

Galway City LECP Implementation Plan 2024 - 2025 Progress Report



Galway City - A Changing Place

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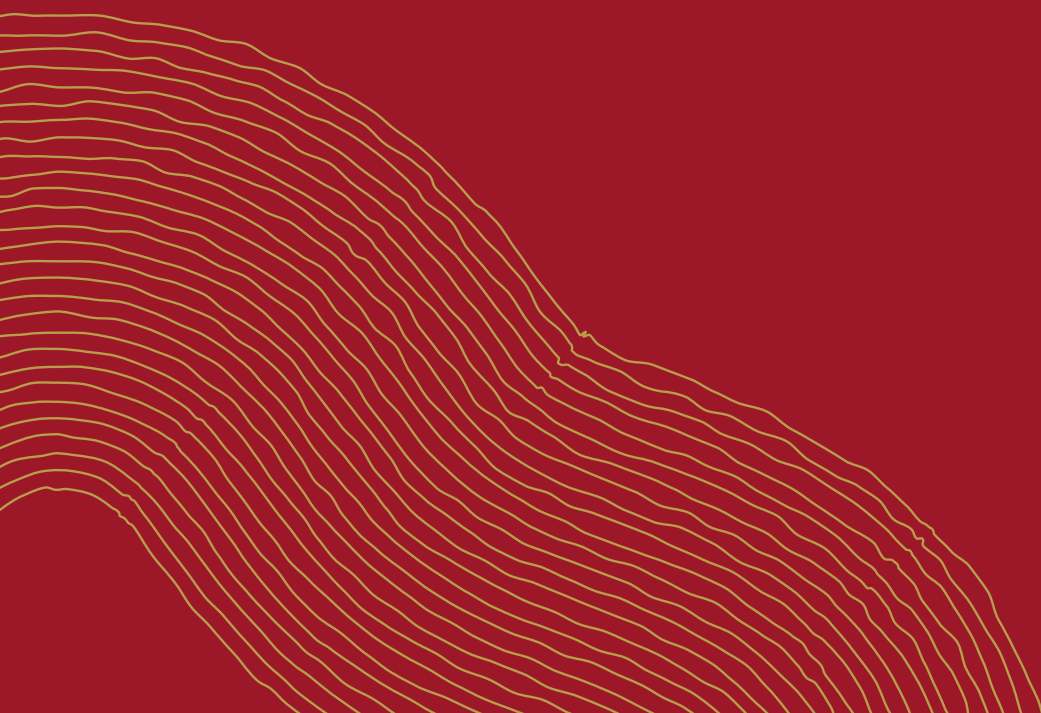
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Implementation Plan 2024 - 2025 Progress Report

This is the first two-year progress report of the Implementation Plan of the Galway City Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2024 - 2029. The LECP Implementation Plan 2024 – 2025 outlines the actions to be delivered for the two-year period and has been closely monitored and evaluated before being reviewed and revised to assist in the preparation of the second Implementation Plan 2026 – 2027.

This new more flexible approach to the implementation of the LECP will allow Galway City Council and its partners to identify activity that may be not resulting in the expected impact and replace them with activity that may be better aligned to achieving the overall vision and goals of the LECP. The review will also allow new activity or focus to be added where policies, funding or changed circumstances dictate.

The Implementation Plan covers both community and economic elements across the 5 High-Level Goals and 17 Objectives of the LECP. Delivery structures and mechanisms have been identified for each action. Implementation Plans set out the agreed actions to be implemented that should contribute to the achievement of the Objectives and High-Level Goals outlined in the Framework LECP.

Implementation Plans are approved by the Local Community Development Committee and Galway City Council's Strategic Policy Committee on Economic Development. Responsibility for implementation, monitoring and reviewing the LECP rests with the LCDC, the SPC on Economic Development and Galway City Council.

Under Goal 1: A World Class Creative City Region, 1 action is Completed, 1 is not progressed and 6 are Ongoing.

Under Goal 2: An Innovative City, 5 actions are Completed, and 6 are In Progress / Ongoing.

Under Goal 3: An Equal and Inclusive City, 14 actions are Completed / Ongoing, and a further 3 are Completed.

Under Goal 4: A Sustainable Resilient City, 4 actions are Completed / Ongoing, 1 is not progressed and 8 are In Progress / Ongoing.

Under Goal 5: A City that Promotes Health and Wellbeing, 11 actions are Completed / Ongoing, 2 are Completed and 2 are In Progress.

This Report provides updates on all actions as outlined. Weblinks are provided in some cases to access further information from various agencies and groups assisting with the delivery of actions.

High Level Goal 1: A World Class Creative City Region



High Level Goal 1: A World Class Creative City Region

Objective: Continue to support the development of the cultural sector, to further enhance Galway City's role as an innovative, inclusive and collaborative world-class city of renown.

Action 1.1: Implement actions in “New Directions – Strategic Plan for the Arts 2021 - 2026”

Lead Partner: Galway City Council (Arts Office)

Status: Ongoing

Progress Report

Across 2024 and 2025, the Galway City Council Arts Office significantly strengthened its role as a leader and central coordinator of cultural development in the city. Working with more than 80 arts organisations and hundreds of artists, the team advanced the implementation of “New Directions – Strategic Plan for the Arts 2021–2026” and aligned its work with the goals of the Local Economic and Community Plan. This period saw enhanced collaboration with regional partners, the Arts Council, Creative Ireland, and sector specific networks, reinforcing Galway's position as a world class creative city.

Investment in artists, organisations and communities grew substantially. In 2024, €400,000 was awarded to 56 arts organisations, while a further €25,000 supported arts education in schools and community bands. Artist development was prioritised through bursaries and structured supports, with 20 practitioners funded via Creative Practitioner Bursaries, alongside multiple residencies including at the Tyrone Guthrie Centre and Áras Éanna. The Levelling Access Bursary created dedicated support for artists with disabilities, reflecting the Arts Office's commitment to inclusion and diverse artistic practice.

Community focused arts engagement also expanded through the Cultural Partnership Fund, which invested €95,000 across 2024–2025 in programmes targeting children, new communities and neighbourhood audiences. Public art and placemaking were also advanced through Percent for Art commissions and new mural projects in partnership with other Council directorates.

Large scale public participation events flourished. Culture Night 2024 saw Galway's biggest programme to date, with 72 events and approximately 30,000 attendees, followed by further expansion in 2025. Through Creative Ireland, 61 projects were supported in 2024, delivering festivals, climate related creative initiatives, and inter cultural artistic partnerships. Youth

creativity remained a priority, with Cruinniú na nÓg providing funding for 21 projects and hundreds of participants, complemented by Music Generation programmes that reached nearly 3,000 children each year. The UNESCO City of Film partnership continued to drive film sector development, supported by €40,000 annual investment and contributions to the WRAP audiovisual fund.

Overall, the combined progress across 2024 and 2025 reflects an arts system that is more inclusive, better resourced and more strategically aligned than ever before. The Arts Office expanded cultural access, strengthened supports for artists, enriched the city's vibrant festival and events landscape, and progressed major cultural infrastructure projects. These achievements contribute directly to Galway's vision of being a creative, culturally confident city where artistic talent is nurtured and communities are actively engaged in shaping cultural life.

Action 1.2: Implement actions in Galway City Council's Culture & Creativity Strategy 2023 – 2027

Lead Partner: Galway City Council (Creative Ireland)

Status: Ongoing

Progress Report

Across 2024 and 2025, Galway City delivered a dynamic and community centred Culture & Creativity Strategy that strengthened local identity, creative participation and social wellbeing. In 2024, the Council launched the Eastside Arts Festival, developed directly through community consultation in Ballybane and Doughiska, ensuring that cultural programming was shaped by and for local residents. This was complemented by 15 community led creative projects, selected through an Open Call, empowering groups across the city to design initiatives focused on inclusion, local storytelling and neighbourhood pride. Creative Ireland funding supported a wide range of projects aligned with strategic priorities, including climate action, youth engagement and creative placemaking. Notable initiatives included the Climate Theatre Project, co created with schoolchildren for the Climate Inspirations Festival, and the Mending HeARTs programme - an arts and health collaboration supporting cardiovascular wellbeing and progressing toward completion in 2026.

The city also strengthened its creative economy through the West Galway Games Initiative (WGGI), delivered with Árdan and CREW, providing incubation supports for emerging video

game designers. Youth cultural access was expanded through Youth Lates, a night time programme shaped with Galway's Night Time Economy Advisor to offer safe, creative evening events for young people.

Galway's Night Time Economy initiatives expanded extensively in 2025, delivering a diverse and inclusive range of cultural experiences. Successful programmes included Café Lates, Youth Lates, Cruinniú Late and Culture Night Late, alongside enhancements to Fr Burke Park as an outdoor cultural event space. Additional initiatives such as the Night Out Access In disability awareness campaign, the Safe and Sound media safety initiative, and Galway's participation in the Interreg NITIES and URBACT projects strengthened safety, accessibility and innovation in night time cultural planning. The Council also delivered an expanded New Year's Eve Family events, ensuring family friendly celebration at the heart of the city's festive programme. Importantly, both Galway City and Salthill retained their Purple Flag designation, recognising them as high quality, well managed and safe night time destinations.

Together, the actions of 2024 and 2025 demonstrate Galway City's strong commitment to creativity as a driver of community cohesion, economic opportunity, health and wellbeing, and cultural vibrancy—ensuring a more inclusive, engaged and imaginative city for all. For further information, see: <https://www.creativeireland.gov.ie/ga/galway-city-2/>

Objective: Continue to support the development of the cultural sector, to further enhance Galway City's role as an innovative, inclusive and collaborative worldclass city of renown

Action1.3: Advance priority cultural projects outlined in the Galway City Council Capital Programme 2024-2026

Lead Partner: Galway City Council

Status: Ongoing

Progress Report

Across 2024 and 2025, Galway City Council made strong progress on key cultural infrastructure priorities, advancing multiple projects through design, refurbishment and pre construction phases. Work on the Galway City Museum continued steadily, with the 2024 capital design phase supported by an SEAI funded energy retrofit plan, and a revised development proposal submitted to Fáilte Ireland in 2025 alongside a notable increase of 25,000 visitors.

Significant investment progressed at Nun's Island / Manse House, where a €3.8m THRIVE grant secured in 2024 set the foundation for major restoration and creative space development. By 2025, the THRIVE West Area Strategy was formally adopted, positioning Nun's Island as a central cultural anchor in wider area regeneration.

The Merchants' Road cultural space advanced through enabling works in 2024, including ESB infrastructure relocation, with revised Stage 2 approval granted in 2025. This allowed detailed design to proceed, preparing the project for tendering and subsequent construction. Both years saw continued expansion of artists' workspace provision through targeted professional development and residency supports. Programmes such as residencies at the Tyrone Guthrie Centre, Áras Éanna, Interface Inagh and others broadened access to dedicated creative space for visual artists, writers and performers.

Refurbishment and restoration plans for the 47 Dominick Street Arts Centre (Galway Arts Centre) advanced during this period. Identified in 2024 as a priority site within the THRIVE strategy, the building progressed into conservation and planning stages in 2025 through the preparation of a Conservation Management Plan.

The City's major cultural venues also saw meaningful development. In 2024, the Town Hall Theatre recorded 115,000 visitors, maintaining its position as one of the busiest Arts Council-supported venues outside Dublin and Cork. Its 2025 programme continued this momentum with a diverse schedule across theatre, dance, film and community engagement.

Meanwhile, Leisureland continued to enhance its cultural and recreational infrastructure. In 2024, major upgrades included new energy efficient air handling systems and solar installations, while in 2025, further investment in gym equipment and expanded event programming helped the venue approach peak usage.

Together, the period from 2024 to 2025 reflects strong, coordinated momentum in delivering Galway City's cultural infrastructure ambitions - strengthening facilities, developing new creative spaces, enhancing flagship venues and supporting long term cultural regeneration across the city.

Objective: Embed and support our status as a bi-lingual city and continue to recognise the importance of the Irish language as a cultural, community and economic resource

Action 1.4: Advance and support the implementation of the Irish Language Plan for Galway City 2020 – 2026

Lead Partner: Gaillimh Le Gaeilge

Status: Ongoing

Progress Report

Across 2024 and 2025, Gaillimh le Gaeilge and Galway City Council continued to strengthen Galway's role as Ireland's bilingual city by supporting fluent Irish speakers, Gaeltacht communities, families raising children through Irish, and Irish language learners of all ages. The city expanded opportunities for people to learn, speak and experience Irish in everyday life, while enhancing its role as a Gaeltacht Service Town for Connemara, Claregalway and other Gaeltacht areas.

In 2024, a wide range of social and cultural events created regular opportunities for Irish language use across the city. Programmes such as Aon Scéal, Pop Up Gaeltacht, Ciorcal Comhrá in the PorterShed and Spás Gaeilge in the City Library provided informal, welcoming spaces for conversation and community building. The city also delivered Tonnta 2024, which featured 31 bilingual events and attracted 5,700 attendees in one weekend, including 22 free events and 11 youth focused activities - signalling strong public demand for accessible cultural programming through Irish.

In 2025, this momentum grew significantly with Tonnta 2025. The festival offered a major citywide bilingual celebration with concerts, workshops, food tours, family events and outdoor spectacles across iconic venues.

To strengthen services for the Irish language community, Gaillimh le Gaeilge developed 'An tEolaire – Seirbhís trí Ghaeilge', a directory promoting businesses operating through Irish, and launched the Treibh na Máirte campaign to recognise and encourage organisations offering #SeirbhísTríGhaeilge. These efforts increased visibility of Irish language services and made it easier for residents, visitors and Gaeltacht communities to engage with the language in daily life. Two new initiatives with the University of Galway also supported increased Irish usage across academic, social and professional settings.

A major strategic milestone was the completion of a feasibility study for a new Irish Language Cultural Centre in Galway City. Submitted to the Department for review, the study proposes a shared cultural hub to support learning, community programming, creative work, and cross Gaeltacht engagement - strengthening Galway's long term role in supporting the future of the Irish language.

Throughout 2025, the city also significantly increased its Irish language service capacity.

Galway City Council held its first fully bilingual Council meeting on 10 March 2025. A dedicated Gaeilge Strategic Policy Committee, established in December 2024 advanced key actions such as a Gaeilge style guide, quality translation standards, and the rollout of Gaeltacht place name signage across city districts. These efforts strengthened services for residents who use Irish at home, at work or in community settings.

