Council adopt the growth strategy that is predominantly led by the recommendations of the GTPS. This strategy promotes the development of the city as a gateway and regional growth centre. It will mean accommodating additional growth in a sustainable manner, supporting the development of the Ardaun Corridor and the surrounding towns and villages. It will require the co-ordination of infrastructure and the linkage of development with public transport and services. This implies a high level of co-operation with Galway County Council. The ultimate aim of this growth strategy is to promote the social and economic well being of the city and to enhance the quality of life for its citizens.



- Support and promote the development of a high quality transport system within and linking the city.

It is acknowledged that the Council is not a transport provider but land-use decisions and policies are proposed in the plan which will contribute to the development and the viability of a sustainable integrated transportation system in the city. The integration of land use and transportation and the promotion of higher densities is central to this aim. In addition it includes the protection and safeguarding of strategic corridors for roads and bus routes which can support a “real choice” public transportation system in the city and environs. An integration of transport modes will include for the possibility of interchange between different types of transport car and bus, bus and walking, rail and bus. This will be further facilitated through the provision of park and rides.


The development of Ardaun, the main settlement strategy for the city is consistent with this aim also. It will focus development into a self-sustaining corridor, where opportunities for achieving mix of uses will be maximized in order to contain journeys and travel and where it would be possible, owing to critical mass to have a dedicated public transport system. In addition the Council will co-ordinate with the relevant service providers in the context of all transportation issues and is placing high priority on public transport in this context. This will include for the facilitation of key road projects, promotion of rail options, bus priority measures, improvement for cycling and pedestrian facilities.

The strategic framework for this aim is the GTPS. In order to build on and develop the strategic measures the Council will prepare an integrated transportation plan for the city.

- Promote balanced sustainable economic development and employment opportunities.

The policies, which support this aim, are all grounded in the fact that Galway is a designated gateway under the NSS, the city which creates a critical mass that helps sustain job growth in the





region. This dynamism must be maintained and will require an adequate level of land to be zoned and serviced for industrial, commercial and retail purposes. It requires the policies in the plan to be flexible enough to accommodate a range of employment opportunities in traditional sectors which includes retailing, education, offices and services as well as the new niche bio-medical and information technology industries and to facilitate the supports for culture and tourism markets. The critical linkages between third level education and industry in the city means that the development of these institutions is an important objective in the plan for the promotion of sustainable job opportunities. The mis-match between job locations and residential areas is being redressed through the current residential developments in the east of the city. This policy of co-location will be further pursued through judicious land use zoning in the plan. It is acknowledged that many job opportunities will be created on lands immediately outside of the city, the plan makes provision for strategic infrastructural investment and transport links to support this development.

- Maximise the economic opportunities for all persons in the city and facilitate a wide range of access to social, community and housing facilities.

This aim is strongly linked in with the (GCDB) Strategy Gaillimh Beo agus Briomhar 2002 – 2012. The plan includes policies and objectives that contribute to the concept of social inclusion, to the facilitation of critical community infrastructure and to the achievement of an accessible environment. The plan is committed to the promotion of a transportation system that gives people real choices and broadens their opportunities for employment, it also makes specific provision for childcare facilities which further supports employment choices. The implementation of the Housing Strategy which is included in the plan has an objective of securing all housing needs in the city. This includes for zoning sufficient lands for housing, requiring an adequate mix in size and type of housing and for reserving 20% of housing developments for social and affordable housing which will help in the achievement of this strategic aim.

- Promote a high quality built environment through protection of archaeological/architectural heritage and through the encouragement of good urban design.

The plan acknowledges all statutory heritage designations and gives policy direction in this regard to protect these significant assets of Galway City. The plan includes for the listing of over 600 structures on the register of protected structures. It also makes proposals for the establishment of a number of Architectural Conservation Areas in the city and has specific spatial objectives for other areas. The achievement of high quality urban design is a central theme of the plan. This aim is translated into policy direction on urban design and into the encouragement of sustainable neighbourhoods which applies to both existing and future residential developments. In addition the preparation of local area plans and specific design standards for certain areas will also help achieve good urban design standards and sustainable communities.

