

Chapter 11

# **Community Development and Social Infrastructure**

*To promote and develop healthy and sustainable communities, with access to a wide range of good quality social, community, healthcare, educational and cultural facilities that meet both current and future needs and where, through a commitment to equality, participation, accessibility and social inclusion, the County develops as a unique location that improve people's quality of life.*

## **11.1 Introduction**

The creation of healthy and inclusive communities, developed on the principles of sustainability and accessibility, is a key component to ensuring a high quality of life for all residents in County Galway while also ensuring that the County is an attractive place to visit and in which to do business. Placemaking and the quality of our immediate environment including our ability to access social infrastructure, services and amenities, leisure and social interactions make a real difference to people's lives while also developing strong and inclusive communities. Access to social and community infrastructure within the county, is essential to well-being, social inclusion and the creation of sustainable and attractive communities. Social infrastructure should be easily accessible by walking, cycling and public transport. Communities also require opportunities to meet, interact and form bonds, all essential in creating a sense of place and belonging. Shared use and co-location of facilities should be encouraged, in order to use land more efficiently and facilitate opportunities for further inclusion and community participation.

## **11.2 Strategic Aims**

Galway County Council shall work the appropriate stakeholders and agencies in order to endeavour to achieve an integrated and sustainable approach to the development in the County. This will with the following strategic aims:

- To promote and facilitate sustainable communities through land use planning, by supporting the provision of leisure, recreational, amenity and cultural

facilities while also including our ability to access services such as education and healthcare;

- To create a more socially inclusive society by alleviating social exclusion, poverty and deprivation via the provision of good quality affordable housing, community infrastructure and improving access to information and resources throughout the County and across all communities;
- To ensure that the principles of accessible, inclusive and sustainable community development are central in all developments;
- To encourage, promote and facilitate active and inclusive participation in physical and social activities.

### 11.3 Strategic Context

This chapter is prepared in the context of the following European, National and Regional Plans, Policies and Guidelines

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| Europe 2020 Strategy   |
| UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities   |
| Project Ireland 2040 The National Planning Framework 2018  |
| National Development Plan 2018-2027  |
| Climate Action Plan 2019   |
| Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended)   |
| Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Northern and Western Region 2020-2032   |
| Sustainable Residential Development Guidelines In Urban Areas and The Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice Guide, May 2019. |

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| Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025 – Ambition, Goals and Commitment                                    |
| National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2018-2021 (2007-2016 and the 2015-2017 Update)                   |
| Health - Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan 2019- 2014  |
| Galway County Local Economic and Community Plan 2016 – 2022  |
| Get Ireland Active, National Physical Activity Plan for Ireland, 2016 & Implementation Summary 2018        |
| Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme 2018-2022  |
| Our Communities: A Framework Policy for Local and Community Development in Ireland, 2015                   |
| Sláintecare Action Plan, 2019 & Future of Healthcare, Sláintecare Report, 2017                             |
| Healthy Ireland - A Framework for Improved Health and Well Being, 2013-2025                                |
| Healthy Ireland - A Healthy Weight For Ireland, Department of Health                                       |
| Better Outcomes, Brighter Future: The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014-2020    |
| Ready, Steady, Play! A National Play Policy, National Children’s Office, 2019                              |
| The Provision of Schools and the Planning System: A Code of Practice for Planning Authorities, DEHLG, 2008 |
| Childcare Facility Guidelines for Planning Authorities, DEHLG, 2001  |
| Healthy and Positive Ageing Initiative Survey, Department of Health, 2016                                  |
| National Positive Ageing Strategy, Department of Health, 2013  |

Galway Age Friendly Strategy 2014- 2019

National Strategy for Traveller and Roma Integration 2017-2021

Great Outdoors - A Guide for Accessibility 2018

World Health Organisation, Promoting Physical Activity and Active Living in Urban Areas – The Role of Local Governments 2006

National Anti-Poverty Strategy

Our sustainable future – A Framework for Sustainable Development

National Disability Authorities Strategic Plan 2019-2021

Building for Everyone: A Universal Design Approach, 2012, National Disability Authority

National Disability Strategy Implementation Plan 2013-2015, National Disability Strategy Implementation Group

National Women's Strategy 2007-2016, Department of Justice and Equality

The Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice Guide, May 2019

National Cycle Policy Framework

Connecting People, Connecting Places; A Strategy for Walking and Cycling, 2015

Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways, 2018

National Sports Policy 2018-2027

Galway Sports Partnership Strategic Plan 2016-2020

Our Public Libraries 2022 – Inspiring, Connecting and Empowering Communities

Culture 2025 – A Framework Policy to 2025, DAHRRGA, 2016

Galway County Integration and Diversity Strategy 2013-2015

Galway Children and Young People's Services Committee

County Galway Early Years. Health and Wellbeing Plan (2018 – 2022)