Action 1.5: Reflect the Irish language in the artistic and cultural offering available to residents and visitors to the city

Lead Partner: Galway City Council

Status: Completed

Progress Report

Across 2024 and 2025, Galway City Council advanced its goal of expanding Irish language participation among young people and supporting creative expression through dedicated funding, festivals, and intercultural programmes.

In 2024, Gaillimh le Gaeilge and Galway City Council co funded and delivered Tonnta 2024 – Celebrating the Irish Language and Galway as a Bilingual City, a major Irish language cultural festival designed to offer a fun, inclusive space for the city's young people, families, learners and fluent speakers. The festival achieved significant impact, drawing 5,700 attendees across the weekend, with many headline events offered free of charge to remove barriers to participation. Tonnta 2024 highlighted Galway's unique position as Ireland's only bilingual city and demonstrated strong public appetite for accessible creative experiences through Irish.

Building on this success, Tonnta 2025 was developed with an expanded programme to coincide with St Brigid's Day. The 2025 festival placed increased emphasis on Gaeltacht culture, youth

participation, community involvement, and bilingual programming, strengthening creative pathways for young people and nurturing new Irish language audiences. Throughout 2024 and 2025 Galway City Council also supported Irish language creative participation through Culture Night and Cruinniú na nÓg, ensuring dedicated funding streams for Irish language arts programming, youth engagement, and bilingual events. These platforms continue to be vital spaces for young people to explore creativity through Irish in both formal and informal ways.

In addition, the Dúchasach / Ypykuéra project demonstrated the power of intercultural, youth focused creative practice. Supported by the Creative Communities Fund, the initiative brought together Irish/Gaelic and Brazilian indigenous cultures through workshops, storytelling and collaborative artistic exploration. The project offered young participants meaningful opportunities to express identity, explore cultural heritage and engage creatively across languages - strengthening confidence, connection and pride within diverse communities in Galway.

Objective: Strengthen and harness the cultural, creative and educational sectors to attract new investment, commercialisation and collaboration opportunities.

Action 1.6: Actively engage in the EU Intelligent Cities Challenge (ICC) to pilot innovative digital solutions to create resilient and sustainable cultural and creative industry sectors

Lead Partner: Galway City Council

Status: Did not proceed

Progress Report

Due to insufficient staff resources within Galway City Council, the project did not move forward in 2024. The action will need to be reviewed within the context of the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP). While the engagement with the EU Intelligent Cities Challenge did not progress in 2024, revisiting it within the LECP and addressing the resource constraints will allow Galway City Council to move forward with this innovative project. By securing the necessary resources and building the right partnerships, Galway can capitalise on this opportunity to enhance its cultural and creative industries through the adoption of digital solutions for resilience and sustainability.

Action 1.7: Advance the objectives of the Galway City Creativity & Culture Strategy 2023 - 2027

Lead Partner: Galway City Council (Creative Ireland)

Status: Ongoing

Progress Report

In 2024 and 2025, Galway City Council advanced The Air We Share, an innovative Creative Climate Action project designed to raise awareness of air pollution and support climate positive behaviour in Galway's Decarbonisation Zone. Led by a consortium of Galway City Council, Galway Arts Centre, the University of Galway's Centre for Creative Technologies, the Centre for Climate and Air Pollution Studies, the Insight SFI Centre for Data Analytics, Westside Resource Centre, and Galway Culture Company, the project combines scientific research, community engagement and artistic practice to make the invisible issue of air quality visible and actionable.

A key achievement in 2024 was the installation of seven air quality monitors across the Decarbonisation Zone. These monitors provide real time environmental data, enabling residents, schools and community groups to understand local air pollution patterns and support data driven climate discussions. The project also delivered an active programme of community engagement, including public talks, film screenings and soundwalks as part of the Galway City Climate Inspirations Festival. These events helped deepen awareness of environmental issues while fostering participation from diverse community members.

At the creative heart of The Air We Share is its Artist in Residence Programme, launched in November 2024. Selected artists began a nine month residency working directly with Westside residents, climate scientists and citizen researchers to creatively interpret air quality data. Their work helps translate scientific findings into accessible and emotionally resonant artistic outputs, strengthening community understanding of environmental change. The residency culminated in public showcases at the Westside Arts Festival in July 2025, offering the community an opportunity to experience the artistic outcomes and reflect collectively on the project's learnings.

Aligned with the EU's Net Zero Cities initiative, The Air We Share directly informs Galway City Council's emerging climate policy. By integrating science, creativity and community voice, the project supports cultural and behavioural shifts toward more sustainable practices rooted in fairness, collaboration and positive action. It is funded through the Creative Climate Action Fund, an initiative of the Creative Ireland Programme.

Together, the 2024–2025 programme demonstrates the project's powerful role in climate storytelling, community empowerment and environmental awareness - laying the groundwork for long term, community driven sustainability in Galway's Decarbonisation Zone.

Action 1.8: Deliver on agreed objectives as local partners under “Shared Island” national and cross-border projects

Lead Partner: Galway City Council (Arts Office)

Status: Ongoing

Progress Report

Across 2024 and 2025, Galway City Council continued to strengthen its cross border cultural partnerships through the Shared Island Local Authority Development Funding Scheme, advancing both the Culture Connects programme and the Atlantic Region of Creative Content (ARCC) initiative. These projects emphasised creative placemaking, artist mobility, professional development, and sustainable cultural ecosystems connecting communities North and South.

The Culture Connects project - a collaboration between Galway City and Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council focused on strengthening cultural relationships through artist residencies, shared workspaces, mentoring programmes and sector collaboration. Led by Galway City Council with partners including ATU, Southern Regional College and Galway Arts Centre, the project centred on creative placemaking, exploring how arts practice can deepen connections between artists and communities across the island. The work culminated in the Culture Connects Feasibility Report 2023, which provided a roadmap for future collaboration and highlighted the importance of shared infrastructure, professional supports and network development for artists on both sides of the border.

In 2024 and into 2025, Galway Arts Centre continued to play an active role, contributing to enhanced artistic exchange, skills development and opportunities for cross border creative engagement.

In parallel, the Atlantic Region of Creative Content (ARCC) initiative advanced through a cross border feasibility study led by Galway City Council in collaboration with Blu Zebra Ltd. Throughout 2023 and 2024, the study examined the development of a creative digital cluster linking regions such as Galway, Sligo Enniskillen, Letterkenny Derry and potentially Dundalk Newry. The ARCC project aims to support shared digital storytelling, virtual production facilities and enhanced cooperation across the creative technology sector. Once implemented, the ARCC would form a network bridging enterprises and education providers across the island, promoting skills, innovation and economic growth in the creative industries.

High Level Goal 2: An Innovative City



High Level Goal 2: An Innovative City

Objective: Develop, encourage an ecosystem for innovation, enterprise and entrepreneurship, including community / social enterprise that is environmentally sustainable.

Action 2.1: Implement actions in Regional Enterprise Plan West involving Galway City Council

Lead Partner: Galway City Council / Galway Local Enterprise Office

Status: Completed

Progress Report

Across 2024 and 2025, Galway City advanced a strong innovation and enterprise ecosystem that supports start ups, social and community enterprise, and environmentally sustainable growth. This progress aligns directly with the strategic objective of building a thriving, inclusive, regionally connected enterprise environment.

A cornerstone of progress was the continued expansion of incubation, acceleration and sector specific start up infrastructure. The €5.2 million expansion of Platform94 significantly increased Galway's capacity to support scaling technology enterprises, advancing its SCALE programme and strengthening the regional innovation ecosystem. The CREW Creative Enterprise & Innovation Hub, opened in 2024, further enhanced this ecosystem by supporting 105 early stage creative enterprises and providing a hub and spoke model that reaches 11 counties, enabling digital, creative and cultural entrepreneurs to start and grow sustainable enterprises.

Enterprise pathways were supported by improved access to early stage and scaling capital, delivered through a European funded Interreg initiative led by WestBIC. The work identified new models such as regional co investment funds, revenue based financing, equity crowdfunding and investor readiness supports, alongside engaging ~300 participants in capital access events. These recommendations directly strengthen opportunities for sustainable and socially beneficial enterprises to secure growth funding.

People and skills development remained central. The West Regional Skills Forum engaged more than 2,000 leaders across the region, delivering new skills pathways in AI, automation, civil engineering, food manufacturing, and green hydrogen. Skills intelligence reports such as Powered by Artificial Intelligence: Unlocking SME Growth in the West informed training responses that support future proofed enterprise and sustainable innovation.

The Connected Hubs initiative strengthened placemaking, community enterprise and talent retention. Throughout 2025, hubs increasingly operated as multipurpose community and innovation spaces, hosting enterprise programmes, networking, and cultural participation. Inclusivity and equality were advanced through EMPOWER Cumasú, which supported 115 women entrepreneurs in Gaeltacht and rural regions through START and GROWTH pathways, mentoring and optional Irish language supports. Other programmes such as PorterShed's masterclasses for women founders and CREW's gender inclusive digital innovation initiatives further broadened access for underrepresented groups.

Together, these achievements show Galway City's strong leadership in building an innovation ecosystem that is entrepreneurial, community focused and environmentally sustainable, enabling diverse founders, new enterprises and local communities to thrive.

Action 2.2: Support the development of the social and circular economy

Lead Partner: Galway City Partnership

Status: Ongoing

Progress Report

In 2024–2025, Galway City strengthened its social enterprise and circular economy ecosystem through coordinated delivery by SCCUL Enterprises, Galway City Partnership (SICAP), Portershed, Galway City Council and regional partners under the West Regional Enterprise Plan (REP). Together, these actions advanced mentoring, enterprise space, sustainability capacity, networking and inclusion for social enterprises across the city.

Galway City Partnership (SICAP) and SCCUL Enterprises significantly enhanced mentoring supports for social enterprises. The Bizmentors programme added nine new mentors, bringing the total to 94, and supported 46 mentees through in person and online sessions. A February 2024 social enterprise event engaged 70 participants, shaping a new programme of targeted workshops based on identified learning needs. These developments substantially increased mentoring and capacity building supports for social and community enterprises. A partnership with the Portershed provided tailored pitch coaching to help social enterprises position themselves as providers of sustainable, socially responsible products and services. A dedicated corporate pitch event created direct connections between social enterprises and potential buyers, opening CSR aligned commercial pathways and establishing strong foundations for collaboration into 2025.

As part of its long term commitment to social enterprise, SCCUL Enterprises is expanding the Ballybane Enterprise Centre, with a dedicated incubation space opening in 2026. This new space will serve as a hub for both social enterprises and traditional start ups, fostering collaboration, innovation and growth within an inclusive, community embedded enterprise environment.

In 2024, Circular City Galway was launched by Galway City Council, funded through the Department of the Environment's Anti Dumping Initiative. The programme delivered a series of impactful circular economy projects focused on waste reduction, reuse, repair, and community led sustainability. This initiative complements regional actions promoting circular economy innovation, such as the Landing Studio at CREW, University of Galway's Blue Circular Economy and THREADS textile reuse programme, which connect enterprises with applied research and lifecycle design expertise. Together, these initiatives strengthen circular economy adaptation across community, enterprise and public sector partners.

Galway City Council is a project partner in HEALTHGOGREEN (HGG), an Interreg North West Europe proposal focused on advancing circular economy models for assistive medical devices within the healthcare sector. This initiative will support innovation, reuse models, green procurement and cross border collaboration. It strengthens Galway's leadership in circular healthcare, linking social innovation, sustainability and enterprise development.

Action 2.3: Support the pilot phase development of the Innovate Galway platform 'Innovatex'

Lead Partner: Platform 94

Status: Completed

Progress Report

The Innovatex pilot project, developed by Tr3dent, was successfully piloted in early 2024, with the prototype receiving strong positive feedback for its design, usability, and potential to support a more connected innovation ecosystem in Galway. Stakeholders recognised that the platform has significant potential to generate wider regional economic benefits and enhance collaboration across the enterprise and innovation landscape. Following the successful pilot, extensive discussions were held to determine the most strategic pathway for the next phase of the project. Multiple viable development options emerged, highlighting the platform's flexibility and value across sectors ranging from start ups and hubs to regional innovation networks.

Given this potential, it was formally agreed that the Western Development Commission (WDC) is best positioned to lead the next phase of development, leveraging its regional mandate and its operational experience managing Ireland's Connected Hubs initiative. The project has now been officially handed over to the WDC, with all partners and stakeholders informed.

Under WDC leadership, Innovatex will move into a new phase focused on further development, integration with Connected Hubs, and seeking specific innovation funding to scale the platform and strengthen the wider ecosystem.

Objective: Foster a spirit of creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship in our city

Action 2.4: Implement actions in Regional Enterprise Plan West involving Galway City Council

Lead Partner: Creative Enterprise West (CREW)

Status: Completed

Progress Report

In 2024–2025, Galway City Council delivered major progress under West Regional Enterprise Plan by advancing creative sector clustering, expanding regional creative infrastructure, and strengthening collaboration between industry, academia, enterprise hubs and researchers.

The CREW Creative Enterprise and Innovation Hub, opened in April 2024 now functions as the central anchor of a hub and spoke model linking creative enterprise supports across 11 counties, ensuring balanced and region wide access. CREW supported 105 early-stage enterprises and 18 growth stage companies between 2023–2025, with 825 participants engaged in entrepreneurship programmes. This confirms CREW's role as a regional centre of excellence.

CREW strengthened clustering by establishing 23 strategic partnerships across national and international projects, collaborating with representative bodies such as IMIRT, Eirmersive, and the Institute of Designers in Ireland. This created new collaborative pathways, deepened sectoral connectivity and expanded the creative enterprise ecosystem

The region advanced new creative assets and facilities through:

- The Landing Studio at CREW—a specialised shared innovation space supporting AI, immersive tech and digital creative projects (operational from early 2026).
- Development of virtual production research spaces within ATU, including an entry level studio and plans for a medium scale virtual production R&D facility in partnership with CREW.

These investments position the region to capitalise on emerging opportunities in film, animation, immersive media and digital production. ATU and CREW delivered the accredited Postgraduate Certificate in Creative Entrepreneurship & Enterprise Development (CEED) annually, supporting founders across the region. Phase 2 - a Level 9 Postgraduate Diploma will launch in 2026, expanding structured enterprise supports for creative entrepreneurs.

