



Galway County Council

N6 Galway City Ring Road

N6 GALWAY CITY RING ROAD

2025 RFI Response

Ref. No. ABP-318220-23

Part V

Implications of new Galway City Development Plan

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1. Introduction

An Bord Pleanála issued a Request for Further Information (RFI) to Galway County Council on 6 December 2023 (Ref: ABP-318220-23), in relation to the N6 Galway City Ring Road (N6 GCRR) as follows:

Please be advised that the Board, in accordance with section 217B(4) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, hereby requires you to submit the following information:

- 1. Having regard to the passage of time since the applications were lodged and the decisions made by the Board you are invited to update the motorway scheme application and the proposed road development application.*
- 2. Make submissions in relation to the most recent Climate Action Plan and the implications of the new Galway City Development Plan;*
- 3. Update the Environmental Impact Assessment Report; and*
- 4. Update the appropriate assessment screening document and the Natura Impact Statement including updated site conversation objectives.*

This report has been prepared in response to the request in the RFI at point No. 2 above to outline the implications of the new Galway City Development Plan being the Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029 relative to the N6 GCRR. This report forms Part V of the overall 2025 RFI Response.

In October 2018 an application for approval of the proposed N6 GCRR pursuant to Section 51 of the Roads Act 1993 (as amended) was submitted to An Bord Pleanála which included an Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR). At the time of that application in 2018 the Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023 which was in force and the 2018 EIAR and in particular Chapter 2 Planning and Policy Context evidenced how the proposed N6 GCRR was a key objective of that plan and how the pursuit of the proposed N6 GCRR was consistent with and necessary for the implementation of the Galway City Development Plan 2017-2023.

That plan has since been replaced by the Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029. The update to the Environmental Impact Assessment Report as requested under point 3 of the above RFI includes an updated Chapter 2, Planning and Policy Context which specifically considers the Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029 in the context of the proposed N6 GCRR.

As is clear hereinbelow, this report demonstrates that the proposed N6 GCRR remains a key objective of the Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029 and how the provision of the proposed N6 GCRR not only aligns with the policies and objectives in the Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029 but is consistent with those policies and objectives and necessary for the implementation of the Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029.

This report should be read in conjunction with the updated Chapter 2 Planning and Policy Context of the updated EIAR. Chapter 2 confirms that there has been considerable change in the planning and policy environment within which this application for approval is to be considered, and that the proposed N6 GCRR complies with all relevant current policies at EU, national, regional and local levels. Each tier of the planning and policy hierarchy supports the proposed N6 GCRR, which is critical to the growth of the Galway Metropolitan Area and the achievement of the policies and objectives in the current Galway City Development Plan.

1.2 Details of Competent Expert

John O'Malley BA BAI MRUP MIPI MRTPI Kieran O'Malley and Company Limited

This report was prepared by John O'Malley.

John is a Chartered Town Planner with 30 years' professional experience in private practice. He is a Director at Kieran O'Malley and Company Limited and a member of the Irish Planning Institute and the Royal Town Planning Institute. John has an undergraduate degree in Civil Engineering from Trinity College Dublin and a Masters in Regional and Urban Planning (MRUP) from University College Dublin.

John has worked on urban planning strategies, development plans and local area plans, strategic infrastructure projects, large-scale residential developments, feasibility studies, compensation claims, industrial development projects and arbitrations on behalf of Government departments and agencies, Local Authorities, State bodies and State companies, including Bord Gais Eireann (now Ervia), ESB, Bord Na Mona and the private sector. He has given sworn evidence as an expert witness on planning matters before the Property Arbitrator, An Bord Pleanála and in the courts.

Since 2019, John has been involved in the N6 Galway City Ring Road project. He led the Galway County Council planning team at the oral hearing conducted by An Bord Pleanála in February and November 2020. He also delivered the brief of planning evidence to the hearing. John also assisted Arup in its presentation to the Minister for Transport regarding the proposed ring road.

Subsequent to the conclusion of the hearing, John has continued to advise the Council and the Arup-led project design team in relation to planning policy including the relevant provisions of the current Galway County and Galway City Development Plans, which were adopted in 2022 and 2023 respectively.

2 The Galway City Development Plan

2.1 Vision of Galway City Development Plan

The Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029 (the “City Development Plan”) sets out Galway City Council’s policies and objectives for the sustainable development of Galway City to 2029 to achieve the following vision:

The vision for Galway City is to be a successful, sustainable, competitive, regional city that creates prosperity, supports a high quality of life and maintains its distinctive identity and supports a rich cultural experience. A city that is environmentally responsible, mobilised to combat climate change and resilient to challenge. A city that can develop, attract and retain talent and skills and fosters innovation and creativity. An inclusive, diverse city where civic engagement is valued and a shared vision is pursued through good governance and leadership. A city that offers sustainable and quality choices in housing, work, transport and lifestyle opportunities.

