



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council

ADOPTED BUDGET 2026

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CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

CHUIG GACH BALL DEN CHOMHAIRLE

DRAFT BUDGET FOR FINANCIAL YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER 2026

Chuig An Cathaoirleach and gach Ball den Chomhairle

Introduction:

I enclose for your consideration the Draft Budget Book for 2026, together with reports from the respective Directors of Service in respect of activities in their functional areas, which is submitted as the Annual Progress report on the Corporate Plan 2025–2029.

In accordance with the statutory requirements of Sections 102 and 103 of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended), issues relating to the preparation of the Draft Budget were considered at our budget workshops held on 28th October and 5th November 2025, and by the Corporate Policy Group on 15th September 2025.

The Council considered and made its determination in relation to the local adjustment factor for the Local Property Tax at its meeting held on 23rd September 2024, at which the Council decided to increase the basic rate of Local Property Tax by 15 per cent for the five years 2025 to 2029 inclusive, in respect of relevant residential properties situated in County Galway. This was further discussed at Plenary Council on 21st July 2025.

Circular letter Fin 10/2025 dated 9th July 2025 confirmed the prescribed periods for the 2026 budget meeting and budget related matters. The prescribed period for the holding of the budget meeting is 3rd November to 28th November 2025 and the draft budget plan meetings for the Municipal Districts were to take place between 1st October and 14th November 2025. Galway County Council ('GCC') held its five Municipal District meetings from 10th October 2025 to 23rd October 2025 and the Annual Council Budget meeting for Galway County Council is scheduled for 14th November 2025, all in compliance with Circular 10/2025.

The Council may by resolution amend the draft budget but is obliged to adopt the draft budget with or without amendment and determine, in accordance with the budget so adopted, the annual rate on valuation (ARV) to be levied. The Council is required to complete the statutory process within a period of 14 days. This allows for the adjournment, if necessary, of the statutory meeting scheduled for 14th November 2025, but the process must be completed by 28th November 2025.

Local Property Tax:

Under the new model of Local Property Tax (LPT) funding, all equalisation funding will be met by the Exchequer to ensure all local authorities receive, at a minimum, an amount equivalent to their baselines. As the projected Local Property Tax receipts for 2026 are less than the Council's baseline, Galway County Council will be in receipt of an equalisation amount as set out below. The increase of 15% in the rate on the LPT retained locally resulted in an increase in the total LPT of €2,581,838. In effect, the Council's total Local Property Tax in 2026 will be €24,190,909 as set out in Table I below.

Table I Galway County Council - LPT Allocation		
	2026 €	2025 €
Baseline	21,609,071	20,309,071
LPT Retained Locally	17,212,256	15,806,419
Shortfall from equalisation fund	4,396,815	4,502,652
LPT Funding including equalisation	21,609,071	20,309,071
15% increase in LPT retained locally	2,581,838	2,370,963
Total LPT Funding	24,190,909	22,680,034

Equalisation grants are designed to support local authorities with smaller tax bases and higher expenditure needs, typically arising from lower economic activity and socio-economic factors. As the second most rural local authority in Ireland, with over 75 per cent of our population living in rural areas, Galway County Council should, in principle, receive substantial transfers under this mechanism. Another formal request for additional funding has been submitted to the Department.

The Local Property Tax remains one of the few sources through which the Council can generate significant additional income. The recommended increase in the 2025 Local Property Tax report was implemented, resulting in an uplift of €2.5 million to support existing services and unlock further State grant funding opportunities.

Supports from Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage:

Galway County Council has welcomed continued support from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in recent years. For 2025, the Council has received a provisional allocation of €14,291,136 to meet additional costs arising from the National Pay Agreements. For reference, the breakdown of these supports from 2024 to 2026 is set out below:

Table II Funding supports from the Department			
	2024 €	2025 €	2026 €
Payroll	8,897,619	12,688,403	14,291,136
Uplift on payroll	1,763,631	-	-
Energy and inflation	-	-	-
Special Grant Once-off	-	-	-
Total	10,661,250	12,688,403	14,291,136

Main Budget Adjustments:

Members will see from the budget tables that the draft budget for 2026 is €203,268,196 compared to €193,556,097 for 2025. A very significant budget expansion. Members will be aware that the majority of the budget in any year is comprised of non-discretionary costs such as loan charges, payroll, pensions, insurances, statutory demands and expenditure of a contra nature supported either in whole or in part by grant income received on the basis of being assigned to a particular public service or project that the Council delivers.