Action 2.5: Support and actively promote local businesses through the delivery of the Galway Local Enterprise Office Strategic Priorities

Lead Partner: Galway Local Enterprise Office

Status: Ongoing

Progress Report

In 2024 and 2025, the Galway Local Enterprise Office (LEO) continued to play a central role in supporting entrepreneurship, strengthening micro enterprise capability, and advancing digitalisation, sustainability and innovation across Galway City.

In 2024, LEO Galway delivered extensive supports to early stage and existing entrepreneurs, including 120 participants in the Start Your Own Business (SYOB) programme and 503 businesses availing of mentoring clinics. These services provided essential guidance for new entrepreneurs and strengthened the managerial capacity of established businesses. In 2025, LEO Galway continued to prioritise business advisory services, with ongoing delivery of Start Your Own Business supports, mentoring clinics, business advisory sessions and sector specific guidance.

The 2024 Management Development Programme supported 38 participants across leadership, operational improvement and sector specific training such as craft, design and business development. These interventions improved competitiveness and strengthened management capability in micro enterprises. Throughout 2025, LEO Galway continued to deliver management

and capability building supports through Lean, Green, Digital and sector specific programmes, aligned with national LEO strategic priorities.

In 2025, the Galway Local Enterprise Office delivered strong enterprise impacts across job creation, funding, training and mentoring. A total of 76 new jobs were created in LEO supported companies, while 131 clients and projects received approvals amounting to €1.188 million in enterprise funding. LEO also delivered 76 training programmes, supporting 1,423 participants across areas such as digitalisation, sustainability, management development and start up capability. In addition, 882 one to one mentoring sessions were provided to local businesses, offering tailored guidance to help entrepreneurs strengthen strategy, operations and growth planning. Together, these results reflect a highly productive year for LEO Galway and underline its central role in supporting a dynamic, competitive and innovative micro enterprise ecosystem.

In 2025, LEO Galway continued delivering start up programmes, student enterprise supports, accelerator pathways, and sector specific enterprise networks. These ensured a steady pipeline of new business creation and innovation activity.

A major highlight in both 2024 and 2025 was the continued success and expansion of the Local Food and Craft Gift Fair, organised annually by the Galway Local Enterprise Office and supported by Galway City Council. The Fair plays a central role in supporting local designers, artisan food producers, and creative micro enterprises in Galway City. In 2025, the Fair grew significantly, moving from its traditional two day format to a six day extended showcase due to unprecedented demand from traders and the growing popularity of the event. The extended Fair further advanced LEO Galway's mission by generating direct sales, enhancing brand visibility for local enterprises, and strengthening the city's reputation as a hub for creativity and artisan production.

Action 2.6: Support AEC projects including the Connected Hubs network and promotion of the region and attraction of talent

Lead Partner: Galway City Council

Status: Ongoing

Progress Report

In 2024–2025, Galway City Council continued to support and advance Atlantic Economic Corridor (AEC) projects, with a strong focus on strengthening the Connected Hubs network and wider regional promotion and talent attraction initiatives.

A major area of advancement was the continued development of the Connected Hubs network, coordinated by the Western Development Commission (WDC). Throughout 2025, the network grew significantly, with hubs evolving into multipurpose enterprise, learning and community spaces offering programmes, events and cultural activity that support remote workers, entrepreneurs and local communities. This evolution of the hubs directly supports talent retention and strengthens regional enterprise ecosystems. In addition, the WDC delivered national marketing campaigns throughout the plan period to promote Connected Hubs as attractive places to live and work, emphasising the benefits of high quality digital infrastructure and community centred workspaces.

Across the wider AEC initiative, Galway City Council continued to support regional placemaking and enterprise attraction efforts, contributing to inter regional collaboration events and talent retention workshops organised with partners such as the WDC, the Regional Skills Forum, and Connected Hubs. These engagements ensured alignment with AEC priorities and helped position Galway and the West as a dynamic, high-quality environment for innovation, entrepreneurship and remote working.

A significant forward looking development for 2026 is the introduction of Ireland's first National Hub Strategy, due for launch in mid-2026. This strategy will provide a clear national roadmap for the development, integration and expansion of the Connected Hubs network over the following three years. Building on the progress achieved through the Atlantic Economic Corridor (AEC) and the rapid growth of the national hub's ecosystem, the strategy will focus on strengthening collaboration between hubs, enhancing digital and physical infrastructure, improving service quality, and positioning the Connected Hubs network as a key driver of talent attraction, regional development and innovation.

Objective: Advance the digital and green transformation by promoting environmentally sustainable and inclusive enterprise and investment in our smart city

Action 2.7: Develop smart specialisation of renewable energy linked to natural and physical assets

Lead Partner: Galway Harbour Company NetZero Cities Project / Galway City Council

Status: Ongoing

Progress Report

In 2024–2025, Galway City advanced significant work in smart specialisation for renewable energy, climate neutrality, and green innovation leadership. Progress reflects local initiatives, regional collaboration, and major developments identified in the West Regional Enterprise positioning Galway as a leading hub for the renewable and circular economy. Galway continues to progress the development of GH2, Ireland's first Hydrogen Valley, establishing the city as a national centre for green hydrogen innovation. The SH2AMROCK EU project represents a key step in developing a small scale Hydrogen Valley for the Galway region. Coordinated by the University of Galway, the initiative aims to build a fully integrated regional hydrogen ecosystem by connecting all stages of the hydrogen value chain - research, production, distribution, and transportation. Through this coordinated approach, SH2AMROCK will enable Galway to pilot and demonstrate hydrogen solutions in real world conditions, strengthening the region's capacity for renewable energy innovation and supporting Ireland's wider transition to a low carbon, climate neutral economy.

Galway is contributing to the development of a broader regional Living Lab environment, enabling real world testing of digital, green and circular economy innovations. This includes progress through the Data2Sustain European Digital Innovation Hub, which has now entered its €23 million Phase 2 (2026–2029). Through this programme, SMEs and public sector organisations can trial digitalisation, AI tools and low carbon technologies through dedicated “test before invest” supports, helping accelerate the region's transition to a more sustainable and digitally enabled economy.

Galway city continued to advance work under the NetZero Cities platform, supporting European collaboration on achieving climate neutrality. This work underpins Galway city's approach to integrating digital transformation, circularity, climate science, community activation and innovation across its climate action programmes.

Action 2.8: Development of a Destination Experience Development Plan (DEDP)

Lead Partner: Fáilte Ireland

Status: Completed

Progress Report

In 2024–2025, Galway City advanced its ambition to deliver a smarter, greener, more connected and more sustainable tourism offering through the development of its first Destination and Experience Development Plan (DEDP). The plan, led by Fáilte Ireland was officially launched in October 2025, establishing a long term framework to enhance the city's visitor experience, strengthen neighbourhood connectivity, improve environmental performance, and support sustainable tourism growth. The DEDP sets clear targets for experience development, infrastructure improvement and climate aligned visitor management, directly supporting the action outcomes of enabling a greener, smarter tourism model and elevating Galway's distinct tourism brand.

Alongside the DEDP launch, Galway achieved significant improvements in global sustainability benchmarking, reflecting the city's strengthened commitment to responsible tourism. Galway rose from 39th to 25th place in the Global Destination Sustainability Index (GDSI), now ranking ahead of Clare, Limerick and Dublin. The city also achieved an impressive 4th place worldwide in the Small Cities category, competing with more than 100 destinations globally. Under the Environmental category of the GDSI, Galway was recognised as the 8th Most Improved Leader worldwide, demonstrating rapid progress in green initiatives, climate action, community sustainability and environmentally responsible destination management. These achievements, combined with the strategic direction set by the 2025 DEDP, have significantly increased awareness and strengthening of the Galway tourism brand, positioning the city as an internationally competitive, sustainability driven destination.

Action 2.9: Develop Galway City's tourism offering to deliver sustainable tourism infrastructure and visitor experiences

Lead Partner: Galway City Council

Status: Ongoing

Progress Report

In 2024–2025, Galway City advanced a wide range of strategic tourism initiatives aimed at strengthening sustainable tourism infrastructure, enhancing visitor experiences, and supporting year round economic activity.

A strong programme of festivals and cultural events continued across the city, supporting Galway's reputation as a vibrant year round destination and helping to increase bed nights and visitor spend. These events, aligned with Galway's creative and cultural identity, contributed to stronger seasonal and off peak performance, supporting the goal of increased occupancy across accommodation providers. In 2024, Galway City Council further strengthened its capacity to deliver high quality festivals and visitor experiences through the appointment of a new Events Co Ordinator. This dedicated role is central to the development, coordination and enhancement of festivals and events that align with the city's cultural vision and tourism ambitions. The appointment reflects Galway City Council's continued commitment to promoting Galway as a vibrant, creative and culturally rich destination, and ensures that both new and established events are supported to grow, innovate and contribute to the city's year round visitor economy.

Major progress was achieved in the development of new and enhanced tourism assets. Work continued on the Great Western Blueway, a significant outdoor recreation and sustainable mobility tourism project, with further exploration of opportunities to develop a Waterworks Amenity Hub as a new nature based visitor attraction. These initiatives support a greener, more connected tourism landscape and diversify Galway's offering beyond the city centre.

2025 also saw the completion of the Destination Towns project and the Urban Animation Project at Woodquay, delivering upgraded public realm spaces, visitor friendly amenities, and enhanced placemaking features. These improvements contribute to a more welcoming, walkable, and experience rich environment for residents and visitors, while reinforcing Galway's tourism brand and strengthening its competitiveness.

In addition, Galway City Council progressed key stages of development for two major coastal

tourism assets: Leisureland and the Salthill Park site. Project development work advanced across planning, feasibility, design and public realm integration, laying the foundation for substantial upgrades to leisure, recreation and family friendly facilities along Galway's waterfront. These strategic coastal investments support the long term goal of delivering high quality, climate resilient tourism infrastructure.

Taken together, these initiatives show meaningful progress. Galway is expanding and upgrading its tourism infrastructure, strengthening its year round experience offering, and enhancing brand visibility while embedding sustainability and quality at the heart of its visitor strategy. This work ensures that Galway City remains a dynamic, attractive and environmentally responsible destination for both domestic and international visitors.

Action 2.10: Participate in the All-Ireland Smart Cities Forum to identify opportunities and support the delivery of Smart city initiatives

Lead Partner: Galway City Council

Status: Ongoing

Progress Report

In 2024–2025, Galway City Council strengthened its leadership in smart city innovation through active participation in the All Ireland Smart Cities Forum, a cross jurisdictional body advancing smart city development across Ireland and Northern Ireland. The Forum provides a cooperative platform for cities to share best practice, collaborate on emerging technologies, and jointly progress smart city agendas that enhance urban living and deliver value for communities. Galway's involvement supports the implementation of its Digital Strategy across the four pillars of Digital Innovation, Digital Society, Sustainability and Digital Infrastructure.

Galway City Council also progressed its partnership with Data2Sustain, the European Digital Innovation Hub (EDIH) for the Northern and Western region. Through this initiative, funded by Enterprise Ireland, local SMEs can access digital transformation supports including “test before invest” services, data analytics, AI readiness, sustainability tools and innovation mentoring. Galway's engagement with Data2Sustain helps strengthen SME competitiveness and accelerates the city's transition to a more digitally enabled and low carbon regional economy.

To further advance the Digital Infrastructure pillar of the Digital Strategy, Galway City Council has appointed a dedicated Broadband Officer, aligned with the national approach coordinated by the Department of Rural and Community Development. The Broadband Officer acts as a local point of contact for telecoms operators and the public and plays a lead role in supporting the rollout of the National Broadband Plan, addressing local connectivity issues, and enabling the deployment of high-quality digital infrastructure across the city. This function is critical to ensuring Galway is equipped with robust, future proof digital connectivity to support smart city innovation, economic development and digital inclusion.

High Level Goal 3: An Equal and Inclusive City



High Level Goal 3: An Equal and Inclusive City

Objective: Reduce poverty and alleviate disadvantage through appropriate and targeted social inclusion, community development programmes and initiatives.

Action 3.1: Target initiatives and funding to disadvantaged communities identified in the SICAP programme

Lead Partner: Galway City Partnership

Status: Completed / Ongoing

Progress Report

The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2024-2028 was a key initiative for the LCDC in 2024 and 2025 with regular updates and progress evaluations being considered at LCDC meetings.

SICAP delivery in Galway City across 2024 and 2025 shows strong, sustained progress in reducing poverty and social exclusion, with Galway City Partnership (GCP) consistently exceeding performance targets and expanding supports for individuals and community organisations. Over the two years, work also advanced significantly on the Ballybane Needs Analysis, moving from initial consultation to the development of a coordinated Action Plan.

In 2024 and 2025, GCP exceeded SICAP Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), prioritising International Protection Applicants, disadvantaged communities and people experiencing joblessness or precarious work.

- In 2024, 53 Community Organisations received support. In 2025, 72 Community Organisations received support in planning, evaluation, capacity building, policy development, funding proposals, networking and advocacy (122% of target).
- 348 individuals engaged with SICAP in 2024, 92% of whom were newly registered.
- Supports included ESOL tuition, resilience and wellbeing workshops, lifelong learning, and labour market training for 136 people in 2024. In 2025, a further 197 ESOL Learners participate

- Galway City Council also commissioned SCCUL Enterprises CLG to conduct a Needs Analysis of Ballybane, starting in 2024. The final report highlighted key needs, service gaps, and opportunities for more coordinated action. Work has now moved into developing a collaborative Action Plan.
- In 2025, The Local Area Employment Service (LAES) assisted around 700 long-term unemployed people, funding certified training.
- The WorkAbility Programme supported 61 people with disabilities, including 18 completing QQI accredited training in 2025.

To learn more about the Galway City SICAP programme, visit [SICAP - Galway City Partnership](#)

Action 3.2: Deliver targeted actions through the Community Enhancement Programme

Lead Partner: Galway City Council

Status: Completed

Progress Report

The Local Enhancement Programme (LEP) 2025 was announced in November 2024 by the Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht (DRCDG) and administered by Galway City LCDC, providing over €137,000 in current and capital funding to 91 community and voluntary groups.

This support particularly targeted disadvantaged areas, helping organisations carry out minor capital works—such as essential repairs, accessibility improvements, and energy-efficiency upgrades—as well as purchase equipment for community use. The programme also offered current funding to assist with non-pay running costs including energy bills, rental or lease expenses, and insurance.

The programme focuses on enhancing economic, social, and environmental development in specific areas. It provides financial assistance for projects that contribute to the growth of local economies, improve infrastructure, and promote sustainability. The LEP encourages collaboration between local authorities, businesses, and community groups to deliver initiatives that enhance the overall quality of life while fostering long-term prosperity and resilience.