- Protect and promote the natural heritage of the city and provide for sustainable recreational opportunities.

This aim will be addressed through the promotion of a green network in the city which will include for the protection of all statutory natural designations, the development of sustainable recreational opportunities and the development of adequate open space standards within neighbourhoods. The conservation of the natural heritage and the enhancement of biodiversity is an important aspect of this approach. This is linked in with the Council's Parks & Amenity Strategy and the GCDB Strategy. In this regard also, the plan has a specific objective to prepare a recreational needs study which will include for an approach that integrates the resources of natural heritage areas and amenity/recreational areas and gives direction on the proper protection, management and enhancement of this resource.





- Protect the prime role of the city centre and promote areas in need of regeneration.

Protection of the significant role of the city centre was included for in previous development plans, the current plan expands on these policies. The retail strategy reinforces the regional role of the city and the sequential test approach which supports the expansion of the city centre into the Ceann Station area and if appropriate, into the southern section of the Headford Road. It also makes provision for further linkage in the city centre to the coast area through regeneration of part of the harbour site. The importance of the built heritage and tourist role of the city is supported by a number of policies and objectives. It is also strongly linked with the transportation policies and in particular the promotion of opportunities for improvements in the public transport.

- Provide for essential infrastructure and minimise the adverse impacts of development on the environment.

In order to sustain the economic growth that Galway has experienced and to fulfil its role as a gateway it is essential that the strategic needs for infrastructure such as public transport, drainage, water, roads, waste management are prioritised. The plan indicates the proposals the Council has in this regard. Land zoning has accordingly been made in the knowledge that it can be serviced for specific purposes within the period of the plan. This aim also includes for environmental protection. Environmental considerations are integral to sustainable development which is a central tenet of the city plan. Policies and standards in the plan give direction with regard to acceptable developments and measures required to prevent negative environmental impacts. The principle of “polluter pays” and the “precautionary approach” are important elements in this regard.

- Support the development of tourism, arts and preserve the distinct culture of Galway City.

This aim acknowledges the arts and cultural stronghold Galway has become and the major contribution this makes to the tourist industry and to the positive vibrant image of the city. The plan includes for policies to enhance and support this role further and makes specific provisions for the inclusion of cultural facilities on key city sites in order to consolidate and expand the arts and cultural infrastructure. The protection and promotion of the cultural and linguistic heritage of the Gaeltacht status of the city is part of this aim as far as is possible in a land-use plan.

These strategies provide the framework for both policy and specific objectives and the wider programmes of Galway City Council. The policies provide the interpretation of the Council's strategic aims, these are dealt with in the next chapters on both an area and topic basis. These chapters also indicate the specific objectives of the Council in relation to spatial and land use proposals and the commitments of the Council on projects and on specific areas.

1.3 Overall Strategy Context

The overall strategy of this plan is largely determined by the Galway Transportation and Planning Study GTPS. These recommendations apply to a sub-regional area and cover the period up to 2016 (see fig.1.1).

The study area includes Galway and its hinterland, an area of about 30 km radius including Rossaveal, Oughterard, Headford, Tuam, Athenry, Loughrea and Gort.

The recommendations of this study have been adopted by both Galway City Council and by Galway County Council. Implementation of these recommendations now requires the relevant provisions to be included for in the development plan. Galway County Council's recent Development Plan 2003 - 2009 has accommodated some of these provisions.





1.4 GTPS - Settlement Strategy

The GTPS promotes a balanced regional settlement strategy pattern through a more structured dispersal of population and households that will spread development and prosperity over a wider area. This will meet the needs of Galway City and other main centres with consideration for some growth in rural areas. It includes for the development of the Ardaun Corridor which will concentrate development to the east of the city and will offer a sustainable solution to growth for both the city and county. The proposed development pattern will strengthen the settlement structure of both city and county and will offer flexibility and choice of where to live. The overall settlement strategy supports a corridor approach, which aims to build up population levels to a critical mass so that public transport services are made more viable.