The Council's financial position has been reviewed in detail by the Corporate Policy Group and at Plenary Council. Funding remains a critical issue in delivering the expanded services outlined in the Corporate Plan 2025–2029. Additional funding is required across nearly all areas of Council activity, including staffing, housing and estate maintenance, road upkeep, libraries, street cleaning, verge trimming, swimming facilities, tourism and economic development.

Budget 2026 provides for increased expenditure across most programme areas. Despite ongoing financial pressures, the Council will continue its staff recruitment drive under the Strategic Workforce Plan. The resulting increase in payroll costs has been incorporated into the Draft Budget 2026, alongside provision for new pensions, gratuities and adjustments to existing pension commitments. Inflation, currently at approximately 2.3%, will also affect the cost of goods, services and contracts.

Due to additional income, the overall budget for 2026 represents an expansion on that of the 2025 budget, providing Galway County Council with the ability to further increase headcount and services for 2026. The Draft Budget 2026 provides for expenditure of €203million. Table III below sets out how the proposed budgeted expenditure will be funded.

Table III Sources of Income		
Sources of income	Draft budget 2025 €'000	Draft budget 2026 €'000
Grants and Subsidies	90,308	96,313
Rates	41,739	43,462
Local Property Tax Allocation	22,680	24,191
Rents & Loans (inc. RAS)	11,825	12,569
Irish Water recoupment	6,334	4,856
Parking Charges and fines	970	878
Local Authority Contributions	8,662	8,844
Other Misc Income	11,038	12,155
Total	193,556	203,268

2026 Work Programme

Housing

Galway County Council is committed to leading the way in housing delivery for County Galway in 2026, setting a bold and ambitious agenda to meet the evolving housing needs of our communities and drive economic and social progress across County Galway.

Building on our work to date, we will accelerate the delivery of high-quality social, affordable, and mixed-tenure homes, ensuring that every resident has access to secure and sustainable housing. Our Housing Delivery Action Plan remains firmly on target, with 1,717 new social housing units scheduled for delivery between 2022 and 2026. We are leveraging every available mechanism—including Part V, Cost Rental, and strategic partnerships with Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs)—to maximize output and respond flexibly to high local demand.

We continue to play a central role in national and local responses to emerging needs, including the ongoing support of the Community Integration Forum and the administration of the www.offerahome.ie programme, ensuring that Galway remains a welcoming and inclusive County.

Recognising the challenges in housing maintenance and estate management, we have secured a €444,652 increase in the 2026 budget to accelerate the turnaround of vacant properties and enhance the quality of our housing stock. Our ambition extends to eradicating homelessness through a new, innovative programme of supported housing, and we will maintain a relentless focus on delivering Traveller Accommodation Plan actions and promoting the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) Scheme countywide.

Galway County Council has increased significantly the funding for the Disabled Persons Grant, rising from a budget of €750,000 in 2024 to €1 million in 2025, and now reaching €1.5 million in Budget 2026. As this is matched funding, every €1.5 million invested by Galway County Council leverages a total of €10 million in enhancements to homes across the County, delivering substantial improvements in accessibility and quality of life for the elderly and those residents with disabilities.

In 2026, Galway County Council will continue to champion progressive housing policies, invest in sustainable communities, and work collaboratively with government (Galway Housing Taskforce), stakeholders, and the people of Galway to deliver real and lasting impact. Our vision is clear: to provide homes, build communities, and ensure that Galway remains a place where everyone can thrive.

Road Transport & Safety and Physical Infrastructure

Galway County Council is committed to delivering a future-focused programme for roads, transport, and active travel in 2026, ensuring our infrastructure meets the needs of a growing and dynamic County.