In Galway City, €128,000 in capital funding was approved under the Local Enhancement Programme 2024, with more than €137,000 in current and capital funding allocated under the Local Enhancement Programme 2025. This investment supported 67 community and voluntary groups and organisations in 2024 and 91 groups in 2025, enabling them to undertake a wide range of community-focused projects.

All groups completed their projects in 2024 and 2025 and drew down their allocated funding from Galway City Council. The Local Enhancement Programme 2026 was announced in December 2025, with Galway City receiving an allocation of €141,688.31 in capital funding. The application process for this funding stream is scheduled to open in early 2026.

To read more about the Local Enhancement Programme in Galway City, please visit

[Local Enhancement Programme 2026 | Galway City Council](#)

Action 3.3: Develop an Age Friendly Strategy to include planning for an age friendly society, connected communities, digital literacy skills, social prescribing, ageism and health and wellbeing

Lead Partner: Galway City Council

Status: Completed

Progress Report

Galway City and County Councils commissioned HUB Planning in February 2025 to develop their second joint Age Friendly Strategy. The process included extensive public consultation, data analysis, and action-planning workshops with internal partners and external stakeholders.

After review and refinement by the Age Friendly Alliance, the Older Person's Council, several city and county committees, and elected representatives, the Strategy was formally adopted in December and officially launched in January 2026.

The Galway Age Friendly Strategy 2026-2031 is a coordinated plan developed by Galway City and County Councils to make the city and county more inclusive, supportive, and accessible for older people. The strategy focuses on improving everyday life for older adults by enhancing public spaces, transport, housing options, social participation, community supports and access to information. The Strategy was launched in early 2026.

To view the Galway Age Friendly Strategy, please visit [Galway Age Friendly Strategy 2026-2031.pdf](#)

The Directory of Services for Older People in Galway City & County was updated in 2025 to provide up to date useful information for older people and their families, carers and service providers. The Directory can be accessed at [Directory of Services for Older People in Galway City and County.pdf](#)

The Healthy Age Friendly Homes programme is an initiative aimed at improving the living conditions of older adults, enabling them to live independently and comfortably in their own homes as they age. The programme focuses on making homes more accessible, safer, and healthier through modifications and improvements such as the installation of assistive technologies, better heating systems, and modifications to the layout or design of homes. It is part of a broader effort to create age-friendly environments that support the well-being of older people, allowing them to continue living in their communities for as long as possible.

The Healthy Age Friendly Homes Co-Ordinator for Galway City has been appointed and is currently taking referrals through the following email address. healthyagefriendlyhomes@meathcoco.ie. More information on the Healthy Age Friendly Homes Initiative can be found at [Healthy Age Friendly Homes Programme | Age Friendly Ireland](#)

Action 3.4: Ensure housing supports provide for the needs of disadvantaged groups including people with a disability, Travellers and homeless

Lead Partner: Galway City Council

Status: Completed / Ongoing

Progress Report

The Housing Disability Steering Group now has 5 HDSG Subgroups with key external agencies to progress collaborative solutions for housing applicants. The groups include; HDSG Subgroup for Physical & Sensory attended by GCC, HSE and IWA; HDSG Subgroup for Intellectual Disability attended by GCC, Brothers of Charity and Ability West; HDSC Subgroup for Mental Health attended by GCC and HSE Mental Health Coordinator and Sophia Housing; HDSC Subgroup for Children with Disabilities attended by GCC, Primary Care Social Work for Children and Enable Ireland; Internal HDSG Subgroup,

The team consists of staff from Housing Capital, Housing Maintenance, members of the Allocations team and Social Work team to consistently review housing stock and needs of those on the Housing Waiting List with a disability requirement. At these HDSG Subgroups, GCC are progressing housing outcomes under different projects such as the My Home Project (Mental Health) and the Living My Life Project (Intellectual Disability).

The Traveller Accommodation Plan 2025 – 2029 which will project targets for the coming five years for provision of accommodation for Travellers was adopted by Galway City Council in December 2024 and can be viewed [here](#).

Further information on Traveller accommodation at [Traveller Accommodation | Galway City Council](#)

The joint Galway City and County Traveller Interagency Group (TIG) was established in 2024 and has met quarterly throughout 2025 and 2025. The TIG has been established to improve the situation of the local Traveller community and support public service providers in this objective, by fostering collaboration among various agencies and stakeholders. The group aims to ensure that the needs of the Traveller community are identified and addressed in a coordinated and efficient manner across the full range of policy fields, respecting their rights, culture, and traditions. A 2025/2026 Action Plan has been agreed by the TIG and will focus on areas including Service Provision, National Policy and Linkages between agencies.

Objective: Address educational disadvantage and prioritise the needs of communities experiencing exclusion.

Action 3.5: Develop and deliver Community Leadership Training programmes using a community education approach across targeted communities

Lead Partner: GRET B

Status: Completed / Ongoing

Progress Report

GRET B's community leadership work across 2024 and 2025 shows a consistent focus on strengthening skills, confidence, and organisational capacity within community groups, social enterprises, and emerging leaders in Galway City. Across both years, Galway City Partnership worked closely with GRET B to ensure programmes were accessible to groups in disadvantaged areas and aligned with local needs.

In 2024, GRET B delivered a comprehensive suite of Community Leadership courses, including Managing Finance for Community and Youth Groups, Committee Skills, Community Action Planning, Conflict Management, Active Citizenship, and Funding Applications. Targeted supports for New Arrivals were expanded through two tailored workshops for 24 participants, covering committee roles, governance, funding applications, communications, and social media. Additional capacity building included First Aid Training delivered with the Irish Red Cross for 10 volunteers active in community organisations.

In 2025, GRET B continued to deliver its core leadership programmes, maintaining strong support for individuals and groups taking on leadership roles. Guidance and information workshops were provided to groups applying for Community Education and REACH funding, helping strengthen the quality of applications. A new online programme on sustainability and community was also introduced, broadening learning opportunities and responding to emerging priorities within the sector.

Together, the 2024 and 2025 programmes strengthened governance, leadership and organisational capacity across Galway City's community landscape, enabling both established groups and new community members to participate more confidently and effectively in local development.

For more information see <https://gretb.ie/further-education-training/community-education/>

Action 3.6: Provide community education opportunities in partnership with community groups as a first step back to education

Lead Partner: GRETb

Status: Completed / Ongoing

Progress Report

GRETb's community education work across 2024 and 2025 shows steady growth in accessible learning opportunities, strong collaboration with community partners, and continued support for groups in disadvantaged areas of Galway City. Galway City Partnership played a consistent role in connecting community members with GRETb programmes.

Across the two years, GRETb significantly expanded community based learning:

- 2024: A total of 74 programmes were delivered across Galway City, with 39 community groups receiving Community Education Grants to run programmes based on identified local needs.
- 2025: A total of 81 programmes were delivered across Galway City, with 35 groups receiving Community Education Grants to run needs-based programmes.

In both years, GRETb also delivered 75 additional programmes in partnership with other organisations, strengthening collaboration and widening access to learning opportunities.

The Community Education- REACH Fund continued to play an important role in enabling community groups to enhance their learning environments:

- 12 groups supported in 2024 to purchase essential equipment and materials.
- 12 groups supported in 2025, ensuring continuity of investment in community learning spaces.

Galway City Partnership supported GRETb's work across both years by signposting and referring more than 50 community group members to GRETb education and training opportunities.

For more information see <https://gretb.ie/further-education-training/community-education/>

Action 3.7: Provision of English to Speakers of Other Languages for learners with the development of Digital Badges for low level ESOL learners

Lead Partner: GRETB

Status: Completed / Ongoing

Progress Report

In 2024, English language provision continued to play a central role in supporting migrant integration and reducing social isolation. The GRETB Adult Basic Education Service offered free tuition in literacy, numeracy, digital skills, ESOL, Family Learning and Skills for Work programmes. Galway City Partnership delivered ESOL classes to 210 learners, with around 100 individuals on a waiting list, reflecting strong demand. Across the year, over 400 individuals received tuition and supports.

Provision included 28 hours of classroom based ESOL tuition weekly, covering all levels from pre beginner to advanced. Delivery was supported by a SICAP Project Officer, a GRETB tutor, a Tús participant, and three qualified volunteers. The 2024 SICAP Case Study focused on ESOL supports for new arrivals, highlighting the impact of accessible language learning. A YouTube video of the case study can be found [here](#).

In 2025, GRETB continued to prioritise English language proficiency as a key factor in migrant inclusion and access to education and employment. The Adult Basic Education Service provided free literacy, numeracy, digital skills, ESOL, Family Learning and Skills for Work programmes. ESOL classes were delivered across multiple community locations, Ballybane, Knocknacarra, Mervue, Westside and the main Adult Basic Education (ABE) centre on Dock Street. Provision spanned all levels including Pre Literacy learners, supporting individuals with no literacy through their first language. Digital Badges are in development, and several learners are now completing QQI programmes at Level 1 and 2.

For more information see <https://gretb.ie/further-education-training/community-education/>

Action 3.8: Provide additional access to education and skills training to support marginalised communities to progress to meaningful work tailored to prior experience and/or needs

Lead Partner: GRETB

Status: Completed / Ongoing

Progress Report

Galway City Partnership offered a wide variety of educational opportunities for the unemployed and underemployed in 2024 and 2025, working closely with several local education and employment providers, such as Galway Roscommon Education Training Board (GRETB), Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS), Galway Community College (GCC), and the Local Employment Service Network (LESN).

Under the SICAP Programme, 136 individuals in 2024 and 97 individuals in 2025 participated in Lifelong Learning courses including a range of Labour Market Training and accredited further education courses.

The following are courses in which individuals from marginalised communities participated in during 2024 and 2025;

- 9 Manual Handling
- 3 Barista with HACCP (45 people);
- 2 First Aid Responder
- 1 Security Course (12 people);
- 3 Safe Pass
- 1 Self-Employment Workshop (15 people);
- 1 Start your Own Business (15 people);
- Laptop Loan Scheme with GRETB Reach Fund Funding to access online education and learning

Galway City Partnership and the GRETB have facilitated the provision of English to Speakers of Other Language (ESOL) classes to progress to meaningful work and to assist in integration into the community.

The Galway Childcare Committee promotes the DCEDIY Childcare Subsidy Programme for parents who are returning to school or work. More information on the programme and how to apply can be found at [Galway Childcare Committee CCSU](#)

Action 3.9: Continue to promote volunteering as a means for individuals to gain skills, experience and confidence

Lead Partner: Galway Volunteer Centre

Status: Completed / Ongoing

Progress Report

Galway Volunteer Centre's (GVC) activity across 2024 and 2025 shows sustained growth in volunteering, strong engagement with new communities, and expanded organisational supports, with a volunteer base that is increasingly diverse and active across the city.

In 2024, GVC registered 846 new volunteers and advertised 200 roles, supported by targeted recruitment drives in Ballybane, Westside and Ballinfoile, as well as a major citywide Recruitment Fair that attracted 1,500 attendees and 50 organisations, generating 2,448 volunteer applications. 65% of new registrations were from non-Irish volunteers representing 74 nationalities, and 65% were women. Vetting remained a core service, with 785 volunteers vetted for 75 organisations. The Community Volunteers programme supported 29 events, and LCDC funding enabled 10 online organisational management workshops. GVC also launched an On Street Ambassador programme and supported major events including St. Patrick's Day, Culture Night and Africa Day.

In 2025, GVC continued to expand its reach, registering 891 new Galway City residents, bringing the total volunteer base to more than 6,000 people representing 85 nationalities. A total of 270 volunteer roles were advertised for organisations ranging from small community groups to national charities.

The Community Volunteers programme remained strong, with 250 volunteers supporting 26 events, including Culture Night, St. Patrick's Day, Cruinniú na nÓg and the Mayor's Awards. The 43 Galway Street Ambassadors were active throughout the summer, and GVC received the Galway City Mayor's Award in the Arts, Culture, Heritage and Cúrsaí Gaeilge category.

Training and capacity building continued through 10 LCDC funded online workshops attended by 62 participants from 36 organisations, alongside volunteer management workshops delivered with GCCN.

GVC vetted 623 applicants for 67 organisations and provided training on updated vetting requirements. Supports for new communities expanded further, including confidence-building English classes, empathy skills workshops and conversation mornings.

GVC also developed a Creative Ireland–funded photographic exhibition, In Our Eyes, scheduled to tour in 2026, and partnered with Galway City Council’s Climate Action Team to deliver the first Climate Action Fair during the Climate Inspirations Festival. The Collaboration Café in May brought together community, state and business representatives to explore more effective ways of working together for the benefit of Galway’s citizens. For more information, visit [Volunteer Ireland: National Volunteer Organisation](#)

Objective: Promote partnership approaches to accessibility and services and recognise and enhance the value that diversity brings to the city

Action 3.10: Support inter-cultural events and programmes for migrant and new communities

Lead Partner: Galway City Council Integration Support Service / Healthy Galway City

Status: Completed / Ongoing

Progress Report

Africa Day Galway City is an annual event that marks the African Liberation Day, May 25th, and highlights the rich cultural diversity and contributions of African nations and communities. It is part of the larger Africa Day celebrations held across Ireland, which are organised by Irish Aid in collaboration with local communities and organisations.

The Galway City celebration is a vibrant festival showcasing African culture, music, dance, food, and arts. The event aims to promote understanding, foster a sense of unity and celebrate the diverse African diaspora in Galway and beyond.

Experiences include Traditional African music and dance performances, Cultural exhibitions and displays, Tastings of African cuisine Workshops, discussions and storytelling sessions.

In addition to the cultural celebrations, Africa Day Galway City also serves as an opportunity to raise awareness about key social, political, and economic issues affecting African countries, as well as highlight the contributions of African immigrants to the cultural fabric of Ireland. Galway City Council provided €15k in funding to community groups to hold Africa Day events in 2024, and €13.5k in 2025.