The strategy for Galway City is to continue to be the regional growth centre but to receive a smaller share of growth relative to the county part of the GTPS than it would if there was to be no strategic intervention. It ultimately predicts a population level of approximately 72,000 in the city and 107,680 in the county part of the GTPS by the year 2016 (see table 1.3). These statistics were produced in advance of the results of the 2002 census of population. They suggested a greater rate of growth in the county and a lesser rate of growth for the city than what actually occurred in the GTPS. However the long-term strategy for 2016 is considered to be a valid scenario if active regional policies are implemented.

Table 1.3 Recommended Settlement Strategy (GTPS)

Settlement	Population 1996	Estimated Population 2001	Household Population (2001 – 2016)	Forecast Growth 2016	Total Forecast Population Change 1996-2016
Galway City	57,200	62,750	5,000	65,890	8,690
Ardaun (City)	0	0	2,600	6,730	6,730
Main Centres (settlements over 1,000 population)					
Ardaun (County)	0	0	4,100	11,230	11,230
Tuam	5,600	7,330	2,500	13,070	7,470
Athenry	1,600	2,100	1,000	4,520	2,920
Loughrea	3,300	4,300	1,000	6,380	3,080
Gort	1,200	1,390	1,000	3,920	2,720
Oranmore	1,400	1,620	1,250	4,800	3,400
Small Towns in Rural Areas (Settlements with Population 500-1,000)					
	3,850	4,460	1,200	7,060	3,210
Rural Development (Settlements less than 500 population and Rural Areas)					
	52,760	59,700	2,200	56,700	3,940
Sub Total City	57,200	62,750	7,600	72,620	15,420
Sub Total County	69,710	80,900	14,250	107,680	37,970
Overall Total	126,910	143,650	21,850	180,300	53,390

Source: GTPS Integration Study Final Report March 2002



The focus for development in the city will be the consolidation of the growth it has achieved to date and to ensure that future development becomes more co-ordinated and sustainable. It is acknowledged in the NSS that Galway as a gateway creates the synergies for the wider prosperity in the GTPS area and indeed the West Region. It is mutually beneficial therefore to the county and the city that the strength of Galway City is enhanced and maintained. Providing for housing and employment demands will be a critical factor in achieving this. It is anticipated that the development of the Ardaun Corridor (city section) will accommodate a substantial element of this in a sustainable and efficient manner.

Ardaun is a very important element of the settlement strategy. Over one third of this corridor is located in the city area (see fig. 1.2). Overall it is anticipated that the entire area of the Ardaun Corridor, both city and county, will accommodate over 18,000 people living in 6,700 housing units. At such a level of population significant services and employment opportunities can be supported as well as dedicated transport services. This area will be laid out around a public transport system so that there are viable alternatives to the car for local trips to work, school and shops and for travel to the city centre. This corridor will develop as an urban extension of the city from Doughiska eastwards. It will be functionally related to the city but will have a key growth role to play in the GTPS area as a whole.

The settlement strategy also includes for the development of Tuam in particular and the other main centres in the county to a level where they become more self-sufficient, attract a greater range of employment opportunities and services and widen their functional area. However they will still have a strong functional relationship with Galway City and therefore transport improvements, particularly public transport improvements, will play an important part in providing continued access to jobs, education opportunities and other key services.

Figure 1.2 Ardaun Corridor



Source: GTPS Integration Study Final Report March 2002.



1.5 GTPS – Transportation Strategy

The transportation strategy for the GTPS area has been designed around the settlement strategy. It is founded on the need to reduce congestion and provide better transport patterns within and to the GTPS area. This would require having the choice of a range of transport modes with improved public transport links on every level of accessibility that is citywide, countywide and nationwide.

The transport strategy recommendations include investment in projects on the national road network within the GTPS area, some of which are currently at design level. It recommends investment in the inter-city bus service and the rail services (Galway – Dublin line). It also recommends that the potential of a rail commuter service between Galway, Athenry, Gort and Tuam be examined and supports investment in the idea of a western rail corridor. The transportation strategy also recommends the development of a fixed bus route service which would be able to offer frequent service from the settlements in the GTPS area to the city centre.