While 2026 road grant allocations are pending confirmation, our budget planning is rooted in prudent management and a clear ambition to expand and enhance our transport network. We anticipate and will advocate for increased funding to address inflation and sustain high levels of infrastructure output. In 2025, we successfully maintained or improved over 400 km of roads and invested in enhanced street cleaning, setting a strong foundation for the year ahead.

In 2026, we will accelerate the delivery of major capital projects with the support of the Department of Transport, Transport Infrastructure Ireland and the National Transport Authority. The N6 Galway City Ring Road remains a flagship project for the County and West region, and we are proactively advancing the planning process to unlock its full potential for Galway's residential and economic growth, connectivity, and climate resilience.

Our commitment to active travel is unwavering, with ongoing upgrades to footpaths, cycle lanes, public lighting, and pedestrian crossings across the County. The Council is also making significant progress on Greenway infrastructure, including the Galway–Oughterard and Clifden–Oughterard Greenways, which will serve as major assets for sustainable travel and tourism.

We are ambitious in our approach to bridge rehabilitation, with a substantial increase in funding sought for 2026 to address critical infrastructure needs. Our maritime function, supporting 689 km of coastline and numerous piers and harbours, remains a priority, and we are actively seeking additional resources to strengthen marine maintenance and planning expertise.

Recognising the importance of a modern and efficient transport fleet, we are undergoing a phased replacement programme, ensuring our machinery and vehicles are fit for purpose and aligned with our sustainability goals. The continued rollout of solar-powered pay and display machines and the accelerated replacement of public lighting with energy-efficient LED units further demonstrate our leadership in innovation and climate action.

An investment of €35.7 million has been allocated for the development of Inis Oírr pier. This represents the largest single investment in offshore islands and in the Gaeltacht ever made by the Department of Rural and Community Development and the Department of the Gaeltacht, delivering transformative maritime infrastructure for the island community and significantly enhancing connectivity, safety, and economic opportunity. Construction is expected to be completed within two years.

This landmark project demonstrates Galway County Council's ongoing commitment to supporting the inhabited islands of the county, ensuring that island communities are provided with the infrastructure and opportunities needed to thrive into the future.

Finally, we are managing the planned transfer of staff to Uisce Éireann with care and coordination, ensuring continuity of service and organisational stability.

In 2026, Galway County Council will continue to lead with ambition, innovation, and a relentless focus on delivering high-quality infrastructure and services for all who live, work, and visit County Galway.

Economic Development and Planning

Galway County Council is determined to drive transformative and sustainable development across the County in 2026, building on the strong momentum achieved under the County Development Plan 2022–2028. We are committed to delivering on our strategic objectives—economic development, proper planning & development, environmental protection, transport, planning, climate action, energy, and tourism—by embracing innovation, collaboration, and a plan-based solutions-focused approach.

Despite ongoing resource challenges and the increasing complexity of statutory obligations—including the new marine spatial planning function, and the implementation of the new Planning and Development Act 2024, we are ambitious in our vision and proactive in overcoming barriers. Over 90% of all planning applications and submissions are now processed through our e-Planning system, reflecting our commitment to efficiency and customer service. The Council's planning application grant rate is also @ 90%.

We continue to foster economic growth through strategic partnerships with IDA, Enterprise Ireland, Uisce Éireann, EirGrid, Iarnród Éireann, and others. The Galway Strategic Economic Corridor remains a central focus for the County's Economic activity, and a joint Economic Master Plan with the City Council is in preparation to unlock new opportunities for investment and job creation for Galway. In 2026, we will advance major regeneration projects under the Urban

Regeneration Development Fund, including the Garraun passing loop, expanded car parking, and the preparation of a network of comprehensive urban framework plans.

Urban and rural regeneration will remain a top priority, with the additional budget allocation the Council will continue to secure funding under URDF to tackle urban vacancy and dereliction. We will actively pursue additional co-funding to scale up RRDF and URDF projects, and leverage national schemes such as ORIS, Town and Village Renewal, Clár, and LIS to maximize impact across all communities in County Galway.

Our Town Centre First (TCF) initiative, piloted in Gort, is setting a new standard for community-led regeneration, and we are committed to expanding this model to other towns, empowering local town teams to influence and shape their town's future.