County Galway Playground Guide, 'Let's Play!', 2015

### **11.3.1 National Planning Framework**

The National Planning Framework (NPF) is built around 10 no. National Strategic Outcomes (NSO's), with NSO 10 Access to Quality Childcare, Education and Health Services of particular relevance. NSO 7 Enhanced Amenity and Heritage, NSO 1 Compact Growth and NSO 3 Strengthening Rural Economies and Communities are also considered of relevance. NPO 26 supports the objectives of public health policy including Healthy Ireland and the National Physical Activity Plan, though integrating such policies, where appropriate and at the applicable scale, with planning policy. NPO 27 ensures the integration of safe and convenient alternatives to the car into the design of our communities, by prioritising walking and cycling accessibility to both existing and proposed developments and integrating physical activity facilities for all ages. NPO 28 aims to plan for a more diverse and socially inclusive society that targets equality of opportunity and a better quality of life for all citizens, through improved integration and greater accessibility in the delivery of sustainable communities and the provision of associated services. NPO30 indicates that local planning, housing, transport/ accessibility and leisure policies will be developed with a focus on meeting the needs and opportunities of an ageing population along with the inclusion of specific projections, supported by clear proposals in respect of ageing communities as part of the core strategy of city and county development plans.

Childcare, Education and Life Long Learning is addressed in NPO 31 which is to prioritise the alignment of targeted and planned population and employment growth.

### **11.3.2 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy**

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) considers social inclusion, access to affordable and good quality childcare, education facilities, lifelong learning facilities, health services, accessible amenities and leisure facilities as essential requirements for an equitable society, a thriving economy and sustainable communities via a number of relevant Regional Policy Objectives (RPOs); Multi-agency approaches for delivering the health, social care, education and community services needed by growing, diverse or isolated communities are encouraged via RPO 7.15. Social Inclusion and accessibility is promoted via RPO 7.2 and 7.9 which support disadvantaged communities and high-quality accessible public open spaces with good linkages for all. Education is promoted via RPO 7.3, 7.4 and 7.6 including the promotion of educational programmes through the LCDCs, support for the STEM program in Irish Education and support for the Connacht Ulster Alliance becoming a Technological University serving the west and north-west.

Healthcare is promoted via RPO 7.8 and 7.10 including support for the implementation of the objectives of Sláinte Care (development of a Single Tier Health Service, and the advancement of Primary Care Centres) and also support for the Health Service Executive and other statutory and voluntary agencies and private healthcare providers in the provision of healthcare facilities to all sections of the community. The RSES supports the designation of lands in development plans for nursing homes and sheltered housing via RPO 7.14, whilst ensuring these facilities are integrated within communities. Public Health Policy is promoted via RPO 7.11 which supports the objectives of Healthy Ireland and the National Physical Activity Plan and the National Obesity Plan through integration with planning policy.

The RSES acknowledges the 'Age-Friendly Ireland' Initiative as best placed to respond to change at a local level including the principles of universal design via RPO 7.13 and RPO 7.12 aims to ensure local planning, housing, transport/ accessibility and leisure policies are developed with a focus on meeting the needs and opportunities of an ageing population and people with disabilities and younger persons. Lifetime adaptable homes are supported via RPO 7.19 so that provision of lifetime adaptable homes can accommodate the changing needs of a household over time.

## **11.4 Climate Change**

The provision of community and social infrastructure within the county are key parameters of this plan. It is a priority that where possible childcare, education, healthcare, specialist residential and community facilities are developed in settlements so as to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by allowing people to travel to these facilities by sustainable transport modes where possible. All such developments will avoid areas at risk of flooding within the county. There will be support where possible with increased education awareness in schools and in community settings on climate resilience.

## **11.5 Social Inclusion and Community Development**

The Local Government Reform Act, 2014 introduced structures that brought about a greater emphasis on community development with the introduction of the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) in each local authority to address the need for creating sustainable communities for each County.

The Galway LECP 2016 – 2022 provides the supporting framework to promote and support economic and local community development of Galway. The Galway Local Community Development Committee (LCDC), which consists of representatives from local government and from local development and community interests, plays an important oversight role in local and community development programmes and in preparing the community element of the Galway Local Economic and Community Plan.