As a significant amount of the forecast growth will take place in the Ardaun Corridor there will be opportunities for a specific designated public transport system—a bus network. The provision of such a service will be required to be integrated fully into the design and location of employment opportunities and services. It is anticipated that every household within the Ardaun Corridor would be no more than 300m from a bus stop and will have good quality links for pedestrians and cyclists. Strategic corridor reservations have been included in the plan to accommodate the link of this bus system into the city centre.

Traffic generated within the urban area of the city will also need to be addressed. The recommendations for the city area would require bus priority measures, development and investments in the public transportation system, implementation of city centre car parking controls and the development of park and ride facilities at appropriate locations. In this regard an integrated transport plan for the city is proposed in this development plan in order to bring forward more specific measures for the city which will complement and consolidate the strategic measures proposed in the transport strategy of the GTPS.

1.6 Supporting Strategies

The development plan has incorporated and developed the growth strategy recommended in the GTPS. Measures to achieve this have included land use policies, infrastructure provision, reservation of strategic corridors, environmental improvements and protection of heritage. In addition there are many other supporting strategies in the development plan. The most significant ones relating to residential, recreational and city centre are discussed below.

The plan includes for additional zoned land other than those in the Ardaun Corridor. It includes for the consolidation of the existing residential neighbourhoods in Knocknacarra and Castlegar. In Knocknacarra additional lands are being zoned for residential and recreational/amenity purposes. This will complement the designation of a district centre for this area and the designation of lands specifically for enterprise purposes. In the Castlegar area additional lands have been zoned for residential purposes, recreational and amenity purposes and specific provision made for community uses and local services.





The development to the east of the city at Doughiska and the imminent development of the adjoining Ardaun Corridor could result ultimately in a new population of almost 7,000 in the city with an additional 11,000 persons in the adjoining county section of the Ardaun Corridor. It is in this context that lands at Murroogh are now included for development, primarily of a recreational/amenity nature. These lands were previously protected against development because it was considered that they had great potential to satisfy the amenity needs generated by an expanding population. As significant increases in the population of the east side of the city are now anticipated it is now considered appropriate to meet these needs at Murroogh and to have more balanced opportunities for coastal amenity recreation within the

city than what currently exists with these being predominantly located on the west side of the city. In this regard developments of a mixed use nature will be encouraged while a minimum of two thirds of the land will be retained in recreational/amenity use. As this is an area of important landscape value a detailed local area plan which demonstrates a high quality of public access and amenity to the coast area will be required in advance of any development.

The GTPS strategy is supported further by a strengthening of the significant role of the city centre. The city centre has an established regional function with regard to retailing, services, culture and tourism. It is envisaged in the plan that the city centre will continue to drive growth in the region and will be facilitated to expand in a sustainable manner. The previous development plan identified the area near Ceannt Station as having great potential for expansion of the city centre, this plan further supports this strategy while also allowing for, in restricted circumstances, the city centre to expand out to the Headford Road. Enhancement of the city centre is further pursued through changes in zoning for the harbour area that reflect the change in function of the harbour and complement the amenities of the city centre. This area will have potential for mixed-use development including for a new residential community and a mix of leisure, recreational and limited retailing.

1.7 Local Area Plans

Another key element of the development plan strategy is to bring policies to a more detailed local level through Local Area Plans. These will be required for the Ardaun Corridor area and the Murroogh area. It is considered that the broad ranging policies of a city development plan cannot provide the detailed treatment needed for the significant proposals included for these areas. In addition key sites, particularly in the city centre will require development briefs/urban design frameworks. Residential development sites above 2 hectares in area will also be required to submit a design brief with their applications.

Regeneration schemes, environmental schemes in addition to the local area plans will be prepared by the local authority in accordance with a scheduled program following adoption of the development plan and will include for extensive public consultation.