Plate 2.1 Extract from Section 1.2 of the Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029

Section 1.2 of the City Development Plan lists ten strategic goals the City Council considers necessary to deliver its Strategic Vision for the development of Galway City during the plan period, including the following:

- *Enable Galway to become a city of scale as envisaged in the NPF and a regional driver of development that can contribute to economic growth through the provision of balanced and sustainable economic opportunities for development, innovation and investment across all employment sectors and allow the role of the City and Metropolitan Area harness the strengths and maximise the economic development for the whole Northern and Western Region.*
- *Apply the principle of sustainability and integrate the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations’ 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development particularly where they relate to the uses of land, buildings, water, energy, waste and through the encouragement of sustainable modes of transport and the integration of transportation with land use.*
- *Integrate land use and transport planning to maximise opportunities for active travel and public transport usage and enable key transport projects included in the Galway Transport Strategy which will deliver multi modal usage, smart mobility and accessibility for all.*
- *Ensure efficient and sustainable use of all water services, environmental resources and infrastructure.*
- *Develop a more urban compact form in the city that provides for attractive, integrated, and easily assessable neighbourhoods that are supported by appropriate levels of services and amenities.*

2.2 Strategic Aims of City Development Plan

A comparison between the strategic aims in the current City Development Plan and the previous Development Plan demonstrates the manner in which the current City Development Plan seeks to achieve the National Strategic Outcomes (the “NSOs”) in Project Ireland 2040 National Planning Framework (the “National Planning Framework” or “NPF”). Galway is targeted for significant growth in population and employment to become a regional centre of scale and to deliver balanced regional development under the NPF.

Densification and compact growth within the built-up footprint of existing urban areas based on sustainable mobility are the key tenets of the planning strategy. The strategic aims adopt these principles and recognise that the integration of land use and transport including, importantly, the transport projects in the Galway Transport Strategy (including the proposed N6 GCRR) is necessary to deliver smart and sustainable mobility.

Galway City is identified as one of the four designated cities outside Dublin in the NPF and has been allocated ambitious population growth targets with at least half of the new homes to be delivered in the existing built up footprint. This focus on scale and settlement pattern is reflected in the objectives in Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Northern and Western Region 2020-2032 (i.e., the NWRSES) and the Galway Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (the “MASP”) which require this planned growth to be compact, smart and sustainable.

The Core Strategy acknowledges the broader spatial context of the MASP which identifies Strategic Growth Areas and the infrastructure, services and facilities required for sustainable city growth. Plate 2.2 is the Core Strategy Map (Figure 1.6 in the Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029). It is significant that the alignment of the proposed N6 GCRR, extending from Ardaun to the east to the suburbs on the west side of Galway City, is clearly marked on the Core Strategy Map (Plate 2.2) illustrating the strategic function of the proposed N6 GCRR.

Section 1.8.3 of the City Development Plan confirms that the Core Strategy is informed by the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS) which aims to address the current and future transport requirements of Galway City and environs. The GTS therefore underpins future growth in the city and aligns growth in employment and housing along existing and planned transport corridors with a strong objective to reduce car dependency in favour of public transport and active modes.