The recently published *Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025 – Ambition, Goals and Commitment* seeks to make Ireland one of the most socially inclusive counties in the EU over the coming years. It outlines specific measures and goals, which can capture progress across many aspects of social inclusion: housing, healthcare, childcare and social integration.

One of the overall aims of the plan is the promotion of social inclusion and in order to facilitate social inclusion at local level, the Social Inclusion Activation Programme (SICAP) 2018-2022 is overseen by the Galway Local Community Development



Committee (LCDC), with the aim of tackling poverty, social exclusion and long term unemployment through engagement and participation between community organisations, public sector agencies and certain sectors of society.

### **11.5.1 Voluntary and Community Groups**

Galway County Council recognises the essential contribution that voluntary groups, community groups and sporting groups make to quality of life in the County. These groups work voluntarily to support and enhance their local communities, from both a physical and social perspective.

The Public Participation Network (PPN) acts as the main link through which the Council facilitates, connects with and seek representations from the local Community/Voluntary, Social Inclusion and Environmental sectors, to progress their work in the areas of arts, sports, community and social inclusion initiatives.

## **Policy Objectives Social Inclusion and Community Development**

### **SCI 1 Community and Social development in the County.**

To support the policy objectives and actions set out in the National Planning Framework, Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES), Galway Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2022 (and any subsequent LECP) and relevant National Guidance documents to strengthen community and social development in the County.

### **SCI 2 Galway Local Economic and Community Plan**

To support the Local Community Development Committee and all relevant stakeholders to implement the Galway Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2022 and any subsequent plan.

### **SCI 3 Social Inclusion**

Promote social inclusion as outlined in the 'Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020 – 2025' through equality of access to services and facilities and to assist in the removal of barriers to full participation in society.

### **SCI 4 Recreation, Amenity, Sports and Social Inclusion**

Support the implementation of the Integration and Diversity Strategy 2013-2015 and other appropriate plans and programmes that may be developed during the lifetime of this plan.

## **SCI 5 Voluntary and Community Groups**

To actively engage with the Galway Public Participation Network in the preparation and implementation of local authority policies and programmes to increase support for the community and voluntary sector while responding to the needs of the residents of County Galway.

## **11.6 Social and Community Facilities**

The quality of life in a community depends not only on the provision of housing, employment and infrastructure support but also on access to social, community and cultural facilities. The proper provision of community and social infrastructure of a high standard, in the most appropriate locations and in tandem with housing and other development is important for all ages and abilities in society and is an essential component of building sustainable and properly planned communities.

The Sustainable Residential Development Guidelines in Urban Areas highlight the need to phase development in line with the availability of essential social and community infrastructure such as schools, amenities and other facilities.

Galway County Council facilitates and supports the development of social and community facilities which provide numerous benefits to individuals and communities. Strong and relevant social infrastructure is essential to the creation of healthy, inclusive and sustainable communities. While different elements of social infrastructure are discussed individually below, they should be provided in a coordinated manner in communities across the County, in locations that are accessible to the population that they are intended to serve.

### **Policy Objectives Social and Community Facilities**

#### **SC 1 Social and Community Infrastructure**

Support the provision of social and community facilities and services within the County which meet the current and future needs of the entire population.

#### **SC 2 Provision of lands for Social and Community Facilities**

Support the provision of lands for social and community facilities and encourage the provision of facilities suitable for all members of the community.

## 11.7 Multi - Use Community Facilities

Facilities within the community should be located to maximise their efficiency and to facilitate ease of access for users of all ages and abilities. Where appropriate, facilities should also be capable of adapting to changing needs over time.

It is the aim of the Council to encourage the provision of multiuse facilities that community groups can share. New facilities should be designed for multiuse and future sharing. The clustering of facilities at appropriate locations will also be encouraged such as Childcare facilities and Schools sharing the same campus.

### Policy Objective Multi-Use Community Facilities

#### MU 1 Multi - Use Community Facilities

Encourage and support the provision and extension of Multi-Use Community Facilities, where feasible, which encourage sharing and integration of community facilities designed for multi-use activities by community groups.

## 11.8 Childcare Facilities

The provision of Childcare facilities is a key component of social infrastructure considered an integral requirement to economic and social wellbeing. Childcare facilities generate employment within communities and often serve as a social focal point for the local community while also allowing for a wider participation in the workforce and the economy.

The 2001 Childcare Facility Guidelines for Planning Authorities place an emphasis on the role planning has to play in delivering childcare facilities. In having regard to the Guidelines on Childcare Facilities for Planning Authorities, the Council will take account of existing childcare provision when considering new childcare / crèche facilities provision as part of residential development in order to avoid over provision of these facilities.