Galway City Partnership, supported by SICAP, support various inter-cultural events and programmes for migrant and new communities, including:

- Collaborating with the Marie Keating Foundation to translate and disseminate health information on breast, cervical and prostate cancer for the Ukrainian community
- Targeted heart health screenings for Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection (BOTPs) and International Protections Applicants (IPAS) In partnership with Croí Heart and Stokey Charity
- A Solidarity Rally and two public meetings on combatting racism and discrimination with Galway Communities Against Racism and Discrimination (GCARD), Westside Welcomes All and Eastside Welcomes All
- Community Days and Cultural Events to welcome New Arrivals in Westside and in the Eastside
- Participation in the Westside Arts Festival with a focus on bringing diversity and different cultures to the festival

Action 3.11: Deliver Community Recognition Fund projects and encourage greater integration between existing and new communities

Lead Partner: Galway City Council

Status: Completed / Ongoing

Progress Report

The Community Recognition Fund (CRF) is designed to support the enhancement of community infrastructure and facilities across the country, recognising the significant contribution made by communities in welcoming and hosting individuals and families arriving from Ukraine and other countries.

The Fund focuses on projects located in cities, towns, and villages that are hosting Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection (BOTP) or International Protection Applicants. The goal of the CRF is to fund the development of facilities that will benefit the entire community in the long term.

For CRF 2023, which was completed in Q4 of 2024, Galway City Council were allocated €1,816,32 with 16 projects across Galway City delivered under the programme. Key initiatives include upgrades to Leisureland, the installation of power supply infrastructure to support community events, accessibility improvements for local businesses, lighting enhancements, and upgrades to community facilities such as changing rooms and multi-use games pitches.

Galway City Council received an allocation of €1,617,752 for CRF 2024 in 2024. The projects are spread across the city to achieve maximum benefit and impact and to be delivered over the course of 2025 and 2026.

19 projects were sanctioned under CRF 2024, distributed across three funding windows: €936,693 for 11 projects in August 2024, €290,735 for 2 projects in February 2025, and €390,325 for 6 projects in June 2025.

The latter focused specifically on the East side of Galway City to achieve balanced investment citywide. Projects delivered during 2025 included lighting upgrades, energy efficiency improvements to community facilities, the purchase of community vehicles, refurbishment of local clubs and sports amenities, and enhancements to school yards.

Remaining projects must be completed by October 2026.

Action 3.12: Co-ordination and delivery of supports to Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection from Ukraine

Lead Partner: Galway City Council

Status: Completed / Ongoing

Progress Report

The Galway City Local Authority Integration Team (LAIT) was established in early 2024 to support people seeking International Protection, refugees, those with Subsidiary Protection or Permission to Remain, Programme Refugees, and Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection. Integration means helping people who have moved to a new country to have a sense of belonging, while also preserving their own identity and culture.

The team—comprising an Integration Support Co-ordinator, two Integration Support Workers and a Community Integration Forum Worker—works to help new arrivals build a sense of belonging while preserving their identity and culture. Support includes access to various welfare entitlements, language development, cultural orientation, entering employment, education and training.

Two Ukrainian Support Workers from Galway City Partnership also provided targeted supports to Ukrainian individuals, families, and community organisations such as UA Mriya, UHUG, Kalyna and the Harmony Choir. Over 105 displaced Ukrainians have been accommodated through 28 ‘Offer A Home’ properties, supported by monthly information sessions in partnership with the Irish Red Cross.

In 2024, Galway City Council, in conjunction with Galway City Local Community Development Committee (LCDC), administered the Community Recognition Fund 2024 to recognise the huge efforts made by local communities in welcoming and supporting new arrivals from Ukraine and other countries coming to Ireland.

A total fund of €1,702,897 was targeted at and specifically invested in areas around the city where the highest level of new arrivals is located.

Action 3.13: Raise awareness of the experiences of the LGBTI+ community and support programmes to enhance social inclusion

Lead Partner: AMACH! LGBTI+

Status: Completed / Ongoing

Progress Report

AMACH! LGBT+ works to promote inclusion, protect rights, and enhance the wellbeing of LGBTI+ people in Galway. In 2023, the organisation secured funding through Galway City LCDC, which has since been extended to December 2026. The Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht (DRCDG) Community Development Programme has funded AMACH! to secure a premises to re-establish Teach Solais LGBT+ Resource Centre.

Teach Solais has become an important hub for LGBTI+ youth, with Youth Work Ireland using the space for groups up to age 18. AMACH! also expanded its cultural and community activities, hosting its first Africa Day celebration in 2025 and supporting Galway Community Pride events. Collaborative health and wellbeing initiatives were held with Sexual Health West, Galway Rape Crisis Centre and Cope Galway, including rapid HIV testing, workshops and awareness talks.

Volunteer and staff development was strengthened through a comprehensive suite of training in areas such as youth leadership, peer support, media skills and health and safety. AMACH! also worked with a range of groups to respond to emerging issues, supporting initiatives like Galway Community Resistance, the Trans Collective Action Group, and peer-led supports for LGBTI+ people in Direct Provision.

Community participation increased significantly in 2025, with new peer-led social groups and wellbeing activities. AMACH! partnered with ShOUT LGBT Youth Project to run an 18–24 youth group, providing continuity for young people transitioning out of youth services. It also supported Youth Work Ireland in delivering a monthly group for parents of LGBTI+ young people, helping create safer home environments.

AMACH! continued to broaden its reach through initiatives such as the Visibility Café in GTI, regular wellbeing events, and support for the Galway Gulls LGBTI+ softball team, which resumed indoor training in late 2025. These diverse activities reflect two years of significant growth and strengthened community supports.

Objective: Demonstrate a commitment to human rights, equality, integration and antidiscrimination, aligned to our responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty

Action 3.14: Establish the Galway City Integration Support Service (ISS) to co-ordinate supports for International Protection applicants, Programme Refugees and Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection (BOTP)

Lead Partner: Galway City Council / Integration Support Service

Status: Completed

Progress Report

The Galway City Local Authority Integration Team (LAIT) was established in Q1 2024, comprising an Integration Support Co-ordinator, Two Integration Support Workers and most recently a Community Integration Forum Worker.

The LAIT supports people who are International Protection applicants, Those with Refugee status, Those with Subsidiary Protection or Permission to Remain status, Programme Refugees, Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection and Unaccompanied Minors.

The LAIT Integration Support Workers guide people to services they require to integrate into the community. The team connect with relevant services across the city and visit IPAS Accommodation Centres fortnightly to identify supports needed by residents. This includes conducting needs-based group information sessions, as well as one to one clinics across 19 locations in the city, with individuals to understand their specific support needs.

The LAIT Community Integration Forum Worker facilitates forum meetings six times a year bringing together key services and agencies to exchange information, discuss emerging needs of the client group, highlight blockages or issues that need attention and problem solve as a collective. The LAIT currently facilitates a touring anti racism exhibition – the SALAAM exhibit is a series of cartoon stories displayed in both Irish and English which was launched in March. The LAIT also run an annual ‘Open Training Initiative’ which welcomes partner agencies and organisations into City Hall to participate in a series of trainings to better enhance their knowledge and skills when working with asylum seekers.

The Galway City Community Integration Forum was established and meets bimonthly bringing together 20 members to discuss issues pertaining to the client group, highlight best practises and troubleshoot challenges.

Action 3.15: Implement actions from the National Action Plan Against Racism 2023-2027

Lead Partner: Galway City Council / Galway City Partnership

Status: Completed / Ongoing

Progress Report

The Bridge Project in Galway City is a community initiative aimed at fostering social inclusion, engagement, and support for marginalized groups, particularly focusing on individuals from immigrant backgrounds, refugees, and asylum seekers.

The project helps communities integrate into Galway by offering a range of services such as language support, educational programs, social activities, and advice on legal or practical matters. The goals of the project are Integration & Empowerment, Support Services, and Community Building. Activities and services include Language Support, Social Events & Networking and Practical Advice.

The Bridge Project plays an essential role in making Galway a more inclusive and welcoming city for newcomers, helping to foster a stronger sense of community. The Bridge Project resumed operation in Galway City in September 2024.

Galway City Council partook in an alliance against anti-muslim hatred awareness campaign in partnership with Sustainable Alliances Against Anti-Muslim Hatred (SALAAM) and began in December 2024. A series of Muslim centered comic-style images were displayed in City Hall to highlight the issue. Both LAIT and Galway City Partnership showcased the SALAAM exhibition during the year, further supporting intercultural awareness and engagement across the city.

In 2025, the Galway City Anti-Racism and Intercultural Strategy was finalised and as of March 2026, is now awaiting print. Galway City Council has also reactivated its membership in the Intercultural Cities Network and contributed several rounds of feedback during the development of the strategy.

Action 3.16: Conduct training and awareness workshops for staff members and public representatives on human rights, equality and antidiscrimination

Lead Partner: Galway City Council

Status: Completed / Ongoing

Progress Report

Galway City Council are establishing a Public Sector Duty working group with Public Sector Duty Champions from each Department.

Galway City Council (GCC) is committed to an ongoing implementation of the equality and human rights duty. In doing so, the City Council will embed an explicit, coherent and consistent focus on equality and human rights in all operations across all functions.

GCC have developed an Equality and Human Rights Values Statement to frame and benchmark its approach to the Duty.

Action 3.17: Have regard to equality and diversity policies when reviewing GCC Housing plans and policies

Lead Partner: Galway City Council

Status: Completed / Ongoing

Progress Report

Galway City Council has implemented the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty in the preparation of the 2024 - 2029 Corporate Plan and is committed to its ongoing implementation. Galway City Council has framed its ambition for and benchmarked its approach to the Duty, based on the values of dignity, autonomy, participation, inclusion, social justice, and environmental justice.

Overall responsibility for driving implementation of the Duty is held by the Corporate Development Directorate. The Public Sector Equality and Human Rights assessment is publicly available on Galway City Council's [Public Sector Duty Assessment.pdf](#)

In deploying the assessment of equality and human rights issues, Galway City Council will put in place and implement the following targeted initiatives to address the relevant equality and human rights issues through implementation of: The City Age Friendly Strategy; Integration Strategy to be developed; Housing Disability Strategy 2021 – 2026; Galway City Traveller Accommodation Plan 2025-2029, Regional Homeless Action Plan 2025-2027.

In preparing the Corporate Plan, Galway City Council identified eight priority overarching equality and human rights issues to be a focus. The Implementation Plan identifies the approach to be taken to implement the legislation and to ensure the relevant equality and human rights issues are addressed, at key moments, in particular the preparation of the Council's Annual Service Delivery Plans and the development and review, generally, of the plans, policies, strategies and programmes that flow from these annual service plans. [Public Sector Duty Implementation.pdf](#)

An assessment of Equality and Human Rights has been undertaken in drafting the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2025-2029. The same process has also been undertaken for the draft Regional Homeless Action Plan 2025 - 2027 and other strategies in Social Development Unit.

High Level Goal 4: A Sustainable Resilient City



High Level Goal 4: A Sustainable Resilient City

Objective: Ensure our city and infrastructure is resilient and adaptive to a changing climate

Action 4.1: Develop a Galway City Climate Action Plan and implement initiatives

Lead Partner: Galway City Council

Status: Completed / Ongoing

Progress Report

In 2024, Galway City Council made major strides in advancing climate action, beginning with the formal adoption of the Galway City Climate Action Plan (CAP) 2024–2029 in February 2024. This comprehensive five year plan sets out a clear framework for both mitigation and adaptation, guiding Galway toward a 51% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and a long term trajectory toward climate neutrality by 2050.

A foundational achievement within the plan's early implementation was the development of a baseline emissions inventory, establishing the evidence base required to define KPIs, measure progress, and direct emissions reduction efforts across key sectors. A climate risk assessment was also prepared, identifying local vulnerabilities - including flooding, storms, coastal pressures and temperature extremes and informing resilience focused planning across Council operations and community infrastructure.

Throughout 2024, Galway City Council advanced a wide range of initiatives aligned to the CAP. This included energy efficiency upgrades across public buildings, retrofitting of older housing stock, and targeted support to community organisations and sports clubs to reduce energy use and emissions. Improvements to civic facilities demonstrated measurable progress in lowering energy demand and operational carbon output.

Sustainable mobility remained a central pillar of climate delivery, with continued investment in active travel infrastructure, expansion of cycling networks, and support for electric vehicle uptake. These improvements complement broader measures aimed at reducing transport related emissions and fostering cleaner, more accessible movement throughout the city.

Significant progress also continued within Galway City's Decarbonisation Zone (Westside). The implementation plan advanced through community led projects, environmental monitoring, energy efficiency actions, and awareness initiatives. The zone also served as a proving ground

for innovative approaches, including creative community science projects such as The Air We Share, which strengthened citizen engagement and climate literacy. Work within the DZ continues to inform city wide approaches to emissions reduction, renewable energy integration and climate resilience.

Galway's climate action leadership is further reinforced through its participation in major European initiatives, including NetZero Cities and the EU Mission for Adaptation to Climate Change. These partnerships support knowledge exchange, innovation and capacity building, helping Galway embed climate action and digital transformation across strategic planning, community engagement and infrastructure delivery.

To strengthen regional collaboration, the Council signed a Service Level Agreement with the Climate Action Regional Office (CARO), extending the Regional Energy Bureau's contract for a further year and enhancing support for climate mitigation projects across the Atlantic Seaboard North Region. Galway also secured approval to transition all Council vehicles above 3.5 tonnes to Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) fuel, a move expected to cut emissions by up to 90% compared with diesel and representing a major step toward decarbonising Council operations.

Action 4.2: Implement actions within the four work packages of the Galway Net Zero Pilot City Project

Lead Partner: Galway City Council

Status: Ongoing

Progress Report

In 2024–2025, Galway City Council progressed substantial work under the EU NetZeroCities Pilot Cities Programme, advancing the city's ambition to act as a Living Lab for digital and green transformation. With €1 million in secured funding, Galway launched a comprehensive set of initiatives focused on energy efficiency, community engagement, capacity building and decarbonisation. These actions directly support the development of a shared regional strategy that leverages the potential of Decarbonisation Zones and advances the wider climate neutrality mission.

A core component of the project is the Warm Home Hub, a community based one stop shop located in Westside, which provides households with practical guidance on home energy

upgrades. The Hub offers one to one consultations, energy assessments, drop in clinics, workshops and information events, making retrofit advice accessible to residents within Galway City's Decarbonisation Zone. This model is strengthening community confidence in energy upgrade processes and contributes directly to the objective of improving BER ratings within the zone.