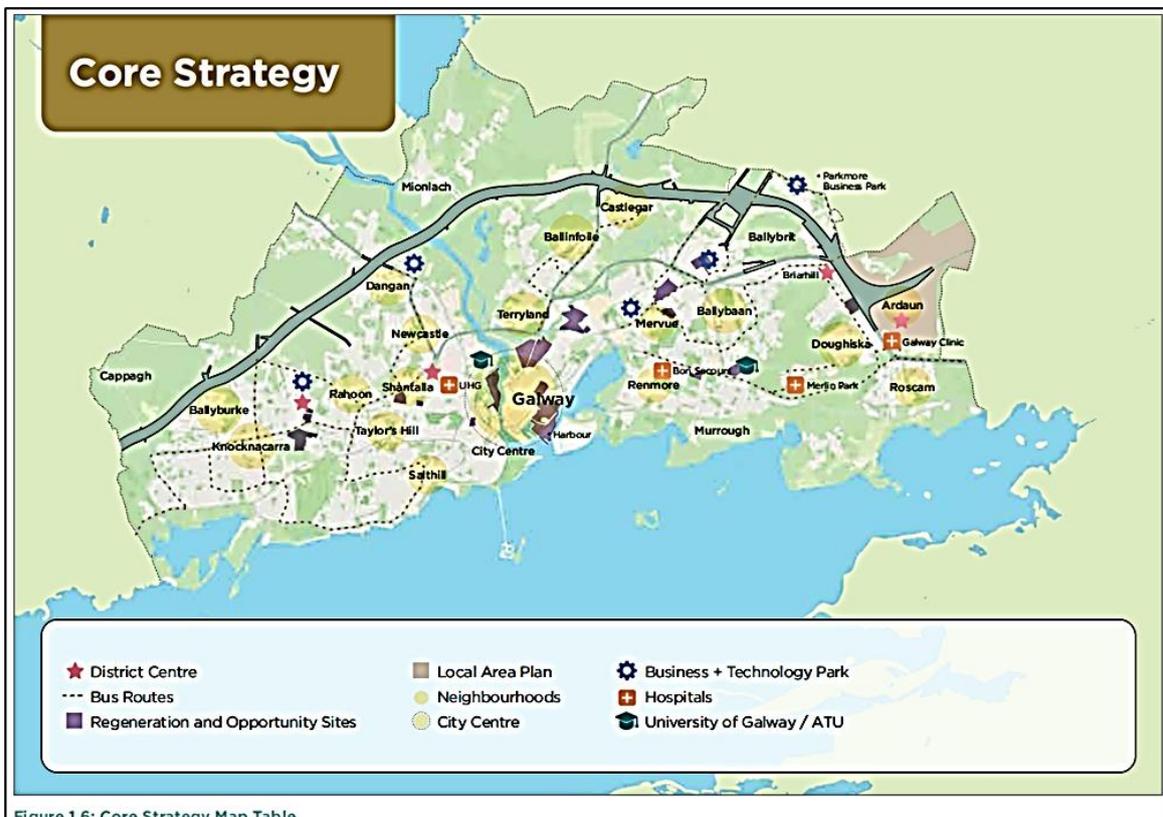


Plate 2.2 Core Strategy Map from Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029

The Core Strategy Map above gives visual representation of the main settlement areas and transport focus. Chapter 4 of the Galway City Development Plan deals with Sustainable Mobility and Transportation and sets out the Council's general transport policies at Policy 4.1 including the following policies in relation to the GTS and the proposed N6 GCRR as a required supporting project as shown on Plate 2.33.

Policy 4.1 General	
1.	Develop a compact city, where sustainable land use and transportation are integrated and where there is choice and accessibility to a range of transport modes, with increasing support for a shift to more sustainable modes in line with national aims on climate action and where safety and ease of movement is provided to and within the City and onward to the wider area of the MASP, County Galway and the Northern and Western Region.
2.	Align with the National Strategic Outcomes of the NPF and the regional policy objectives of the RSES in the promotion of sustainable patterns of transport and in the support for the delivery of key transport infrastructure that will enable development to take place in accordance with the Core Strategy.
3.	Support the implementation of the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS) which will advance the delivery and modal shift to more sustainable modes of transport and also enable planned integration of land use and transport within the city and the greater MASP area in consultation with Galway County Council, NTA and TII and service providers.
4.	Support the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS) and the associated implementation programme which will deliver a high quality public transport network, provide and encourage the use of other sustainable modes of transport, and facilitate the efficient movement of private vehicles and freight.
5.	Support the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS) and the outcomes of the planned evidenced based review to be carried out in collaboration with Galway County Council, the NTA 'and other stakeholders'. This review will consider all transport modes including the feasibility of a very light rail/light rail option and will not preclude the advancement of the Cross City Link route or the planning of other projects already commenced within the Galway Transportation Strategy to planning consent stage with Galway County Council and the NTA. This review will consider all transport modes including the feasibility of a light rail option and will not preclude the advancement of the Cross City Link route to planning consent stage.
6.	Continue to progress a sustainable transport solution for the city through the implementation of measures included in the GTS and required supporting projects in particular the N6 GCRR project.

Plate 2.3 Policy 4.1 General from Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029

Section 4.2 of the Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029 emphasises the importance of aligning land use and transportation to create sustainable cities and the critical role of the GTS in helping achieve the growth ambitions in the Core Strategy:

Implementation of the GTS measures will support the integration of housing with transportation, fostering sustainable transportation patterns. The Core Strategy has been informed by the GTS and provides for a co-ordinated approach with investment and the delivery of essential infrastructure, services and community facilities.