## Policy Objectives Childcare Facilities

### CF 1 Childcare Facilities

Encourage and support the sustainable provision of childcare facilities in appropriate locations and seek their provision concurrent with development, having regard to the distribution of the residential populations and population targets for the area and in accordance with the Guidelines on Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG, 2001), the Childcare (PreSchool Services) Regulations 2006 and any other relevant statutory guidelines which may issue during the period of this Plan.

### CF 2 Consultation Childcare Facilities

Promote and encourage the provision of a network of good quality affordable childcare facilities in consultation with the Galway County Childcare Committee, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and Tusla Child and Family Agency throughout the County.

### CF 3 Crèche Facilities

Require where appropriate the provision of crèche facilities in mixed use/residential developments in accordance with the ministerial guidelines for Planning Authorities on Childcare Facilities published in 2001. In general, childcare facilities outside of established settlements shall only be permitted adjacent to or in close proximity to existing educational or social facilities.

## 11.9 Education

Educational and school facilities are critical to achieving the full socio-economic potential of the County and have a crucial role in the development of a skilled workforce that can meet the demands of a modern economy.

The Development Plan seeks to prioritise the alignment of targeted and planned population and employment growth with educational investment, including the provision of new schools on well-located sites within or close to existing built-up areas that meet the diverse needs of local populations. The continued provision and enhancement of facilities and amenities for children and young people, such as childcare, schools, playgrounds, parks and sportsgrounds, is a priority and will continue to be for the foreseeable future.

The council recognises that every town in the county should have ASD classes available to students with additional needs in at least one secondary school in each town. Where this does not currently exist, the council will endeavour to work with the DES to ensure the realisation of this provision.

The Council works proactively with the Department of Education and Skills on an ongoing basis to identify educational needs and the spatial and land use implications of same as they arise.

The Planning Authority also supports the concept of multi-campus school arrangements such as primary schools side by side or primary and secondary institutions sharing a site. This approach can lead to more sustainable provision of schools in that it reduces the land take required for such developments.

Increased demands for school places can rise significantly within a settlement with new large residential developments. Therefore, it is important that the planning system keeps pace with the scale of new residential development by ensuring that adequate school places are available or provided in a timely manner.

The Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas place the emphasis on the need to select school sites which maximise the potential for sustainable mobility patterns, offer the potential to share major public open spaces and can support other community uses outside of school hours subject to normal proper planning and sustainable development considerations.

The RSES outlines the potential of the Higher Education section in the Region which has the potential to develop a Connaught-Ulster Technological University that would deliver a broad range of high-quality education and training in each campus located throughout the Region. The Council also recognises the important role of higher education in providing for the economic and social wellbeing of the County's population. In terms of adult education, the National University of Ireland Galway, the Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology, Galway and Roscommon Education and Training Board all offer courses including blended learning programmes to the residents of County Galway.

Galway Local Enterprise Office also offers business information and advice, business skills training and mentoring support as well as other skills and training options to support businesses in the County. Other organisations involved in education and training for the citizens of County Galway include the following organisations; LEADER, Local Development Companies, Údarás na Gaeltachta and EQUAL Ireland.

## **Policy Objectives Educational Facilities**

### **EDU 1 Educational Facilities**

Facilitate the provision of primary, second-level, third-level, vocational, outreach, research, adult and further educational facilities, lifelong learning facilities and digital capacity for distance learning to meet the needs of the County. Multiuse facilities which can accommodate both educational and childcare facilities are also encouraged.

### **EDU 2 Provision of Educational Facilities in Large Residential Developments**

(a) Provide new educational facilities in accordance with the guidance set out in Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas;

(b) Recognise that new residential communities can generate demand for additional school places and that it is vital to the process of supporting sustainable communities, that the necessary increased capacity in school facilities, either in the form of new schools, or the expansion of existing schools, is supported;

(c) Work closely with the Department of Education & Skills to ensure that there are sufficient lands identified in zoning plans and cognisance of the existing and future educational requirements, for sites for future school provision in order to ensure that the necessary increased capacity in school provision is provided in a timely manner while also maximise the opportunities for use of walking, cycling and use of public transport.

### **EDU 3 Future Education Uses**

Ensure that existing and new school sites are protected for educational use and lands adjacent to existing schools are protected for future educational use to allow for expansion of these schools, if required, subject to site suitability.

### **EDU 4 Connaught-Ulster Technological University**

Support the development of the Connaught-Ulster Technological University to deliver a broad range of high-quality dedicated Higher Education and training in each associated campus in the Region.