Complementing this is a dedicated Retrofit Skills and Training Research Project, developed to address skills gaps in the construction and retrofit sector. This work includes the publication of a directory of retrofit training courses, identification of barriers to participation, and targeted proposals to increase the supply of qualified contractors. By supporting workforce development, the project contributes to a more resilient and future ready regional retrofit ecosystem. Galway City Council is delivering the project in partnership with a broad collaboration network. Together, the initiatives delivered through the NetZeroCities Pilot Cities Programme represent a significant step toward Galway's climate neutral future, establishing the processes, partnerships and capabilities required to deliver long term decarbonisation across the city. The NetZeroCities project emphasises learning, sharing, and building capacity as fundamental elements to foster sustainability and achieve net-zero goals. As part of this initiative, Galway City is actively participating in international collaborations and sharing experiences with other cities across Europe.

Action 4.3: Support and empower communities through the climate action fund and development of energy masterplans

Lead Partner: Galway City Council

Status: Ongoing

Progress Report

In 2024–2025, Galway City Council significantly expanded its work to empower communities to take climate action through dedicated funding, capacity building, and technical supports. A major milestone was the allocation of €560,242 through the Community Climate Action Fund enabling 19 community led climate projects across Galway City. Under Strand 1, €445,890 supported 15 local community groups, while an additional €114,352 under Strand 1a funded four cross border Shared Island projects with community partners in Galway and Co. Fermanagh. These investments strengthened local capacity to build low carbon, climate resilient communities and align with national climate and energy targets.

Community engagement and climate awareness were further advanced through the Galway Climate Inspirations Festival, introduced in September 2024. Focused on the theme “Communities in Action”, the festival featured creative public engagement activities—including Playful Streets, panel discussions on carbon targets and climate adaptation, artistic performances, and a sustainable food event. These initiatives fostered deeper public understanding of climate challenges and strengthened community wide participation in climate action.

Throughout both years, Galway City Council supported Sustainable Energy Communities (SECs) by helping groups prepare energy masterplans, providing technical guidance and bridging supports to progress retrofit planning, reduce emissions and improve energy efficiency. This aligned directly with the Action Outcome of expanding SEC participation and enabling community driven decarbonisation.

Galway City Council delivered staff training and internal awareness programmes focused on energy reduction, climate adaptation and sustainable practice—supporting organisational capacity for climate delivery and modelling best practice.

In November 2024, a new €50 million Business Energy Upgrades Scheme (BEUS) was launched nationally, offering up to €120,000 per project for SME building upgrades. Galway City Council promoted awareness of the scheme locally, helping ensure businesses could access supports for heat pumps, solar thermal systems, controls upgrades, insulation and retrofit design planning.

Objective: Increase investment in the circular and green economy and support new and existing business and enterprise in the transition to a net zero economy and to take advantage of emerging green business opportunities

Action 4.4: Actively engage in the EU Intelligent Cities Challenge (ICC) and implement Local Green Deals with businesses to lead the green and digital transition.

Lead Partner: Galway City Council

Status: Did not proceed

Progress Report

Due to insufficient staff resources within Galway City Council, the project did not move forward in 2024. The action will need to be reviewed within the context of the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP). While the engagement with the EU Intelligent Cities Challenge did not progress in 2024, revisiting it within the LECP and addressing the resource constraints will allow Galway City Council to move forward with this innovative project. By securing the necessary resources and building the right partnerships, Galway can capitalise on this opportunity to enhance its cultural and creative industries through the adoption of digital solutions for resilience and sustainability.

Action 4.5: Deliver accelerator programmes to boost sustainability innovation

Lead Partner: Galway Local Enterprise Office

Status: Ongoing

Progress Report

In 2024–2025, the Galway Local Enterprise Office (LEO) advanced a strong programme of supports and accelerator initiatives aimed at boosting sustainability innovation and helping local enterprises transition to a low carbon, resource efficient future. A central component of this work was the continued promotion and delivery of the Green for Business programme, which provides tailored advisory support and funding to SMEs seeking to adopt more sustainable practices. Through expert guidance, site assessments and grant supported improvements, businesses were supported to reduce waste, lower emissions, improve energy performance and build long term competitiveness. Complementing this, enterprises also accessed the Energy Efficiency Grant, which provides direct funding for measures that cut energy consumption and carbon output.

To drive innovation in sustainability focused enterprises, Galway LEO supported access to Research, Development & Innovation (RD&I) funding, enabling businesses to explore new technologies, low carbon solutions and green product development. The Lean for Business programme further assisted companies to become more resource efficient and competitive by embedding continuous improvement methodologies that reduce waste and operational energy costs. These combined interventions help ensure that local SMEs not only meet environmental standards but become leaders in sustainable business transformation.

Supporting the talent pipeline for a sustainable economy remained a priority. Galway LEO guided businesses toward relevant Skillnet programmes, which provide employees with training in circular economy practices, energy management, sustainability leadership and green innovation. Through signposting, advisory sessions and sector specific training, the LEO helped business owners and employees build the competencies needed to participate fully in the transition to a low carbon regional economy. Targeted mentoring also played a key role, with enterprises operating in the green, clean tech and sustainability sectors receiving focused one to one supports to assist with scaling, market development, regulatory requirements and strategic planning. These mentoring supports helped emerging and established green enterprises to grow and expand, while encouraging new climate aligned business models to flourish.

Action 4.6: Develop a climate change awareness plan and campaign for business and startups to inform how climate action measures can be integrated into business activities

Lead Partner: Galway City Council

Status: Ongoing

Progress Report

In 2024–2025, Galway City Council advanced a comprehensive set of initiatives to raise climate action awareness among businesses, start ups and the wider community, supporting the transition to a circular, low carbon economy. A key driver of this progress was the continued delivery of the Green for Business programme, supporting SMEs in reducing carbon emissions, improving resource efficiency and integrating sustainable practices. This included advisory visits, carbon reduction planning and access to grant supports that help businesses progress energy efficiency and circular economy improvements. Training supports were complemented by the MODOS Circular Economy Training for SMEs, delivered online to help enterprises reduce waste, optimise resources and identify new circular business opportunities.

Galway City Council also strengthened business engagement through networking and knowledge sharing events held in partnership with Galway Chamber and the Galway City Community Network. These events brought businesses together to learn from sustainability case studies, hear from experts, and explore practical steps to integrate climate action into daily operations. The Council ran city wide awareness initiatives focused on climate adaptation and sustainable living, supporting households and businesses to better understand and act on climate challenges. These initiatives helped increase climate literacy and foster community wide participation.

Objective: Provide, maintain and enhance our green spaces, biodiversity and public realm

Action 4.7: Resource and implement actions in the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021 – 2025, the Biodiversity Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan 2019 and the National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2027

Lead Partner: Galway City Council

Status: Completed / Ongoing

Progress Report

Galway City's progress across 2024 and 2025 reflects a coordinated programme of climate action, sustainability and biodiversity protection. In 2024, Galway City Council adopted its **five-year Climate Action Plan**, establishing a framework to guide the city toward a low-carbon and climate-resilient future. The plan outlines measures across energy efficiency, renewable energy expansion, sustainable transport, and climate adaptation, and is supported by ongoing staff and public engagement initiatives to promote sustainable practices.

Urban planning developments increasingly integrated nature-based solutions, enhancing biodiversity, improving air quality, and strengthening climate resilience. Progress during 2024 also included a Service Level Agreement with the Climate Action Regional Office, the extension of Regional Energy Bureau support for mitigation projects, and approval to transition Council vehicles above 3.5 tonnes to Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil fuel—cutting emissions by up to 90 percent.

In 2025, this climate-focused work was further strengthened by the adoption of the **Galway City Biodiversity Action Plan 2025–2030**. The plan prioritises habitat protection, ecological connectivity and long-term stewardship of natural areas. Key actions underway include the creation of wildlife corridors and buffer zones, expansion of the Healthy Green Spaces programme with pollinator-friendly approaches, and the development of management plans for green areas and urban woodlands.

Together, the initiatives undertaken in 2024 and 2025 demonstrate Galway City Council's integrated approach to environmental sustainability. The Climate Action Plan provides a foundation for reducing emissions and building resilience, while the Biodiversity Action Plan ensures that nature-based solutions, habitat protection and ecological enhancement are embedded within the city's long-term strategy.

Action 4.8: Resource and implement rejuvenation projects identified in the Galway City Public Realm Strategy 2019

Lead Partner: Galway City Council

Status: Completed / Ongoing

Progress Report

Galway City Council advanced a coordinated public realm agenda focused on improving streets, squares, and pedestrian environments across the city.

In 2024, the newly formed Urbanism and Placemaking Team began implementing the Galway City Public Realm Strategy, supported by URDF Call 2 and NTA Active Travel funding. Design consultants were appointed for improvements on Cross Street, Middle Street, Buttermilk Lane, and Buttermilk Walk, with tender preparation underway for Lombard Street, Market Street, Church Lane, and Church Street.

Major schemes such as the Cross City Link received statutory approval, enabling public realm upgrades at Eyre Square North, Woodquay, and the Cathedral. To learn more, click here

[**BusConnects Galway: Cross-City Link – BusConnects Galway: Cross-City Link**](#)

In 2025, delivery responsibilities became more structured: the Urbanism Team provided strategic oversight while individual project teams such as the NTA Active Travel Team managed specific public realm components within larger programmes like BusConnects. Public realm enhancements continued to be integrated across Active Travel, heritage, recreation, and dedicated public realm projects, reflecting a collaborative, organisation-wide approach to improving Galway's urban spaces.

Action 4.9: Develop green and blue spaces and infrastructure across the city

Lead Partner: Galway City Council

Status: In progress

Progress Report

Galway City Council advanced a wide range of green and blue infrastructure initiatives across 2024 and 2025, strengthening biodiversity, recreation and climate resilience.

In 2024 the Council progressed its Green Spaces Strategy, improved parks and sports facilities, expanded 'no-mow' and pollinator-friendly areas under the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan and partnered with Coillte on woodland management and a planned new amenity woodland for which funding will be sought in 2025. Biodiversity actions included installing bat boxes, completing Healthy Green Spaces projects, and piloting conservation grazing at Ballyloughane Beach.

Climate-adaptation work continued through the Grattan Beach Living Lab, which attracted international research interest, while major public engagement began on the proposed Kingston and Millers Lane Neighbourhood Parks, scheduled for construction in 2026 subject to planning and funding.

In 2025 the Council developed the methodology and mapping for a future Blue Green Infrastructure Plan, with updated biodiversity surveys informing its preparation.

The Watersports Recreational Hub at the Waterworks Building in Terryland made steady progress in 2025. The project secured full planning permission, completed detailed design, and proceeded to public tender. Funding has been approved through Fáilte Ireland's Platform for Growth 2 scheme, launched in January 2020 to support the development of watersports facilities nationwide and to increase year-round participation by improving the visitor experience. With procurement underway, the project is scheduled to begin construction in 2026.

To read more about the Galway City Green Spaces Strategy, visit [Green Spaces Strategy | Galway City Council](#)

Objective: Enable sustainable development that improves the natural environment, reduces resource consumption, encourages modal shift to sustainable travel and provides for all housing needs

Action 4.10: Develop renewable energy projects and expand the use of emerging renewable technologies

Lead Partner: Galway City Council

Status: Completed / Ongoing

Progress Report

Galway City Council are implementing retrofit projects to both residential and public buildings. Before and after BER's are completed to ensure the savings are verified. Renewable energy solutions are being introduced to buildings owned by Galway City Council on a continuous basis to ensure the 50% increase in use of renewable energy is achieved by 2030.

The Energy Efficiency Retrofit Programme supports local authorities with the retrofit of local authority owned homes requiring insulation and energy upgrade works. This contributed to the retrofitting of 50 social houses in Galway City during 2024.

Galway City Council have also completed retrofitting works on 12 site offices, the Ballybane dressing rooms, the Melody Court community centre and the Dog Pound in 2024.

Galway City is participating in the EU NetZero Cities Pilot Cities Programme and has secured funding to carry out a NetZero Cities project focusing on energy efficiency in buildings. The Galway City NetZeroCities project aims to address the barriers associated with retrofitting homes and highlight the comfort, financial and health benefits of improving energy efficiency in the home, as well as the environmental benefits. The NetZero Cities project is ongoing with an aim to bring 250 private sector homeowners through the retrofit process.

To find out more about EU NetZero Cities, visit [NetZeroCities | Galway City Council](#)

In 2025, the Mount Lucas Retrofitting Rig, a fully equipped mobile NZEB (Nearly Zero Energy Buildings) training unit that facilitates training on energy upgrades and retrofitting was hosted in Shantalla.

The Galway City Council Climate Action and Sustainability Team were awarded “Team of the Year” at the 2025 Ireland Climate Change Leadership Awards. The award recognises the team’s exceptional cross-departmental collaboration, community engagement, and delivery of pioneering climate projects, including the NetZeroCities Pilot Cities Programme, the Westside renewable energy-powered eMobility Hub, the Galway Climate Inspirations Festival, and the Grattan Beach Living Lab.

Action 4.11: Implement the Galway Transport Strategy to encourage modal shift to sustainable and active travel - Support the redevelopment of Ceannt Station to increase number of train platforms from 2 to 5.

Lead Partner: Galway City Council/ Iarnrod Eireann

Status: In Progress

Progress Report

Galway City's transport activity across 2024 and 2025 reflects a sustained and coordinated effort to reshape mobility, improve safety, and support a more accessible and sustainable urban environment. In 2024, the Galway Transport Strategy continued to guide long term planning, setting out a 20year programme of infrastructural, operational, and policy measures to be delivered in phases.

Under National Transport Authority capital funding, the Active Travel Team advanced a wide range of schemes focused on walking, cycling, public transport, Safe Routes to School, permeability improvements, and other minor interventions. Significant progress was made on the development of new and upgraded cycling and walking infrastructure along the Western Distributor Road, including the redesign of six roundabouts on a route identified as an Urban Primary cycle corridor in the CycleConnects network.

Construction on the Ballybane Road and Castlepark Road Cycle Network Scheme began in February 2025, while works on the Bóthar Stiofáin scheme commenced in September 2025 and are expected to conclude within 12 months.

Additional progress included the completion of works on Crescent Sea Road in March 2025, which incorporated safety enhancements for Scoil Fhursa, and the commencement of construction on the Salmon Weir pedestrian crossing in December 2025, scheduled for completion in early 2026.

Major public transport infrastructure also progressed, with the redevelopment of Ceannt Station entering its construction phase. Funded through the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund and the National Transport Authority, the project aims to create a modern public transport hub, increase service capacity, and prioritise mobility and accessibility, with completion expected in mid-2026.