Chapter 4 sets out the City Council's policies in relation to public transport (policy 4.3), sustainable mobility (policy 4.4) and transport demand management measures (policy 4.5). The extract below from Section 4.6 of the Galway City Development Plan highlights the transport infrastructure challenge associated with enhancing regional connectivity and meeting NPF growth targets. The City Development Plan explicitly recognises the need for the N6 GCRR to successfully deliver the

integrated transport solution in the GTS and the wider strategic function of the proposed N6 GCRR.

“The national road and motorway network in particular provides vital inter-urban and interregional connectivity, critical to realise the NPF growth ambitions for Galway to become a city of scale and to maintain its economic resilience and competitiveness. The M6 motorway significantly reduced travel times from Dublin to Galway and has made the city more accessible nationally and enhanced movement in general, including that relating to bus transport and goods vehicles. This route is a highly important national road and is identified as part of the EU TEN-T Comprehensive Network which is critical in maintaining, improving and protecting the strategic function of the key transport corridors in line with national and regional policy and investment commitments. The completion of the M17/M18 Gort to Tuam motorway has added to the accessibility of the city and improved strategic linkage within the region and with other NPF regional cities. The N59 and N84 national roads are important regional links to and from the city also. At local level the near completion of the entire N6 Multi Modal Corridor Improvement Scheme has made improvements to the road network and traffic management.

However, there remains significant traffic congestion with most main junctions operating over capacity. The existing road network needs to cater for a range of users and a variety of journeys within the city and even with investment in sustainable modes the problems cannot be entirely addressed. The NPF and the RSES recognise that the growth and economic success of the city requires investment in a range of infrastructure, including roads and if not delivered the current congestion will worsen and inevitably impact on the overall function, success and ambition for Galway to grow to regional status. The NPF specifically sees improved accessibility and connectivity between centres of scale, separate from Dublin, as key to harnessing the peripheral regions potential and to achieving increased regional parity.

Some journeys across the city, in particular through journeys on national and regional roads are not always capable of being accommodated by non-car modes. Strong demands for such journeys remain at present and will increase in the future. While there will be a shift to sustainable modes on implementation of the GTS through a number of measures, the efficiencies of these modes are jeopardised by the significant level of congestion that will still remain on the network and on the main river crossings.

The GTS recognises this need for an integrated transport solution which includes for the provision for sustainable and reliable alternatives to travel by private car and also to deliver the strategic orbital route – the N6 GCRR incorporating a new river crossing. Although some elements of the GTS can be implemented independently from the delivery of such a road, the full extent of measures and the success of the GTS needs the provision of this new orbital route which is also an identified strategic addition to the EU TEN-T Comprehensive Network. In addition, to support efficient movement within the city the GTS also outlines additional traffic management measures which are needed, which include new improved roads and links and the management of car parking.

The NPF, in acknowledgement of the rationale for a strategic orbital route, has identified the delivery of the N6 GCRR as a key growth enabler for the city. This route is further supported in the RSES which identifies the road network in general as an investment priority. It recognises that the accessibility from the Northern and Western regions of Ireland and between centres of scale separate from Dublin needs to be significantly improved with a focus on cities and larger regionally distributed centres and key east to

west and north to south routes. The MASP also sees the need to continue to improve the road network around the city and in particular to support the delivery of all measures in the GTS including the N6 GCRR.”

[emphasis added by Kiaran O’Malley and Company Limited]

This extract highlights the significance of the N6 GCRR in the achievement of strategic aims in the City Development Plan, which envisage that Galway will grow to become a larger accessible city of scale and a regional driver of development in the Northern and Western Region.

EIAR Section 2.5.1 notes that significant progress in the delivery of GTS projects has been achieved in recent years with further projects working their way towards completion. The implementation of these transport projects including the N6 GCRR will achieve the overall aim of delivering a safe, cohesive city cycle network and pedestrian facilities as prescribed in the GTS, noting that these other GTS transport projects and the overall objectives of the Transport Strategy can only be optimally delivered with the N6 GCRR in place.

Moreover, Policy 4.6 in the Galway City Development Plan at Plate 2.4 below expressly supports the N6 Galway City Ring Road project and the GTS in terms of the road and street network.

Policy 4.6 Road and Street Network and Accessibility	
1.	Support the N6 Galway City Ring Road project in conjunction with Galway County Council and Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) in order to develop a transportation solution to address the existing congestion on the national and regional road network.
2.	Enhance the delivery of an overall integrated transport solution for the city and environs by supporting the reservation of the designated strategic road corridor to accommodate the N6 GCRR project.
3.	Support the proposals in the Galway Transport Strategy for design interventions, revised traffic management arrangements and priority arrangements for walking, cycling and public transport on the road network.