#### **EDU 5 Shared use of educational and community facilities**

Promote the shared use of educational and community facilities for community and non-school purposes where possible.

#### **EDU 6 Fast food outlets located close to schools**

It is the policy objective of the Planning Authority to give careful consideration to the appropriateness and location of fast food outlets in the vicinity of schools and, where considered appropriate, to restrict the opening or expansion of new fast food/takeaway outlets in close proximity to schools so as to protect the health and wellbeing of school-going children.

#### **EDU 7 Active school flag programme**

Support the progression of the active school flag programme in schools in the County.

### **11.10 Healthcare**

Healthcare facilities are essential to ensure that the residents of County Galway have access to the care that they need. Healthcare is provided by a range of private, community and charitable service providers. The Health Service Executive (HSE) is the primary organisation responsible for the delivery of health care and personal social services to the people of the County.

The availability and access to health services is central to creating healthier places. In addressing lifestyle induced illness and an aging population, the provision of educative and primary health care can support lifestyle adjustments that help people avoid tertiary care, leading to a more effective and less burdened health-care system.

Galway University Hospital and Merlin Park University Hospital provides a comprehensive range of services to emergency and elective patients on an inpatient, outpatient and day care basis across the two sites and to the residents of Galway City, Galway County and the wider Region.

Portiuncula Hospital in Ballinasloe also provides acute general and maternity care. Private healthcare providers including the Galway Clinic and the Bon Secours

Hospital both of which provide additional and important healthcare services for the county and the region.

The Health Service Executive policy reflects a shift away from traditional hospital-based care, towards more community-based care with increased emphasis on meeting people's needs at local level by primary care teams.

Galway County Council will seek to facilitate the provision and expansion of built facilities to ensure accessible healthcare services are integrated into communities throughout the County. The Planning Authority will support the provision of future Primary Healthcare Centres (PHC's) in the County's main settlements. The range and configuration of services may vary from one community or settlement to another.

## **Policy Objectives Healthcare**

### **H 1 Healthcare Facilities**

Support the Health Service Executive and other statutory and voluntary agencies and private healthcare providers in the provision of healthcare facilities to all sections of the community, at appropriate locations, especially where good public transport links and parking facilities are available.

### **H 2 Health Service**

Support the Department of Health in the implementation of the objectives of the Sláinte Care strategy and the provision of health and social care services.

### **H 3 Provision of Primary Healthcare Centre's**

Support the provision of Primary Healthcare Facilities in appropriate locations across the county subject to proper planning and sustainable development requirements.

### **H4 Portiuncula University Hospital**

Recognise the importance of Portiuncula University Hospital as the main hospital in the County (outside of GUH) and support the enhancement and extension of the hospital, as necessary and appropriate, subject to proper planning and sustainable development requirements.



## 11.11 Planning for Ageing

The *National Positive Ageing Strategy* and more recently the *Programme for Government* aims to enable people to age with confidence, security, dignity and independence in their own homes and communities for as long as possible. A greater choice of suitable or adaptable housing for the needs of ageing people shall be incorporated into the design, housing mix and location of new housing developments as outlined in *Chapter 3 Placemaking, Regeneration and Urban Living*. By incorporating the principles of 'Universal Design', architects, designers and planners can have a major impact in terms of creating the environment that enables people to remain in their own homes.

A second type of accommodation for older persons relates to the need for more supported group/community housing (sometimes referred to as sheltered housing) which incorporates a household model approach, and which is integrated and not segregated or isolated from the community. To date the majority of this type of accommodation is provided by the Voluntary and Private Housing sector.

### Policy Objectives Planning for Ageing

#### PA 1 Age-Friendly County

Support the concept of an age friendly county and recognise the demographic challenges that face the county and ensure the provision of suitable facilities and services in the future while proactively supporting the implementation of the Galway Age-Friendly County Programme 2014 - 2019 and any subsequent programmes.

#### PA 2 Services and Infrastructure for Age-Friendly County

To support where appropriate, communities and relevant stakeholders to achieve accessible and age-friendly amenities and facilities in communities across the County.

#### PA 3 Accommodation for Older Persons

Support the provision of residential care, assisted living, group/community housing and other forms of accommodation for older persons having regard to location and requirements and in collaboration with relevant stakeholders.

#### **PA 4 Retirement villages and sheltered housing for older persons**

Support and encourage the development of sustainable retirement villages and sheltered housing for older persons in appropriate locations throughout the county.

#### **PA 5 Older Persons Services**

Consider favourably projects throughout the County that deliver infrastructure and services for older persons or that integrate services for older persons while improving community safety.