The BIA Innovator Campus is strengthening the social and economic fabric of County Galway by fostering a vibrant food community rooted in sustainability. Through shared facilities, knowledge exchange, and support for local producers, BIA promotes environmentally responsible practices and short supply chains that benefit both businesses and consumers. This initiative not only creates jobs but also champions climate-conscious innovation, ensuring that growth is inclusive and aligned with Galway County Council's vision for resilient communities and a sustainable future. Galway County Council continues to support BIA Innovator and continues to promote creative sector initiatives across the County.

Tourism development will be guided by the County's Tourism Strategy, aligned with Fáilte Ireland's national vision, ensuring that the benefits of tourism are shared countywide. Additional resources have been allocated to support delivery and to enhance Galway's reputation as a premier tourism destination.

Climate action and environmental protection is also at the heart of our agenda. The Climate Action Unit, supported by cross-organisational teams, has implemented the Local Authority Climate Action Plan 2024–2029, with a steadfast commitment to achieving a climate-neutral, resilient, and sustainable economy by 2050. In 2026, we will administer the second round of the €762,000 Community Climate Action Fund and accelerate projects in public lighting retrofits, social housing energy upgrades, active travel, and biodiversity.

We are also investing in community enrichment and quality of life. Library services are being strengthened with additional funding for books and development projects, ensuring that our libraries remain vibrant hubs for learning and connection.

Our Blue Flag beaches and swimming areas, vital to both residents and the tourism economy, are being enhanced through ongoing investment in water safety infrastructure, accessibility, and lifeguard services. Under the Water Safety Programme 2025, a panel of 55 trained lifeguards was recruited to provide services at 10 County locations, including six Blue Flag beaches, and six City locations under a shared service agreement with Galway City Council. In this Budget we are seeking to expand our summer ready programme to commence earlier in 2026.

At Cill Mhuirbhígh Bathing Area, improvements include a new lifeguard hut, bicycle racks, handrails, ringbuoys, safety signage and a beach wheelchair, enhancing accessibility and safety for all users.

Galway County Council is ambitious, innovative, and resolute in striving to deliver for all our communities—ensuring that development is inclusive, sustainable, and future-ready.

Digitilisation and ICT

Galway County Council is committed to digital excellence and resilience, placing cyber security and digital transformation at the heart of our operations. In 2026, we will significantly increase investment in advanced system monitoring, threat detection, and data resilience, ensuring robust protection for our digital services and the communities we serve.

In 2026 our Digital Strategy charts an ambitious course for Galway County Council, supporting rapid growth in digital services and connectivity. Through the Wifi4EU initiative, we are expanding free public Wi-Fi access points across the County, bridging the digital divide and empowering residents, businesses, and visitors to contact us, connect and thrive.

We have completed a comprehensive website transformation, delivering a modern, user-centric platform built on open-source technology. This not only enhances public engagement and service delivery, and enables innovative solution sharing with other local authorities, but through its dual-language functionality, also demonstrates Galway County Council's ongoing commitment to nourishing and promoting our first language, Gaeilge, as a living part of our digital presence.

Looking ahead, we will accelerate the implementation of our Digital and ICT Strategy, fully aligned with Ireland's Local Government Digital and ICT Strategy 2030. Our focus for 2026 includes:

- Advancing ePlanning, iPlan, and iHouse systems to deliver seamless, accessible digital services for customers, staff, and elected members.
- Driving continuous improvement in digital infrastructure, data management, and cyber resilience.
- Fostering a culture of innovation, collaboration, and digital inclusion across all Council functions.

By embracing cutting-edge technology and prioritising digital transformation, Galway County Council will continue to lead as a forward-thinking, secure, and connected local authority—delivering smarter, more responsive services for all.

Human Resources

Galway County Council's Human Resources Department continues to drive a culture of excellence, engagement, and continuous human resource improvement and expansion across the organisation.

In 2025, the Council prioritized strategic workforce planning, successfully filling 82 posts and establishing 45 recruitment panels to ensure the right skills are in place to deliver on the Council's ambitious Corporate Plan.