Plate 2.4 Extract from Policy 4.6 Galway City Development Plan 2023 -2029

Section 4.8 of the Development Plan lists specific development objectives pertaining to sustainable mobility and transport including objectives that relate to various elements of the GTS. The following road and street network & accessibility objectives no.’s. 23 & 24 directly relate to the proposed N6 GCRR road development as shown on Plate 2.5. Both objectives emphasise the strategic function of the proposed N6 GCRR and associated bridge crossing which are critical transport infrastructure works in the City Development Plan.

Road and Street Network & Accessibility	
23.	Reserve the route corridor of the N6 Galway City Ring Road (N6 GCRR) project as approved with conditions and modifications by An Bord Pleanála which accommodates the designated strategic road and the associated bridge crossing of the River Corrib.
24.	Give priority to the reservation the N6 GCRR designed strategic road corridor and any associated land requirements over other land uses and objectives in the City Development Plan and prohibit developments within the designed strategic road corridor which could potentially prejudice the development of this strategic road and river crossing.

Plate 2.5 Extract from Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029

The analysis above is focused upon the strategic aims, core strategy and transport chapters in the Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029. Other provisions, which highlight the role of transport infrastructure in the GTS including the proposed N6 GCRR in facilitating development in accordance with the policies and objectives of the Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029 include the following.

Transport plays a critical role in terms of achieving sustainable planning outcomes and the importance of the GTS in this regard is recognised in the following extract from Section 2.3 of the City Development Plan.

For the Development Plan this includes for adopting compact growth polices and regeneration of brownfield sites which is one of the main tenets of the Core Strategy in conjunction with a strategy for transport which promotes sustainable mobility as provided for in the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS). This will encourage sustainable densities, expansion of walking, cycling and public transport networks, encouragement of the neighbourhood concept and supporting infrastructure for the transition to electric vehicles and the use of biofuels.

Addressing climate change requires a strategic integrated approach to be embedded in the City Development Plan (Section 2.4). EIAR Table 2.1 lists the key cross-cutting policies that contribute to climate mitigation and adaptation in each chapter of the City Development Plan. The extract below emphasises how the integration of land use and transportation supported by the GTS is necessary to achieve compact growth, a shift towards sustainable modes of transport and reduced GHG emissions.

4. Sustainable Mobility and Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supports the integration of land use and transportation to encourage compact growth, shift to sustainable mobility and reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.• Supports the '15-Minute City' concept to reduce dependence on car use and encourage sustainable mobility.• Supports the delivery of public transport and sustainable mobility projects in the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS) such as Cross City Link, Bus Connects and the National Greenway Network in the city.• Supports the expansion of the EV charging network
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Plate 2.6 Extract from Section 2.4 Galway City Development Plan 2023 -2029

Section 3.5 'Sustainable Neighbourhoods: Outer Suburbs' notes as follows.

Additional strategic facilities such as the proposed N6 GCRR will provide additional accessibility and connectivity in the area in addition to identified investment in other GTS measures to support public and sustainable transport.

Policy 6.1 sets out Galway City Council's general policies in respect of the economy, enterprise and retail sectors and includes the following policy.

15. Support the economic performance of the city and the wider MASP through the implementation of the phased plan of transport measures as provided in the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS) including those relating to public transport, walking, cycling, and the N6 GCRR strategic road project.

Plate 2.7 Extract from Policy 6.1 Galway City Development Plan 2023 -2029

Section 11.2 Land Use Zoning General of Chapter 11 ‘Land Use Zoning Objectives and Development Standards and Guidelines’ of the City Development Plan (page 280) states as follows:

“Priority will be given to the reservation of the N6 GCRR designated strategic road corridor and any associated land requirements over other land use zonings and specific objectives.”

2.3 Public Realm Strategy 2019-2040

Galway City’s Public Realm Strategy explores the present condition of the city townscape and its network of public and green spaces and sets out a vision and strategy for improvements to guide investment and development.

The Galway Transport Strategy is identified as a catalyst for change in the Public Realm Strategy. Galway’s Transport Strategy seeks to redress the balance in favour of pedestrians and cyclists over vehicular traffic and the Public Realm Strategy seeks to capitalise on this by creating a high quality public realm.

The Public Realm Strategy notes the main components of the GTS including the proposed N6 GCRR, the Salmon Weir Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge opened since May 2023 and the Cross-City Link where an application was approved by An Bord Pleanála, currently subject to judicial review, and their implications for the city’s public realm.