## **11.12 Young People and Children**

The Council recognises the role of Comhairle Na nÓg, and the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA), in giving children and young people the opportunity to be involved in the development of local services and policies.

The Council will have regard to the Departments of Health and Children & Youth Affairs' policy document, *"Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: a National Policy Framework for children and young people 2014 – 2020"*. It is recognised that a multi-agency approach is necessary in meeting the needs of the youth within the county. Such needs include recreational opportunities, including both formal and informal activities i.e. 'youth cafes', skate parks, sports facilities and casual areas where young people can socialize with each other. It is Council policy to consider the needs of children and young people, including those with disabilities and additional needs, in the provision of indoor and outdoor recreational facilities.

The Council recognises the need to maximise opportunities for play facilities for children both within the natural and built environment. The Council has adopted a playground guide '*Tar Liom ag Spraoi, 2015*'. There are over fifty playground available in County Galway for residents and visitors catering for different age ranges from pre-school through to teenagers. A number of playgrounds offer inclusive play equipment for children with a range of special needs and there are skateboarding facilities in Tuam and Loughrea.

## Policy Objectives Young People

### YP 1 Play Facilities

Facilitate the development of children's play areas and playgrounds in proximity to existing and proposed neighbourhoods, where appropriate.

### YP 2 Provision of Recreational areas in public playgrounds

Endeavour to improve the provision of public playgrounds to allow for recreational areas for the elderly and the youth in appropriate locations across the county with particular emphasis on those areas with greatest need.

### YP 3 Youth Facilities

Facilitate a multi-agency approach to the provision of youth facilities such as Youth Clubs, Youth Café's across the County, and encourage their integration into multi-purpose community facilities.

## 11.13 People with Disabilities and Universal Design

Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. For people with mobility impairments, ensuring level/ramped access to buildings, dished kerbs and the provision of appropriate parking and toilet facilities are important. For people with visual impairments, tactile paving and audible signals at pedestrian crossings are necessary.

For persons with mental, intellectual or sensory impairments, it is important to ensure facilities such as quiet rooms and sensory gardens are incorporated into development proposals where appropriate. The Irish Wheelchair Association and Sport Ireland's '*Great Outdoors - A Guide for Accessibility*' (2018) provides guidance on accessible design to make specific outdoor environments more available and accessible for people with a disability.

One of the Strategic Priorities of the *National Disability Authority Strategic Plan 2019-2021* is to continue to build awareness and adoption of the concept of Universal Design, maximizing independence and participation for all. The Council will promote Universal Design and Lifetime Housing in all new developments. This type of housing allows for the future adaption of units as needs present throughout the life cycle of the occupier/owner. It is a proactive step in addressing the housing needs of people with a disability, older people and the diversity of the family unit as well as increasing the value and sustainability of buildings in the long-term.

## **Policy Objectives People with Disabilities and Universal Design**

### **PDU 1 Universal Design Approach**

It is a policy objective of the Planning Authority Council to promote Universal Design and ensure that all public buildings, public open spaces, recreational and amenity areas are accessible for people with disabilities.

### **PDU 2 Recognised Special Needs**

a) It is a policy objective of the Planning Authority to consider all different levels of ability, in the location, layout and design of housing developments, communal facilities, public spaces and transport services. Proposals could include the appropriate mitigation of the built environment for example, through the selection of building materials; the provision of quiet rooms and sensory gardens where appropriate; and in the design of pedestrian facilities for the visually impaired.

b) To support the provision of public accessibility friendly toilets, maximum dependency adult changing facilities at all appropriate locations in our towns and villages and at transport connectivity nodes.

c) To support the provision of universal access to water-based facilities (e.g., marinas) recreational water-based activities for all people, especially for those with additional needs, individuals who are differently abled, those with physical or/and sensory impairments, mobility difficulties and that the overall the implementation of United Nations Convention of Rights of Persons with Disabilities in this regard.

### **PDU 3 Social Infrastructure Developments and Housing**

It is a policy objective of the Planning Authority to ensure that new social infrastructure developments and housing are accessible and inclusive for a range of users by promoting a universal design approach and provide for an age friendly society in which people of all ages can live full active, valued and healthy lives.

## **11.14 Sports, Recreation and Amenity**

Sporting, leisure and recreational facilities are essential to cater for the demands of an increasing population and in promoting good health, social cohesion, a sense of community and enhancing quality of life and well-being of the communities they serve. Adequate and accessible provision of open space, sport and recreational facilities including swimming pools, playgrounds and public parks are an important consideration in assessing the quality of life in a town or area and have major land use implications. Many of the competitive sports demand ever increasing standards of facilities and accommodation, and participants in the County will require access to such facilities in order to compete equally with fellow competitors at national and international level.