Investment in staff training and development remains a cornerstone, with over 2,000 training days delivered, focusing on health and safety, upskilling, and professional growth.

The HR team also advanced key initiatives in staff welfare, supporting flexible work arrangements, family-friendly policies, and employee wellbeing through confidential advisory and occupational health services.

Looking ahead to 2026, the Council will continue to recruit and deploy talent in line with the Strategic Workforce Plan, foster diversity and inclusion, and implement business process improvements to enhance efficiency and service delivery.

The Organisation alongside the HR Department is committed to supporting staff through ongoing education, leadership development, and robust industrial relations, ensuring Galway County Council remains an employer of choice and is fully equipped to meet the evolving needs and expanding needs of the communities we serve.

Corporate

From the 'tone at the top' and through the support of the Corporate Directorate, Galway County Council continues to underpin effective governance, strategic leadership, and high-quality service delivery across all Council functions.

In 2025, the Directorate advanced key initiatives in corporate governance, risk management, ethics, and compliance, ensuring that the Council operates with transparency, accountability, and in line with statutory obligations. The Directorate provided robust support for elected members, managed the adoption and implementation of the Corporate Plan 2025–2029, and delivered comprehensive administrative services for Council meetings, policy groups, and civic events.

A strong focus is placed on data protection, Freedom of Information, and public sector duty, with ongoing staff training and the rollout of new compliance tools and processes. The development of customer service strategies, communications, and digital engagement, enhancing accessibility and responsiveness for citizens and stakeholders was also rolled out in the Council.

Looking ahead to 2026, we will continue to support the delivery of strategic objectives and foster a culture of continuous improvement—ensuring Galway County Council remains a trusted, modern, and citizen-focused local authority.

Commercial Rates

Galway County Council is committed to supporting local businesses and fostering economic growth across the County. In 2026, the Council will maintain the annual rate on valuation for calculating the commercial rates at its current level, with no increase proposed in this budget.

Furthermore, we will continue to offer a favourable rate incentive scheme for eligible rate payers, ensuring that businesses can benefit from meaningful support as they operate in turbulent times. This Council's approach reflects our ongoing dedication to creating a positive environment for enterprise and investment in County Galway.

Table IV Expenditure by Programme Group		
Service Division	2025 Budget €'000	2026 Draft Estimated Budget €'000
Housing and Building	31,729	33,380
Road Transportation and Safety	61,891	65,453
Water Services	16,987	15,227
Development Management	20,719	23,458
Environmental Services	28,079	31,336
Recreation and Amenity	13,241	13,920
Agriculture, Education Health and Welfare	2,840	2,876
Miscellaneous Services	18,080	17,618
Total	193,566	203,268

Conclusion and Recommendation

Budget 2026 reflects Galway County Council's unwavering commitment to delivering high-quality public services, driving sustainable economic growth, and enhancing the quality of life for all residents across the County.

Despite ongoing challenges in funding, resource constraints, and ever-evolving statutory obligations, the Council has demonstrated ambition, innovation, and resilience in advancing its strategic objectives—from housing delivery and infrastructure investment to digital transformation, climate action, economic development and planning and community development.

I will however continue to engage with Department officials to secure further funding uplifts.

The Council's collaborative approach, strong governance, and focus on continuous improvement have positioned Galway to respond proactively to emerging needs and opportunities. To sustain this momentum and realise the full potential of the County Development Plan 2022–2028 and the Corporate Plan 2025 - 2029, it is recommended that the Draft Budget 2026 be adopted as presented. This will enable Galway County Council to continue investing in critical infrastructure, support inclusive communities, and deliver on its vision of a vibrant, sustainable, and future-ready County for residents, businesses and visitors alike.

In preparing the Draft Budget 2026, I wish to thank all Elected Members for their support throughout 2025, particularly Cathaoirligh Cllr Martina Kinane and Cllr David Collins, as well as the Corporate Policy Group and all elected members for their constructive engagement.

I also extend my thanks to our Director of Finance, Ms Katie O'Connor, all the Directors of Service, and the staff of the Finance Directorate for their work in preparing this expansionary budget. I am deeply grateful to all Council staff for their work, their continued commitment and support and for the unwavering sense of public duty and service.

