

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY FEDERATION

GALWAY BRANCH WESTERN AND MIDLAND REGION

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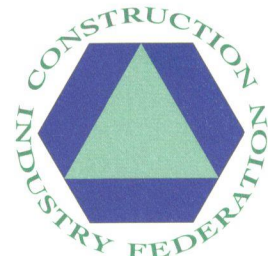
RE: *Submission on the Draft of the Galway County Development Plan 2022 - 2028*

Dear Sir / Madam

CIF note that Galway County Council have published their Stage Two (Draft) of the Galway County Development Plan 2022-2028 (hereinafter referred to as the Draft Plan) on the 20th of May 2021.

CIF acknowledge the changing circumstances under which the new County Development Plan is drafted. A new spatial framework is now in place which guides and influences the drafting of Development Plans at the regional and the local level.

New national guidelines on building height, apartment sizes and urban roads and streets have been introduced or revised since the previous adoption of the Development Plan, which will also influence and shape the forthcoming Development Plan. The following are some core matters the CIF are keen to have incorporated into forth coming Development Plans particularly in County Galway.



Population Projections

Under the National Planning Framework (NPF), Galway is designated a Regional city and the Regional Plan identifies a number of towns outside of the city as being within the Galway Metropolitan Area such as Oranmore, Claregalway, Bearna and further areas such as Briarhill and Garraun. It recognises that these areas offer a range of opportunities for social and community interaction, potential for innovation and prosperity and also gives support and opportunity to the wider western region. The NPF targets the population to grow by between 40,000 - 45,000 people by 2040 which is an increase of almost 55%. It also targets half of the homes to accommodate this population increase to be located within the existing built footprint on lands which include key regeneration / brownfield sites, infill sites and underutilised lands at locations that are well served by existing and planned public transport, amenity, social and community infrastructure.

Supply of Housing & Employment Buildings / Lands

Specialist housing needs will need to be considered in the forthcoming CDP. The Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) has recently provided an integrated model of housing demand that takes into account demographic, economic and housing market factors, including inter-county migration, at individual local authority level. The annual average level of demand identified by the ESRI for the baseline and NPF projections, is just over 28,000 new households per annum for the full twenty-four-year period from 2017 to 2040. With this considered, the annual housing demand in Ireland, and indeed Galway is very likely to be higher than anticipated and the CIF would suggest that this anticipated population inflation is considered as a priority in the drafting of housing policies and objectives.

We also wish to suggest the consideration of 'housing type' in the drafting of CDP policy. We contend that policies in support of higher density residential development will make optimal use of land and will assist Galway (and Ireland) in reaching sustainability targets. Of course, higher density development can also contribute to the acceleration of housing delivery overall as well as providing cheaper transport and infrastructure delivery.

There are many existing infill sites with great potential to deliver housing in sustainable and attractive locations in Galway. Coupled with the shortage of housing in Ireland, this creates a golden opportunity for residential development in Galway. The CIF would suggest that this is considered as part of the new Development Plan. We would suggest that housing policies and objectives are specifically focussed on delivering sustainable residential development at infill sites and in already established residential areas in order to make use of existing infrastructure, and to contribute towards a positive and attractive place-making initiative for Galway particularly within the Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan.



Equally, these infill sites present Galway with opportunities to utilise vacant sites for employment premises, and CIF would suggest that policies and objectives in support of commercial and industrial nature on infill sites are considered.

Mixed-use neighbourhoods are a vital component of a successful county, not least Galway. The CIF requests that careful consideration is given to the provision of employment lands and buildings, in order that commercial development is supported, and employment continues to grow. Galway is seen as a significant employment space in the west of Ireland and has many draws which make it an attractive place to live and work, and the CIF would be grateful to see policies and objectives which take full advantage of this status by providing opportunities for commercial and employment growth and development, so that Galway continues to attract people to move here to live work and to contribute to its future.

It is important that population growth projections and density guidelines are viewed as facilitative tools to promote sustainable development rather than restrictive tools that constrains development. Therefore, flexibility needs to be built into the CDP to allow for any necessary adjustments to reflect actual population growth, likewise, flexibility in density guidelines will be necessary to reflect market demand and construction viability. These measures will be necessary to address the current challenges impacting our economy and the significant under-provision in housing supply to meet demographic demands, any under provision of zoned lands could result in an increase in house prices, exacerbate the housing crisis and encourage long distance commuting.

Infrastructure & Transport

The CIF suggest that this Development Plan is an opportunity to enhance the infrastructure networks in Galway and the surrounding areas, in order that the city can operate optimally and to its potential, which is currently stunted by the existing transport network.

Transport and sustainable mobility networks are vital to a well-functioning community and economy. They provide equitable access to education and employment opportunities, services and amenities in the city and beyond. Sustainable mobility is crucial to our efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution.

CIF supports measures to ensure the most efficient and sustainable use of land and to facilitate access to a range of transport modes, accessible to all sections of the community.



In relation to delivery of the N6 Ring Road, this submission contends that the emerging CDP should seek to support and advance the delivery of the N6 Galway City Ring Road ("GCRR") as a means of enhancing accessibility. The Galway Transport Strategy has clearly demonstrated the need for this road, and the inevitable relief it will bring to the city in terms of access, mobility and movement of goods. The CIF respectfully suggest that development in Galway overall, *depends* on the delivery of the N6 Ring Road for success. Future development in Galway without the Ring Road is likely to create more complex issues going forward. We would suggest delivery of the N6 Ring Road could position the city more optimally for development of all types.

Services / Cluster Housing

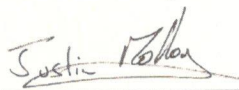
Provision of appropriate servicing to towns and villages in the County needs to be given due consideration, whilst the CIF are aware of the role of Irish Water in the provision of adequate serving of land, there is an opportunity for the County Council's to consider alternatives. The CIF would highlight the successful delivery of Cluster Housing by Tipperary County Council and a template that should be considered by Galway County Council. Many people wish to live in rural areas in County Galway, and also that in order to thrive, our local villages need people to live in them. For that reason, the County Council should consider best practice guidelines to promote and facilitate the development of cluster housing schemes to meet the needs of rural people. A Cluster Housing Scheme could comprise of up to six detached houses or serviced sites within or adjoining a rural village.

Again, we would suggest that any zoned lands in the CDP would be fully serviced, or at least would have a time that would indicate when they would be serviced to ensure that development is not constrained and costs increased as a result of a lack of serviced zoned lands.

Conclusion

The CIF welcomes the opportunity to engage in the preparation of a new development plan for the period 2022 - 2028. The formulation of the new County Development Plan provides an opportunity to work towards a shared ambition to enhance opportunities for social and community interaction, build on the potential for innovation and prosperity and develop County Galway's role in the Region.

Yours sincerely



Justin Molloy
Director