Public Open Space is a key element in defining the overall quality of the residential environment. As well as providing passive and active recreational benefits for residents, open space enhances the aesthetic and environmental quality of a neighbourhood or settlement and promotes social interaction. The County is well served by traditional facilities including sports clubs and leisure centres and the County is developing additional facilities such as greenways, blueways, peatways, cycle routes and walking trails.

Galway Sports Partnership (GSP) is the Partnership representing Galway City and County in the development and delivery of initiatives of sport and physical activities for every resident of Galway city and county. GSP is established by Galway City and Galway County Councils in association with Sport Ireland as the representative body for sports and physical activity in Galway City & County in partnership with community, sporting, local business, educational, statutory, health and voluntary organisations. GSP is core funded by Sport Ireland.

Many of the sports facilities within the County are in private ownership. Galway County Council will continue, where appropriate, to facilitate the provision of further facilities to which public access will be available, where possible. The Planning Authority has a role in protecting existing sport / recreation and open space areas and ensuring that adequate land is zoned for development to accommodate sporting and recreational facilities, both active and passive.

## Policy Objectives Sports, Recreation and Amenity

### **SRA 1 Sport, Amenity and Recreation**

Support local sports groups and community groups in the development, improvement and expansion of authorised facilities for sporting and recreational needs of all sectors and ages through the reservation of suitable land where available and appropriate.

### **SRA 2 Promote Public Access to Natural Amenities**

Recognize the role played by natural amenities as a major resource for visitors and local people and support, protect and promote public access to natural amenities that have been traditionally used for outdoor recreation (water-based facilities, recreational activities, and marinas).

### **SRA 3 High-quality cycle and walking network**

Identify and seek to implement a strategic, coherent and high-quality cycle and walking network across the County that is integrated with accessible public transport where possible and interconnected with cultural, recreational, retail, educational and employment destinations access for all toilet facilities and attractions.

### **SRA 4 Passive and Active Open Space**

Seek to develop multifunctional open spaces throughout the County which will support a range of recreational and amenity activities that provides for active and passive needs.

### **SRA 5 Galway Sports Partnership**

Work in co-operation with Galway Sports Partnership in exploring the potential for clustering facilities.

### **SRA 6 Community Gardening and Allotments**

Support the provision of, or permission for, the development of community gardening /allotments in appropriate locations where they are accessible from the built-up area of the County to facilitate lower carbon living education and practice.

### **SRA 7 Bridleways**

Galway County Council will support and promote programmes and initiatives that will help to develop bridleways in County Galway.

## **SRA 8 Swimming Facilities**

It is the policy objective of the Planning Authority to enhance the provision of swimming facilities throughout the County and ensure the quality of bathing waters is maintained and to contribute towards the achievement of the requirements of the EU Bathing Water Directive and to transposing Bathing Water Quality Regulations (SI No. 79 of 2008) and EU Mandatory Values, as a minimum and EU Guide Values, where possible.

### **11.15 Emergency Services**

The role of Galway County Fire and Rescue Service is to prevent the occurrence of fire and to protect life and property throughout the county. The Fire Service responds to emergency calls in respect of fire, road, traffic and other accidents. The Fire Service headquarters are located at Galway City Fire Station on Fr. Griffin Road. There are a total of ten fire stations located in population centres around the County - Galway City (HQ), which is a whole time station, and 9 other unmanned stations in Athenry, Loughrea, Tuam, Ballinasloe, Mountbellew, Portumna, Gort, Clifden, Cill Rónáin & An Cheathrú Rua. The Council will continue to support the provision of a modern and effective fire service for the county.

The Irish Coast Guard is the national maritime emergency response service and is a division of the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport. They attend emergencies at sea and on inland water, mountains and caves. The range of Coast Guard resources include search and rescue helicopters, Lifeboats and Volunteer Units. The Planning Authority recognises Volunteer Units and the important role that they play in the county. It's the fourth blue light service in the State along with An Garda Síochana, the ambulance services and the fire services all of which provide essential services to communities throughout the County.

The fire service also has a responsibility in relation to fire safety standards in the design of new and improved buildings, changes of use and also in relation to the fire safety aspects of the daily use of buildings which are accessed by the public. Under the Building Regulations, separate applications are sent to the Fire Service to obtain a Fire Safety Certificate and this is obtained prior to construction.