With the collective efforts of Elected Members and staff, I am confident we will deliver a quality, value-added programme of work for the people of County Galway.

I therefore recommend the adoption of the Draft Budget 2026 as presented.

Mise, Le Meas,

Mr. Liam Conneally,
Chief Executive,
Galway County Council.

7th November 2025.

DIVISIONAL REPORTS INCLUDING ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT ON THE GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN 2025 – 2029

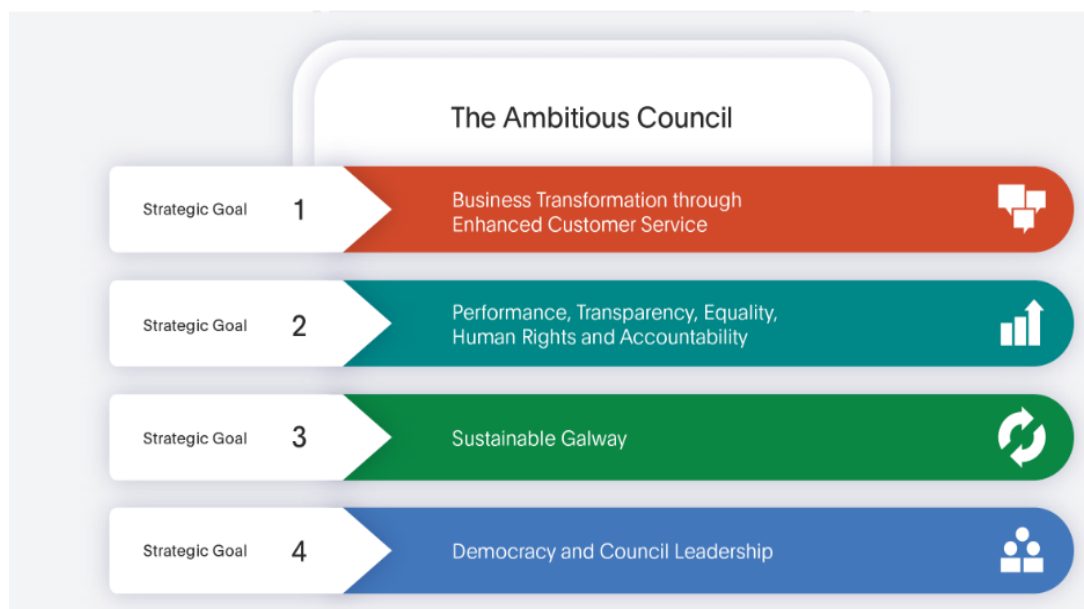
Galway County Council's Corporate Plan 2025–2029, adopted at the Plenary Meeting on 25th November 2024, continues to serve as the strategic foundation for the Council's work. Now in its second year of implementation, the Plan, developed through broad consultation with councillors, staff, and stakeholders, remains central to shaping priorities, guiding decision-making, and ensuring effective governance and high-quality service delivery across all functions.

The Plan is fully aligned with statutory requirements and reflects the Council's commitment to transparency, inclusivity, and adaptability. It addresses cross-cutting priorities and provides a robust framework for action, enabling the Council to respond proactively to emerging challenges and opportunities, monitor progress, and adjust as community needs evolve.

As Galway County Council advances into 2026, the Corporate Plan continues to guide the delivery of comprehensive, citizen-focused services and the achievement of strategic objectives for the benefit of all communities in County Galway.

The accompanying Divisional Reports highlight the progress made throughout 2025 and set out key initiatives and proposals for 2026, ensuring that the Council remains on track to deliver on its strategic goals and commitments.

STRATEGIC GOALS (GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN 2025-2029)



HOUSING

HOUSING SERVICES - DELIVERING HOMES - BUILDING COMMUNITIES

Galway County Council's Housing Department remains committed to:

- Supporting individuals and families in meeting their housing needs within diverse, inclusive, and sustainable communities.
- Providing early inter-agency support and delivering stable housing options to reduce reliance on emergency accommodation, with a continued focus on prevention and long-term solutions.
- Accelerating the delivery of high-quality, well-managed social and affordable housing, ensuring that new developments contribute to climate resilience and a sustainable built environment.
- Maximising the use, quality, and energy efficiency of existing housing stock, supporting the renewal and adaptation of the built environment to meet evolving community needs.