The Cross City Link, which is the cornerstone of the transport strategy is identified as a key public realm scheme on Figure 8.14 in the City Development Plan. Other GTS projects in EIAR Table 2.1 include the Miller’s Lane pedestrian/cycle link, Eglinton Canal Active Travel Scheme, Martin and Kirwan Junctions Upgrades and the Doughiska Road South Cycle Scheme and various pedestrian and cycling schemes within the city, all of which are steadily improving the public realm.

As set out at EIAR Section 2.5.1, the proposed N6 GCRR is an integral part of the objectives, and delivery of those objectives, in the Galway Transport Strategy. In this sense, the proposed N6 GCRR facilitates the delivery of other key elements of the GTS in relation to the prioritisation of public transport on the city streets and safe pedestrian and cyclist movements which in turn enable public realm enhancements in line with the Public Realm Strategy.

Policy 8.8 in the Galway City Development Plan supports the implementation of the Public Realm Strategy and recognises the public realm implications of the GTS projects states as follows.

Policy 8.8 Public Realm

1. Progress implementation of the Public Realm Strategy (2019) and accompanying manuals including the delivery of enhancement projects and a typology of streets and public spaces that positively contributes to the city’s environment and heritage.
7. Support measures in the GTS to ensure that qualitative public realm considerations are integrated into GTS projects promoting sustainable transport use and the pedestrianisation of specific city centre streets.

Plate 2.8 Galway City Development Plan Policy 8.8

Section 8.10 of the City Development Plan lists the specific objectives in the Public Realm including the following in relation to urban design and placemaking.

Specific Objectives

Urban Design and Placemaking

8. Support public realm enhancement projects contained in the Public Realm Strategy and accompanying manuals and their integration with GTS projects, environmental improvements and initiatives relating to climate adaptation, biodiversity, public art and activities in the public realm.

Plate 2.9 Galway City Development Plan

2.4 Delivery of Strategic Aims of City Development Plan

The overall Transport Strategy of the City Development Plan has the objective to:

- Support and facilitate the integration of land use and transportation;
- Support the Galway Transport Strategy (GTS) and the associated implementation programme which will deliver a high quality public transport network and encourage the use of sustainable transport modes;
- Support the proposed N6 GCRR in conjunction with Galway County Council and Transport Infrastructure Ireland in order to develop a transportation solution to address the congestion on the road network and reduce the negative impact of vehicular traffic on the functioning and experience of the city centre and to facilitate city bound, cross-city, cross-county and strategic east-west movements; and
- Support the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions through the promotion of sustainable land use and transportation

The Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029 fully integrates the aims, objectives, and strategies of the GTS, which includes the proposed N6 GCRR into its core policies and development objectives.

2.5 City Development Plan Zoning

In the interest of a complete assessment of the implications of the proposed N6 GCRR with respect to the land use zonings in the City Development Plan, Plate 2.10 below shows the proposed N6 GCRR in the vicinity of Galway Racecourse overlain on an extract from Zoning Map A. This issue is particularly relevant to the proposed development at Galway Racecourse (“the Galway Racecourse planning application”), which is the subject matter of a separate planning application, but which forms part of the Project which is examined and assessed in the updated EIAR.