Local authorities are also required to have in place Major Emergency Plans under the requirements of ‘*A Framework for Major Emergency Management.*’ Such plans are the basis for interagency co-operation and have been prepared to facilitate the response to (and recovery from) major emergencies. Security is a crucial aspect of resident’s lives and a key element in promoting Galway as a place to live, work and invest. Continuing co-operation between agencies and stakeholders will ensure that Galway continues to remain a safe, secure and attractive place.

### **Policy Objective Emergency Services**

#### **EMS 1 Location of Emergency Services**

To facilitate and encourage the accommodation of emergency services including fire services and rescue services, in locations that facilitate ease of access, effectiveness and safety.

## **11.16 Traditional Local Services**

Other traditional local services such as local shops, post offices and licensed premises, which in addition to a primary retail function, provide an important role for the smaller settlements and can help maintain and nurture a sense of community in our towns and villages. See *Chapter 5 Enterprise, Economic and Retail.*

### **Policy Objective Traditional Local Services**

#### **TLS 1 Traditional Local Services**

Support and encourage traditional local services such as small shops, post offices, and licensed premises, acknowledging their important role in communities and smaller settlements, throughout the county.



## 11.17 Co-Working Hubs / Remote Working

The Council will support the establishment of co-working hubs as either standalone facilities or ancillary to public buildings, libraries or community facilities in our settlements. The development of digital co-working hubs, creative spaces and also remote working have the potential to stimulate local economies and accommodate more flexible work options while also reducing commuting levels from our towns and villages. *Chapter 4 Rural Living and Development and Chapter 5 Enterprise, Economic and Retail* addresses remote working and co-working hubs further.

### Policy Objective Co-Working Hubs

#### CWH 1 Co-Working Hubs

It is a policy objective of the Planning Authority to support and facilitate the establishment of co-working/ remote working hubs and creative hubs as either standalone facilities or ancillary to public buildings, libraries and community centres in towns and village centres as appropriate.

## 11.18 Crime Prevention

Good Quality Urban Design and Placemaking in new developments when co-ordinated with other measures such as embedded protective physical features, can make a significant contribution to tackling crime and reduce feelings of insecurity. Well-designed communities and places allow people feel safe and secure and enjoy a good quality of life. Designing out crime and designing in community safety should be central to the planning and delivery of new development. All new development must consider the principles of designing out crime such as surveillance, access and movement, physical protection, ownership, management and maintenance as outlined in *Chapter 15 Development Management Standards*.

## Policy Objectives Crime Prevention

### CP 1 Crime Prevention and Joint Policing Committee

Engage and support An Garda Síochána in addressing policing and crime issues via the Joint Policing Committee.

### CP 2 Crime Prevention and Older Person Strategy

Co-operate with An Garda Síochána's Older Person Strategy to ensure contact and safety of elderly and rurally isolated citizens.

### CP 3 Crime Prevention through Surveillance and Design

All new development must consider the principles of designing out crime such as surveillance, access and movement, physical protection, management and maintenance as outlined in Chapter 15 Development Management Standards.

## 11.19 Places of Worship and Burial Grounds /

### Crematoriums

The Council recognises the valuable contribution that places of worship have in a community context and will endeavour to accommodate and facilitate their provision including multifaith facilities at appropriate locations, such as town and village centres. Extension can be considered, where appropriate and where the use is ancillary to the place of worship such as a prayer room or a modest parish centre extension.

The Council has a responsibility for the provision of burial grounds including as necessary, the acquisition of lands and the undertaking of any necessary works on these lands. The Planning Authority has a role in ensuring that adequate land is reserved to accommodate burial grounds in accordance with future needs within the county.

The use of crematoriums has increased significantly in recent years but there is currently no such facility serving County Galway. In recognition of the multi-cultural population of the county and the changing trends in end-of-life service, the Council

will support the development of crematoriums in the county, subject to proper planning and sustainable development.

## **Policy Objectives Places of Worship and Burial Grounds / Crematoriums**

### **PWB 1 Places of Worship**

Support and facilitate the development of places of worship and multifaith facilities at appropriate locations, such as town and village centres.

### **PWB 2 Burial Grounds**

Facilitate the development and maintenance of new burial grounds and the extension of existing cemeteries at all appropriate locations that meet the required standards.

### **PWB3 Crematoriums**

Facilitate the development of crematoriums at all appropriate locations.

### **PWB 4 Heritage of Burial Grounds**

Protect, preserve and maintain the cultural heritage of archaeological/historical graveyards and historical burial grounds.