Together, the developments of 2024 and 2025 demonstrate Galway's commitment to transforming its transport network into one that is safer, more connected, and more sustainable. For more information on all Galway City Active Travel and Sustainable Transport projects, visit [Active Travel and Sustainable Transport | Galway City Council](#)

Action 4.12: Progress design and development of the Coirib go Cósta Galway City Flood Relief Scheme

Lead Partner: Galway City Council

Status: In progress

Progress Report

The OPW, working in partnership with Galway City Council (GCC) and other Local Authorities, commissioned and have completed the Western Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Study.

To address the Flood Risk Management Plan and to manage the risk of flooding in Galway City the 'Coirib go Cósta' Galway City Flood Relief scheme was developed. Subsequently, Galway City Council appointed Arup to deliver 'Coirib go Cósta' - the Galway City Flood Relief Scheme.

'Coirib go Cósta' is in stage 1 of a five-stage process – scheme assessment and development. The assessment and hydraulic/hydrological modelling element of stage 1 is complete.

The optioneering process is underway. This process involved significant non-statutory stakeholder engagement throughout 2025 to assess various viable options.

A preferred option will be finalised in Q1 2026 and will be brought forward thereafter to develop for planning consent submission. The project is funded by OPW.

Here elements of significant public realm enhancement/impact on other infrastructural works are required, additional funding may be required from various sources depending on location. (eg URDF, NTA, Central Gov, GCC)

For more information on Coirib go Cósta Galway City Flood Relief Scheme, visit [Galway City FRS - Home](#)

Action 4.13: Expand the delivery of social and affordable housing under the Galway City Housing Delivery Action Plan 2022-2026

Lead Partner: Galway City Council

Status: Completed / Ongoing

Galway City Council are committed to delivering a sustainable pipeline of social and affordable housing for Galway city in line with housing for all targets and our own action plan. Galway City Council have undertaken surveys to ascertain the affordable house types required by the city's inhabitants and have increased support for Affordable Housing Bodies and Land Development Agency delivery of cost rental units across the city.

Galway City Council are working collaboratively with the Land Development Agency to develop sustainable communities on Galway City Council's owned land banks in Sandy Quarter and Dyke Road.

The Dyke Road site form part of a strategic brownfield landbank and the proposed development thereon proposes to delivery high quality affordable and social apartments alongside a creche, communal open spaces, playgrounds and new landscaping.

The Sandy Quarter Development involves an ambitious plan to deliver 750 homes and create a vibrant new urban community in Galway City Centre. The Spatial Framework has been agreed by the Land Development Agency. Further details on this project are available [here](#).

The Vacant Home Refurbishment Grant scheme was introduced to help bring vacant and derelict properties back into use as family homes and rental residential units. A grant of up to a maximum of €50,000 is available for the refurbishment of vacant properties with a further top-up grant of up to €20,000 is available where the property has been confirmed to be derelict (structurally unsound and dangerous). There has been an expansion in numbers applying for the vacant home grant scheme and other Pillar 4 schemes set out in Housing for All programme to tackle vacancy and dereliction in the city.

Further information on this scheme is available [here](#).

High Level Goal 5: A City that promotes Health and Wellbeing



High Level Goal 5: A City that promotes Health and Wellbeing

Objective: Reduce health inequality and improve health outcomes through implementation of programmes targeting physical, mental health and wellbeing and nutrition

Action 5.1: Co-ordinate development and implementation of health and wellbeing actions across programmes and plans

Lead Partner: Department of Health / Galway City Council / Healthy Galway City

Status: Completed / Ongoing

Progress Report

In 2024 and 2025, Galway City Council continued to develop and implement health and wellbeing actions targetting marginalised communities through the Healthy Galway City (HGC) programme, the Local Sports Partnership and in partnership with relevant agencies and organisations.

Galway City was accredited under Phase VII as a World Health Organisation (WHO) European Healthy City at the 2025 WHO European Healthy Cities Network Annual Business Meeting and Technical Conference Meeting and Technical Conference in Bursa, Turkey.

Healthy Galway City and Galway Sports Partnership collaborated over 2024 and 2025 to deliver programmes aimed at increasing the percentage of adults and children meeting physical activity guidelines. These included community walking programmes, Buggy Buddies, Men on the Move, Physical Activity Leader training for Older Adults, cycling groups, boxing programmes and more.

HGC and the Galway City Age Friendly Programme also offered the 'Social Steps' dance programme for older adults throughout 2025. Weekly social dance workshops took place in three areas of Galway City (Ballybane, Shantalla / Westside, Ballinfoile / Castlegar).

HGC also partnered with Galway City Partnership (GCP) and Galway Traveller Movement to offer programmes to improve positive mental health and to reduce social isolation. In 2024 and 2025 these included community singing groups, Men's social clubs, Equine Therapy, and a range of art, wellness, and physical activities.

In 2025, the Healthy Galway City Community Grant was launched to support community groups and clubs. This €40,000 fund helped 20 communities, community groups and clubs to provide valuable services to the people in their area, and in the process, to improve the health and wellbeing of people living and working in Galway City.

GCP supported the delivery of two small projects and one large community project under the Community Food Initiatives Programme in 2024. In 2025, GCP were once again selected as Community Food Initiative Champion for the 2025-2028 programme.

Action 5.2: Support the development of the Planet Youth Primary Prevention Project 2023-2028

Lead Partner: Western Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force

Status: Completed / Ongoing

Progress Report

Planet Youth is a five-year pilot programme initiated and developed by the Western Region Drug and Alcohol Task Force (WRDATF) with the support of partner agencies in the region.

The Planet Youth Galway City 2025 report is based on the pupils in the 11 schools and centres within the city boundary. It presents the responses of 832 15 and 16-year-old pupils who completed their Junior Cycle in Galway City schools in June 2024. The pupils sat the Planet Youth survey in November 2024 after their return to school to start their Senior Cycle.

The report offers a comprehensive insight into the lives of our young people and what it's like growing up in Galway City now. It provides some trend information across all four Planet Youth surveys and cross-tabulations that examine some of the risk and protective factors in our teenager's social environment.

2,734 of the Planet Youth Guidelines for First-Year Parents booklets were distributed via Galway schools in September 2024, and these were supported by presentations at the first-year parent information evenings in Galway City schools.

The Parent Power Junior Infant Parent Booklet distribution commences in December 2024. Parental networking initiatives are underway in 36 national schools in the region.

More information on Planet Youth is available [Galway City | Data Research | Planet Youth West](#)

Action 5.3: Promote and support new and existing Parent & Toddler groups

Lead Partner: Galway Childcare Committee

Status: Completed / Ongoing

Progress Report

The Galway Childcare Committee continued its strong support for Parent & Toddler groups across Galway City and County throughout 2024 and 2025, helping providers develop services that meet local family needs and align with national childcare policy.

In 2024, Galway Childcare Committee approved 22 Parent & Toddler Grant applications, including funding for three new groups, two of which operate through Irish, and additional supports for groups introducing buggy walking sessions. That year also saw the establishment of the Westside Parent & Toddler Group following a needs analysis, offering a welcoming, intergenerational space for parents, new arrivals, and families for whom English is not a first language. Galway Childcare Committee also supported the ongoing development of the Ballinfoile group and continued to signpost families to local services, aided by a new national Parent & Toddler database.

In 2025, Galway Childcare Committee built on this progress by assisting both new and existing groups with DCDE grant applications and coordinating parent focused events, including Parent Connect and Make the Link, providing information on childcare options, AIM, the National Childcare Scheme, and funding programmes. Sustainability practices such as reusable materials and outdoor activities became more visible, while trends included increased grandparent participation and an increase in the number of Parent & Toddler groups adding Buggy Walking sessions to their existing and new groups as a result of the specific additional funding in 2025. Galway Childcare Committee also supported the newly established Galway City Parent & Toddler Group, which secured its first grant in 2025 to help with rental costs and equipment, becoming a valuable weekly support for families, including those in the International Protection Programme.

Across both years, Galway Childcare Committee continued to respond to rising childcare place shortages by signposting families to Parent & Toddler groups and supporting communities in establishing new ones, with testimonials highlighting the inclusive, supportive environments these groups create.

Action 5.4: Implement Galway City Early Years Health and Wellbeing actions

Lead Partner: HSE Health Promotion & Improvement / Galway CYPSC

Status: Completed / Ongoing

Progress Report

In 2024 and 2025, Galway CYPSC and the Early Years Group, led by HSE Health Promotion & Improvement, advanced a coordinated programme supporting the health and wellbeing of parents and children aged 0 - 3 years across Galway City.

In 2024, CYPSC hosted a Parents Connect event for Infant Mental Health Awareness Week, attended by 41 parents, and collaborated with ten agencies to promote health initiatives, disseminate My Place to Play mats and deliver targeted supports such as weaning workshops, active play sessions, baby bonding programmes and Active Story Time training. The subcommittee also partnered with the University of Galway on research exploring first-time parents' understanding of infant social and emotional development in the first 1,000 days.

In 2025, the Early Years Group met four times and continued this multi-agency approach, focusing on weaning, active play, infant mental health, and improved communication and collaboration. The group coordinated open and targeted weaning workshops, expanded the distribution of play mats and toddler play bags and supported active play and Buggy Buddies programmes.

During Infant Mental Health Awareness Week, the Galway Parents Connect event grew to 65 parent participants and 14 service providers. The research partnership with the University of Galway continued, while an interagency networking event for staff identified priorities including a central early year's directory, shared communication systems and regular collaboration forums.

The work led by the Early Years Group in 2024 and 2025 demonstrates a coordinated, partnership-based approach to improving health and wellbeing outcomes for parents and children aged 0 - 3 years in Galway City and provides a strong foundation for further work under the LECP in 2026 and beyond.

Action 5.5: Provide a range of youth work programmes for young people 10-24 years of age to meet their wellbeing needs

Lead Partner: Youth Work Ireland Galway

Status: Completed / Ongoing

Progress Report

Youth Work Ireland Galway provides a wide range of supports to young people aged 10–24, with a strong focus on those experiencing marginalisation, including LGBTI+ youth, young Travellers, young migrants, and those with mild mental health difficulties such as social anxiety or depression. Services are youth-led and developed in consultation with young people to meet their expressed needs.

In 2024 and 2025, the shOUT! LGBT+ Youth Project offered weekly one-to-one support, social groups, skill-building activities, a visibility café for 18–24-year-olds, and youth participation in Pride Weeks.

The CAPE Youth Project provided one-to-one supports alongside group programmes such as Westside Youth Project, Media Makers, Crafty Corner, T-side supports for young Travellers, and assistance in establishing the Youth Lates pilot in 2024.

The Westside Youth Project supported young people at risk of not flourishing, including young people not in education, employment, or training (NEETs), neurodivergent youth, young Travellers and young people living in IPAS accommodation. It offers one-to-one supports and a broad programme of activities including coding workshops, leadership development, arts festival contributions, sports, music initiatives, cookery, integration supports and transition programmes for those moving from primary to secondary school. The project has three staff and operates from the Corrach Bui Centre.

Additional supports include the Ballybane Integration Support Project, which promotes integration for young people from diverse ethnic backgrounds—particularly Ukrainian youth—by linking with city services and supporting community events.

Youth Work Ireland Galway also provides a free Youth Counselling Service for 10–21-year-olds, offering six weekly counselling hours in Galway City and coordinating referrals across seven locations, funded primarily by the HSE and TUSLA.

Objective: Develop and support the structures and partnerships which underpin safety and wellbeing of all people in Galway City

Action 5.6: Implement the Joint Policing Committee Strategic Plan with renewed focus on community policing and enhancing community safety responses

Lead Partner: An Garda Síochána / Galway City Council

Status: Completed

Progress Report

In 2024 and 2025, Galway City advanced major reforms in community safety structures as the national transition from Joint Policing Committees (JPC) to Local Community Safety Partnerships (LCSP) progressed.

The long-standing Galway City JPC held its final meeting in April 2024 ahead of the commencement of the Policing, Security and Community Safety Act 2024, which set the groundwork for establishing LCSPs nationwide. Throughout 2024, Galway City Council prepared for the new structure by initiating the appointment process for an independent chairperson and planning for two dedicated staff to coordinate the LCSP from early 2025.

The LCSP model introduces a more inclusive, community centred approach by bringing together statutory agencies, local councillors, voluntary and community organisations and residents, to co design a Local Community Safety Plan informed by public consultation.

In 2025, significant progress was achieved as the Galway City LCSP was formally established in September, marking a major shift toward a collaborative, multi-agency framework for addressing local safety and wellbeing.

The newly formed partnership began work on Galway's first Community Safety Plan, focusing on maintaining low crime levels, strengthening community policing relationships and improving responses to issues such as domestic violence, discrimination, harassment and other harms at local level. This transition represents a substantial step toward a more holistic, community driven model of safety planning and service coordination in Galway City.

Action 5.7: Continue to secure Purple Flag accreditation and implement actions under the Night Time Economy

Lead Partner: Galway City Council

Status: Completed

Progress Report

In 2024 and 2025, Galway City advanced a comprehensive programme to strengthen and diversify its Night-Time Economy (NTE), centred on safety, cultural activation, accessibility, and improved public-realm infrastructure.

In 2024, Galway City Council finalised its [Night-Time Economy Action Plan 2024 - 2025](#), appointed a Night-Time Economy Advisor and began implementing 30 actions across infrastructure, experiences and communications.

Key developments included public-realm and lighting improvements, installation of smart benches, disability-equality and safeguarding training and a review of evening transport. New cultural and social initiatives were launched, such as Youth Lates, TABÚ LGBTQIA+ club nights, Café Lates, Winter Glow and a New Year's Eve Family Féile, alongside enhanced promotion of nighttime events and public transport options.

In 2025, Galway City and Salthill received interim Purple Flag renewal, recognising progress in creating a safe and vibrant night-time environment.

The Safe & Sound initiative delivered free online training and in-person workshops on anti-sexual harassment, bystander intervention, drink-spiking awareness and safeguarding, while the “All Right All Night” train-the-trainer programme expanded best-practice safety training across youth, culture, sport and education sectors.

The following initiatives were developed:

- Youth Lates grew into a citywide, award-nominated programme.
- Café Lates expanded to over 30 events and accessibility audits and funding strengthened inclusion across venues.

Communications were enhanced through a centralised [“What’s On After 6pm” guide](#), while public-realm upgrades—such as major improvements at Fr Burke Park—boosted safety and usability. Family-friendly festive programming and Galway’s participation in the Interreg Europe

NITIES project further positioned the city as a leader in sustainable, inclusive night-time policy across Europe.

