

# The Greater Galway Charter

## The Message



## What?

- What is the Greater Galway Charter for Sustainable Urbanism?

The Greater Galway Charter is a vision statement setting out how the City of Galway could and should develop over the next fifty years or so. It takes fundamental principles of urbanism – such as compact growth, affordable housing, and climate resilience – and applies them in a Galway context. It seeks to ensure that all major decisions made that impact on the development of Galway City over the coming years are consistent with the anchoring principles in creating a city that is Sustainable, Inclusive, Responsive and Proud.

## Why?

- Why do we need Galway Charter?
- Why do we need a vision statement at all?
- Is this not just another plan, why is this relevant?
- Does this compete with the statutory plans for the city and the county?

The Greater Galway Charter was created to ensure a more coordinated and sustainable approach to the growth of the city over the next 50 years. Galway City is a leading light in many aspects of music, arts and culture; it has strong communities and a sense of place with fine urban spaces underpinned by richly layered built heritage assets. However, like all Irish cities and large towns, it faces challenges in the areas of climate adaptation, the delivery of affordable housing and traffic congestion.

The Greater Galway charter is not a statutory document, and this is its strength. It is the application of principles of urbanism to a Galway context. The 12 Propositions of the Greater Galway Charter, are principles, not rules. These principles work, they are hallmarks of successful places including, in many respects, Galway itself and have been established and implemented in successful places and cities across Europe and the world.

When tough decisions have to be made, the Charter and its Propositions will provide guidance. Over the next 50 years, while decisions on Plans, Projects and Programmes will have to be responsive to the contemporary challenges at their particular point in time, the Charter will remain as a touchstone reference - ensuring that the Principles of Urbanism are part of the decision making process. The Charter is a long-term vision that aims to ensure there is consistency and continuity in the development of the City over the long term.

## Who?

- Who has created this vision statement?
- Who is it relevant to?
- Who might sign up to it?

The Charter is an initiative enabled and facilitated by the Academy of Urbanism (AoU) on behalf of a range of Galway stakeholders. It draws upon the tradition of the earlier AoU Freiburg Charter (2010) - whereby key ingredients of successful urbanism were highlighted - with particular emphasis on Galway and its context. The Charter offers a template for progressive urban development and helps position Galway City towards becoming a Leader in urbanism.

While the Charter is the ultimately the work of professional urbanists, planners and architects, working under the AoU umbrella, it draws extensively on ideas from local community and citizen engagement in a number of workshops/events in Galway over the last year - including Architecture at the Edge (October 2022) and The Academy of Urbanism/RIAI conference (April 2023).

The Greater Galway Charter is now offered up to the wider community for citizens to reflect on, and hopefully endorse and promote more widely. It can make its way into debates and discussions, and inform decision making, serving as a long term reminder of community and civic aspirations and responsibilities, at a point in time.

## When?

- When is this all happening?
- When does the Charter start and when does it run to?

The Greater Galway Charter starts now, from its launch in October 2023 onwards. With the initial endorsement of City Leaders, the Galway Charter is now a living concept for

wider discussion, debate and refinement. It aims to be a companion and guide to decision making in the city, influencing the direction for next 50 years.

## Where?

- Where does the Charter relate to?
- Is the charter anti-rural, does the concentration of development on the city detract from the development of rural areas?

The Greater Galway Charter principally relates to the City of Galway, including the areas into which it will expand to over the next 50 years. Given the endorsement of the concept of more compact growth, it is envisaged that the future growth of Galway will be largely accommodated within the line of the proposed Galway City Ring Road.

Galway City is the heart of the West and a strong city anchors a strong region. As Galway City grows from strength to strength in a more sustainable manner, by incorporating the propositions of the Charter, so it can drive a prosperous region that is also productive, efficient and attractive to inward investment.

The Greater Galway Charter is potentially far more than Galway. As a pioneering initiative, the Charter and its themes and principles can be adapted and modified to suit other urban settlements across Ireland and Europe.

## How?

- How can I find out more?
- How can I or my organisation endorse the Charter?

The Charter can be found, in both English and Irish language formats, on the Academy of Urbanism website. This will also advertise when there are events to be held in or around Galway.

Whether you are from Galway or elsewhere, if you or your organisation would wish to formally endorse the Galway Charter, please add your name and details to the list provided. Thank you for your interest.