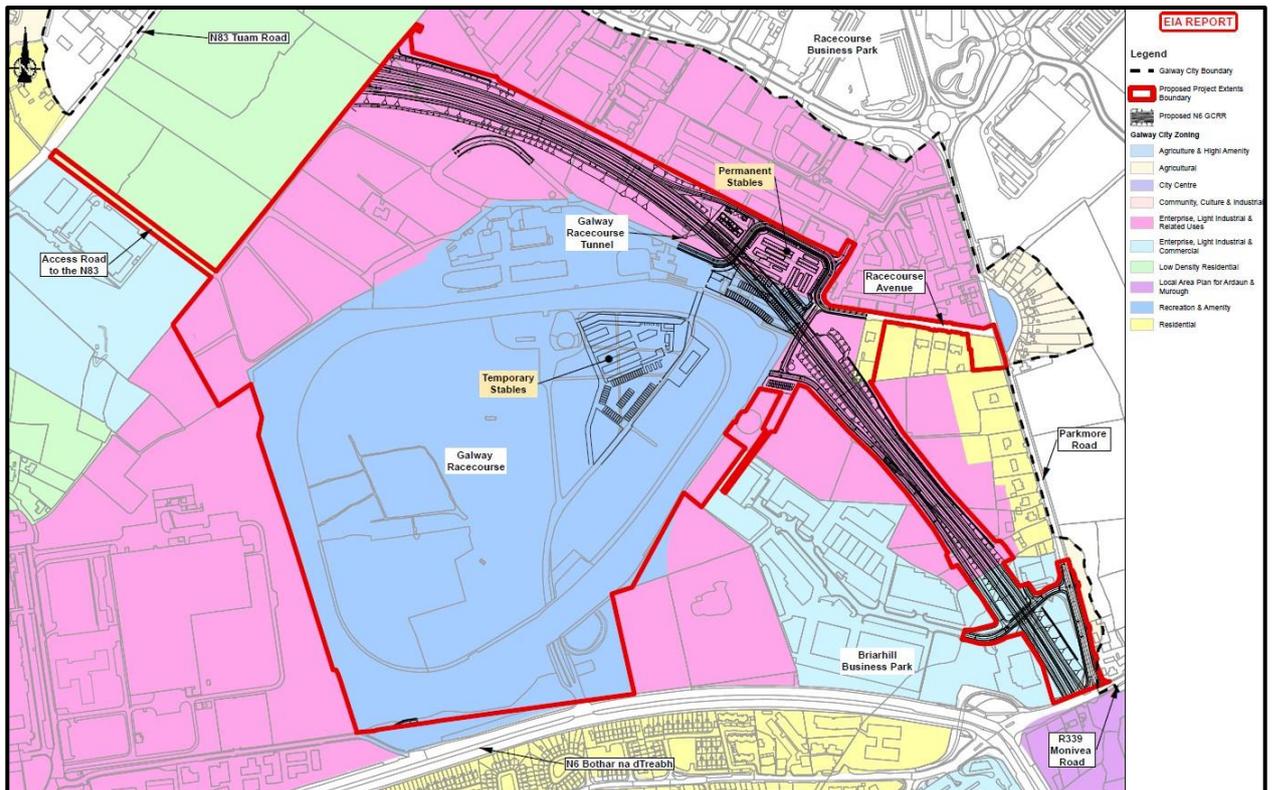


Plate 2.10 City Development Plan Zoning in vicinity of Galway Racecourse and proposed N6 GCRR overlain

The proposed N6 GCRR passes through lands with various zoning objectives on Plate 2.10. If the N6 GCRR is approved by ABP, and the construction of the road proceeds, it will be necessary for Galway Racecourse to implement mitigation measures to ensure racing at Ballybrit continues without interruption during the construction phase. Accordingly, Galway Racecourse Committee Trust applied for permission (Reg. Ref. 24/60279) for the following works as described on the public notices:

The construction and demolition of the temporary stables and the construction of permanent stables, pavilion, machinery and maintenance sheds, pre-parade ring as well as ancillary site works

Galway City Council granted permission for this application on 23 October 2024.

As regards zoning, the stables application site is subject to two different land use zoning objectives i.e. ‘RA’ and ‘I.’ Most of the site is zoned RA shaded ‘green’ on Zoning Map A where the zoning objective is “to provide for and protect recreational uses, open spaces, amenity uses, natural heritage and biodiversity.” Section 11.2.2 of the City Development Plan also includes the following development objective in respect of the RA zoned land at the application site:

RA lands located at Ballybrit Racecourse. The Council will consider the use of existing hospitality facilities and racecourse grounds for suitable commercial purposes including conferences, exhibitions, markets, agricultural or similar shows and park and ride facilities.

The proposed development comprises improvements to the facilities at Galway Racecourse of a temporary and a permanent nature, which are necessary for the uninterrupted safe operation of horse racing during and after the construction of the proposed N6 Galway City Ring Road. The proposed development on the RA zoned lands therefore accords with the RA zoning objective.

The balance of the application site is occupied by the Brooks Timber and Building Supplies Ltd which is zoned 'I' where the zoning objective is "to provide for enterprise, industrial and related uses." Section 11.2.5 of the City Development Plan lists development objectives in relation to specific I zones throughout the city including the following objective in respect of the lands zoned I at the Galway Racecourse application site:

Lands zoned I located north of Ballybrit Racecourse. The Council will consider the provision of essential supporting racecourse infrastructure on a portion of these lands and where it is demonstrated that it cannot reasonably be accommodated on the adjoining RA lands, without jeopardising the function of Galway Racecourse.

The above development objective is included in the Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029, but was not included in the previous City Development Plan. The construction of permanent stables on the lands zoned 'I' to the north of the Racecourse is essential for supporting racecourse infrastructure that cannot be provided within the adjoining zoned RA lands without jeopardising the function of the Racecourse. The rationale for the development of permanent stables on lands zoned 'I' located north of Ballybrit Racecourse is elaborated in Chapter 4 Alternatives Considered of the updated EIAR lodged with application Reg. Ref. 24/60279. The proposed development of permanent stables on lands zoned I located north of Ballybrit Racecourse therefore accords with the specific objective.