Read more about Galway City Night Time Economy at [Night Time Economy | Galway City Council](#)

Action 5.8: Implement Galway City Strategy to Prevent and Reduce Alcohol Related Harm

Lead Partner: HSE Health Promotion & Improvement / WRDATF

Status: Completed / Ongoing

Progress Report

The Galway City Alcohol Forum is a multi-agency group led by HSE Health Promotion and Improvement, WRDATF, GRETb and Dr Ann Hope with representation from An Garda Síochána, GCP, GCCN, GCC, ATU, HSE Addiction Services, Environmental Health and Public Health, NUI Galway Health Promotion, NUI Galway Students Union and Youth Work Ireland, Galway.

In 2024 and 2025, the Galway City Alcohol Forum continued to lead a coordinated, multi-agency approach to preventing and reducing alcohol-related harm in Galway City. In 2024, the forum met four times and hosted two major ‘Learn Connect Collaborate’ engagement events attended by over 100 participants collectively. These events informed the development of the new [Galway City Alcohol Strategy 2024–2029](#), which focuses on communication and awareness, improved data collection, and building organisational capacity. The strategy was launched in November 2024, with service providers and community stakeholders identifying priorities for the 2025 action plan.

In 2025, the Forum, operating as a subgroup of the WRDATF, continued quarterly meetings and advanced implementation of the strategy through a strong programme of communication, training and capacity building.

Key actions included a series of well attended webinars on alcohol and brain health, alcohol and cancer and practical harm reduction approaches for organisations. Members contributed to regional and national needs-assessment work, while new resources such as Reduce Alcohol Harm: A Practical Guide for Groups and Organisations, a harm-reduction poster and an alcohol support services leaflet were developed.

The Forum also promoted training initiatives including Make Every Contact Count (MECC) and SAOR Screening and Brief Intervention for Alcohol and Substance Use to strengthen frontline capacity for brief interventions. Together, the 2024–2025 actions reflect a strengthened, collaborative effort to reduce alcohol-related harm and support healthier communities across Galway City.

For more information on the Galway City Alcohol Forum, visit [WRDATF Collaboration & Policy: Galway City Alcohol Strategy](#)

Action 5.9: Adopt and implement a Galway City Anti-Racism and Intercultural Strategy

Lead Partner: Galway City Partnership / Galway City Council

Status: Completed / Ongoing

Progress Report

In 2024 and 2025, Galway City advanced a coordinated approach to intercultural inclusion, anti-racism work, and supports for International Protection Applicants and migrant communities.

In 2024, the Bridge Project resumed operations to strengthen social inclusion for refugees, asylum seekers and migrant communities. Galway City Council also partnered with SALAAM on an anti-Muslim awareness campaign, displaying a series of comic-style images in City Hall from December 2024.

The Local Authority Integration Team (LAIT) was established in early 2024 and delivered 167 clinics across more than twenty locations between April and November, supporting over 580 individuals through in-person and online appointments. The Galway City Integration Forum was also established, meeting every eight weeks to coordinate responses to emerging needs.

In 2025, the Galway City Anti-Racism and Intercultural Strategy was finalised and prepared for publication, with Galway City Council reactivating its membership in the Intercultural Cities Network and contributing multiple rounds of feedback to strengthen the strategy.

The SALAAM exhibition continued to be displayed by LAIT and Galway City Partnership, reinforcing ongoing anti-racism messaging. Together, the 2024–2025 actions reflect a strengthened, multi-agency commitment to integration, anti-racism, and inclusive community development across Galway City.

Action 5.10: Support young people to have their voices heard on local issues impacting them

Lead Partner: Youth Work Ireland Galway / GCP / GRETB

Status: Completed / Ongoing

Progress Report

In 2024 and 2025, Galway City strengthened youth participation and expanded access to inclusive activities for children and young people. In 2024, Youth Work Ireland Galway continued to coordinate Comhairle na nÓg, providing weekly meetings in City Hall for young people aged 12–17 and ensuring their representation at regional and national structures such as Dáil na nÓg. The Annual Youth Conference, held in October at the Galway Bay Hotel with 75 young people in attendance, focused on creating a “Vision for a Safe Galway” and included a biodiversity consultation with the City Council’s Biodiversity Officer.

In 2025, youth provision broadened further through the Ballinfoile Youth Activity Project, which offered free universal activities for children and young people aged 5–16 across Ballinfoile and Castlegar. Running programmes such as tennis, arts and crafts, cookery, drama, music, outdoor camps and educational outings, the project engaged 148 young people throughout the year, with an average weekly attendance of 78.

Together, these initiatives reflect a strong commitment to youth voice, wellbeing and community engagement across Galway City.

In 2025, the delivery of Comhairle na nÓg was tendered for in September 2025. The contract was awarded to Youth Work Ireland Galway who engage a co-ordinator to work with the young people to ensure that they have a positive experience and facilitates the meetings of the committee to work on the topic voted at the AGM. Comhairle na nÓg highlights included Launch of the Safety Report by the Mayor of Galway City and presentation on the report to the Minister for Justice, Jim O’Callaghan TD.

Galway City Comhairle na nÓg had their annual Youth Conference in October 2025 and the committee welcomed over 60 young people from the various secondary schools in the city. The topic for this year’s Youth Conference consultation was ‘Communication with Decision Makers ‘.

The young people discussed a variety of topics and how young people could discuss these issues with their local decision makers. After the consultation, the young people voted on the

relevant topics and chose their number one issue for young people in Galway City. The topics for 2026 were agreed to be Mental Health and Transport.

Objective: Enhance healthy lifestyles through the development of local sport and physical activity programmes and facilities

Action 5.11: Create a city that promotes health and wellbeing through active travel by encouraging and facilitating walking, running and cycling as a mode of transport and as an alternative to the car

Lead Partner: Galway City Council / National Transport Authority

Status: Completed / Ongoing

Progress Report

In 2024 and 2025, Galway City made significant progress in advancing active travel, sustainable mobility and safer public-realm infrastructure.

In 2024, major projects were completed including the Doughiska South Cycle Network and Martin Junction Upgrade, the Droichead an Dóchais bridge enhancement, and the School Street at Scoil Iognáid alongside the Eglinton Canal Active Travel Scheme.

Galway City Council also began a programme of access-control upgrades, replacing restrictive kissing gates in Terryland and South Park to improve accessibility for all users, with further removals planned for 2025.

The publication of the Walking and Cycling Index Report Galway 2023 highlighted strong public support for active travel investment.

Several schemes moved into construction or design, including new pedestrian crossings at Crescent/Sea Road, the Parkmore Road Bus Priority Scheme, cycle lanes on Bóthar Stiofáin, and the Ballybane and Castlepark Road Cycle Network, as well as preliminary design for a 3km Western Distributor Road cycle route and six upgraded roundabouts.

A major milestone was achieved when An Bord Pleanála approved the BusConnects Galway Cross-City Link in September 2024, with the Dublin Road Bus Corridor progressing toward application in early 2025.

In 2025, Galway City continued to prioritise active travel as a core contributor to public health, wellbeing and sustainable mobility, integrating walking, wheeling and cycling with public transport and supporting long-term behaviour change across the city.

For more information on all Galway City Active Travel and Sustainable Transport projects, visit [Active Travel and Sustainable Transport | Galway City Council](#)

Action 5.12: Implement Galway City's Green Spaces Strategy and progress the development of additional community and recreational facilities

Lead Partner: Galway City Council

Status: Completed / Ongoing

2024-2025 Action Progress Report

Galway City Council is currently developing a Green Spaces Strategy. Consultation with the community and stakeholders and relevant stakeholders was undertaken in 2024 including surveys, workshops and public meetings. The Strategy will be used by the Council to make and shape decisions such as making new playgrounds and outdoor facilities, whilst enhancing the natural and built heritage of Galway City.

Galway City Council was successful in obtaining 2 new Green Flag awards for Eyre Square and Terryland in 2024 which brings the number of Green Flags awarded in Galway City to 5.

Funding of € 4.3 million was awarded to Galway City Council to construct a new community centre in Newcastle under the Community Centres Investment Fund. A project team has been established to progress the project in partnership with Newcastle Combined Community Association.

The Castlepark Calisthenics gym was completed in 2024. This outdoor gym is the first of its kind built by Galway City Council. Calisthenics is a form of exercise that involves running, standing, pushing and pulling using your bodyweight. The refurbishment of Corrib Park MUGA and the Glen Oaks/Drom Caoin MUGA were completed in 2024. These facilities allow for a variety

of sporting uses in the communities within which they are situated, thereby increasing the opportunity for people to engage in physical activity promoting healthy lifestyles in the city.

Galway City Council carried out refurbishments to the South Park Playground, upgrading the facility with accessible and sensory friendly play equipment and the provision of aesthetic planters and benches. Galway City Council carried out lighting upgrades to the O'Sullivan Park amenity area. The Westside Running Track was also upgraded with the installation of automated energy efficient floodlighting.

Galway City Council secured funding under the Community Recognition Fund to carry out refurbishment works to the Crestwood changing rooms which was completed in 2024. Galway City Council provided funding for the provision of two changing shelters at Ballyloughane beach. This project was completed in 2024. Further, the Council carried out improvement of facilities along Salthill Promenade and are working with the Water Safety Officer on the delivery of a lifeguard service.

Galway City Council successfully retained two Blue Flags and Green Coast awards for Silverstrand and Salthill beaches.

A Part 10 planning application has been sent to An Bord Pleanála for the renovation of Woodquay Park, one of the aims of the development is to provide safe and secure access to the park for pedestrians by the development of better access points and necessary upgrades on the surrounding roads and footpaths.

Action 5.13: Provide a dedicated Youth Centre / Hub for the provision of universal and targeted Youth Work opportunities for young people

Lead Partner: GRETB / Youth Work Ireland Galway / CYPSC

Status: In progress

Progress Report

In 2024 and 2025, GRETB continued to provide governance, oversight and administrative support to 22 UBU-funded youth work services and more than 120 volunteer youth clubs under the Local Youth Club Grant Scheme, in line with its statutory responsibilities under the Education and Training Board Act 2013.

Throughout 2024, an inter-agency working group chaired by GRETB, comprising Galway City Council and Tusla, advanced plans for a dedicated youth centre in Galway, with a feasibility study and options report nearing completion.

This work progressed further in 2025, with the study finalised and the next phase of development underway. The partnership expanded to include CYPSC, and funding was secured through Erasmus+ for a study visit to Helsinki in January 2026, enabling 13 representatives from GRETB, Galway City Council, Tusla, Foróige, Youth Work Ireland Galway, Galway City Partnership and Galway Library Service to explore international best practice in youth spaces.

Together, the 2024–2025 actions reflect a sustained commitment to strengthening youth infrastructure, coordination and service quality across Galway City.

Action 5.14: Develop a Galway City Local Sports Plan 2024 – 2029 Implement the Active Cities Galway Programme

Lead Partner: Galway City Council

Status: In progress

Progress Report

In 2024 and 2025, Galway City strengthened its commitment to increasing participation in sport and physical activity through the work of Galway Sports Partnership (GSP), Active Cities Galway, and partner agencies.

In 2024, Sport Ireland issued national guidelines for Local Sports Plans. Throughout the year, GSP delivered a wide range of once-off events, long-term programmes and grant supports for clubs, while Galway City Council continued to fund the Community Sports Hub Coordinator for Ballybane and Doughiska.

The Active Cities Galway project expanded significantly, delivering activities across disadvantaged areas, including European Week of Sport events, yoga programmes for young people, walking football for older adults, Activator Pole Walking, Men on the Move, and inclusive initiatives such as Older Adults Try It Out Day and the Glow of the Youth Culture Night event. GSP also supported walking groups, menopause health workshops, HER Outdoors activities, and began rolling out eight outdoor sports-equipment vending machines to increase access to free recreational resources.

In 2025, Active Cities Galway and GSP continued to deliver a diverse programme of mass-participation events, such as National Play Day, Glow Games, St Patrick's Festival Family Fun Day, Be Active Night and Bike Week, alongside targeted programmes including Nature for Health, Women in Sport, Her Moves, Her Outdoors, Sports Inclusion initiatives, Boccia, Activator Poles and Walking Football. GSP also strengthened club governance and volunteer training through safeguarding and Autism in Sport workshops.

While the Local Sports Plan was delayed to 2026, the combined 2024–2025 actions significantly advanced the LECP goals by promoting health, wellbeing and equitable access to sport and physical activity across Galway City.

For more information click <https://www.galwayactive.ie>

Action 5.15: Support national Healthy Ireland Fund initiatives and strategies for the development of physical activity programmes in partnership with Sport Ireland

Lead Partner: Galway City Council

Status: Completed / Ongoing

Progress Report

Healthy Galway City and Galway Sports Partnership (GSP) collaborated to deliver programmes to increase the percentage of adults and children meeting national physical activity guidelines in 2025 and 2025. HGC funded activities targeting people with disabilities, older adults and people living in disadvantaged communities.

In 2025, HGC and GSP partnered with the Western Regional Drug and Alcohol Taskforce (WRDATF) to fund initiatives aimed at increasing levels of physical activity amongst those in alcohol and drug recovery. These included 'On the Right Road' Cycling Leader Training and Cycling groups, Boxing Programmes and Running and Walking groups.

HGC funded the delivery of the 'Nature for Health' programme; a 10-week walking programme based in local woodlands that supports participant to enjoy gentle exercise, mindfulness, biodiversity, local history and therapeutic art. This programme ran throughout 2024 and 2025 in Merlin Woods, and targets people living in disadvantaged communities and people with mental health issues. Nature for Health ran in spring, summer and autumn, and included evening sessions to accommodate a wider range of participants than in previous years.

HGC and GSP targeted men that do not engage in regular exercise through the 'Men on the Move' (MOTM) programme. MOTM is a physical activity programme that is aimed at adult men to increase physical activity, have fun and improve fitness levels. The programmes were delivered in Westside, Ballybane and Ballinfoile. A boxing fitness programme targeting traveller men was also delivered in Ballinfoile.

HGC and the Galway City Age Friendly Programme delivered the 'Social Steps' dance programme for older adults throughout 2025. Weekly social dance workshops took place in three areas of Galway City (Ballybane, Shantalla / Westside, Ballinfoile / Castlegar), with an average weekly attendance of 20 individuals per class. This programme will continue throughout 2026.

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