In conclusion, the implications of the proposed N6 GCRR include the requirement to obtain permission to develop temporary stables, permanent stables and associated infrastructure at Galway Racecourse to ensure that horse racing will continue during the construction and operational phases of the proposed N6 GCRR. The inclusion of a specific objective in respect of the lands zoned 'I' to the north of the racecourse ensures that the proposed stables development, the need for which is a direct consequence of the N6 GCRR, can be accommodated on those 'I' zoned lands. Thus, the potential zoning implications in the vicinity of Galway Racecourse in respect of the proposed N6 GCRR are addressed in the new City Development Plan.

2.6 Ardaun Local Area Plan 2018-2024

Galway City Council made a Local Area Plan (LAP) for lands situated at the area known as Ardaun on the east side of the city (164ha), approximately 5km from the city centre, which was adopted on 9 April 2018.

The Core Strategy of the Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029 includes an action to 'Review Ardaun Local Area Plan to ensure consistency with the Core Strategy and policies and objectives of the 2023-29 Development Plan'. The Galway City Development Plan supports the development at Ardaun as follows:

The development of Ardaun is a key urban extension on the east side of the city. It is part of the settlement strategy of the city with the capacity to accommodate significant growth and a new city neighbourhood. The Ardaun Local Area Plan 2018-2024 sets out a range of policies and objectives to guide the future development of this area.

Table 1.7 of the LAP notes that Ardaun is identified as a Strategic Growth Area in the RSES for the Northern and Western Region.

Policy 10.5 in the Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029 states that it is the City Council's policy to:

Develop Ardaun, in accordance with the Local Area Plan taking a co-ordinated and phased approach that will contribute to the integration of land use, urban form and structure, transportation and natural heritage to create a new urban village and a sustainable living and working environment.

The LAP seeks to deliver the concept of an urban village with the principal village centre in the southern section of Ardaun i.e. south of the N6/M6 corridor, with two urban nodes / local centres north of this corridor linking to surrounding areas including Coolagh Village. It is anticipated that the LAP area can support a population of up to 12,621 people through the delivery of 4,640 homes and that Ardaun will function as a mixed use business and retail district (LAP Section 1.2).

Strategic Goal 4 of the LAP (Section 3) supports the development of sustainable transport modes as per the Galway City Development Plan and the Galway Transport Strategy. This Strategic Goal is supported by the policy to:

"Promote interconnectivity between all modes of transport, in particular sustainable and public transport modes in order to efficiently link Ardaun with the main hubs for activity including the city centre in accordance with the GTS".

This is supported at Section 4.5 of the LAP through a key objective to:

"Support and facilitate the provision of an integrated public transport network to service Ardaun through the implementation of the Galway Transport Strategy and in conjunction with relevant transport providers, NTA and other stakeholders."

This LAP reserves the preferred route corridor of the proposed N6 GCRR as it traverses the LAP area as per Policies 4.1, 4.6, and the proposed N6 GCRR road corridor reservation at Section 11.2 of the Galway City Development Plan. In this regard, specific objectives 23 and 24 at Section 4.8 of the City Development Plan are also relevant.

The development strategy of the LAP acknowledges and aligns with the Galway City Development Plan, the Galway Transport Strategy and the proposed N6 GCRR.

2.7 Conclusion

The NPF and RSES acknowledge that the growth and economic success of Galway city requires investment in a range of infrastructure, including roads, and identify the delivery of the proposed N6 GCRR as a key future growth enabler for the city. Within this broader planning context, the proposed N6 GCRR remains a core objective of the Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029 to implement the Core Strategy and to integrate land use and transport planning to cater for the projected growth in the Galway Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan.

The Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029 fully integrates the aims, objectives, and strategies of the Galway Transport Strategy incorporating the proposed N6 GCRR into its core policies and objectives. Whereas elements of the GTS can be implemented independently of the proposed ring road, the City Development Plan admits that the full extent of measures and the successful delivery of the GTS require the provision of this new orbital route. Sustainable transport policy and road network policy in the Galway City Development Plan 2023-2029 supports the full implementation of the GTS underpinned by the proposed N6 GCRR, which is also identified as a strategic addition to the EU TEN-T Comprehensive Network.

The proposed N6 GCRR therefore aligns with the strategic aims of the City Development Plan and is necessary to achieve the Council's vision for Galway City to become a successful, sustainable, competitive regional city, that creates prosperity, supports a high quality of life and maintains its distinctive identity and culture.