In 2026, the Department will build on these priorities by advancing innovative housing initiatives, strengthening partnerships with stakeholders, and ensuring that all residents of County Galway have access to secure, accessible, and sustainable homes.

HOUSING FOR ALL – A NEW HOUSING PLAN FOR IRELAND

A new National Housing Plan is expected in the coming months. It will build on existing measures and align with the finalised National Development Plan, setting out revised targets and delivery mechanisms to address housing needs nationwide.

In the interim, implementation of the *Housing for All* strategy continues, with active progression of key initiatives including affordable housing schemes, cost rental developments, and refurbishment supports for vacant properties.

Launched on 2 September 2021, *Housing for All* aimed to deliver an average of 33,000 homes annually over ten years, with a balanced mix of social, affordable and private housing. The strategy was structured around four key pathways:

- Supporting home ownership and improving affordability
- Eradicating homelessness and enhancing social inclusion
- Increasing new housing supply
- Addressing vacancy and optimising use of existing stock

Galway County Council was assigned a target of 1,717 new social housing units for delivery between 2022 and 2026. Social housing construction under the plan is being delivered through:

- Local Authority direct build and Buy and Renew schemes
- Turnkey developments from private developers
- Part V delivery mechanisms
- Approved Housing Body (AHB) delivery

The Minister has indicated that 60% of delivery should be provided by local authorities, with the remainder by AHBs. However, local authorities retain overall responsibility for meeting their assigned targets.

Year	# Social Housing Build Target	Expected Council Delivery (60%)	Expected AHB Delivery (40%)
2022	230	1,030	687
2023	351		
2024	358		
2025	385		
2026	393		
Total	1,717	1,717	

HOUSING DELIVERY ACTION PLAN 2022 - 2026

Galway County Council's Housing Delivery Action Plan (HDAP), approved on 1 July 2022 and published on the Council's website, sets out a plan-led approach to delivering social and affordable housing in appropriate locations across the county.

The HDAP outlines how the Council will meet its housing targets for 2022–2026, with strong delivery by Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) identified as a key component. Delivery remains subject to national targets, funding availability under *Housing for All*, and the standard planning and approval processes.

The HDAP will be reviewed following publication of the Government's new National Housing Plan to ensure continued alignment with national policy and evolving housing needs.

LOCAL AUTHORITY DIRECT BUILD

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

Throughout 2025, Galway County Council's Housing Unit continued to advance a range of direct-build housing projects through the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage approvals process, covering design, planning, tendering and construction stages. Approximately 173 social housing units are scheduled for delivery in 2025 through a combination of construction, turnkey developments and Part V mechanisms.

The following Direct build projects were progressed through various stages to date in 2025:

Location	#Social Housing Units	Costing	DHLGH Stage
Caislean Rathlin, Ardrahan	10	€2,720,701	Completed
Hillcrest, Loughrea	3	€2,379,928*	Nearing Completion
Parkmore, Tuam	4	*Contract value combined with Hillcrest.	Nearing Completion
St. Josephs, Ballinasloe	8	€1,981,244	Nearing Completion
Total	25	€7,081,943	

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

Proposals for 159 housing units are currently in preparation or with the Department of Housing for approval, with delivery planned for 2026. The projected capital spend for these units is €55,650,000.

The construction sector continues to face national challenges, including price inflation, labour shortages, and difficulties accessing finance. Galway County Council's Housing Unit, supported by the Housing Delivery Coordination Office and the Department, is actively supporting the management of these pressures at local level.

To support accelerated delivery, the Housing Activation Office (HAO) was established in April 2025. The HAO coordinates public infrastructure investment and engages with local authorities, utility providers, and industry stakeholders to unlock zoned lands and strategic sites. This initiative is a key commitment under the *Programme for Government 2025* and aims to enable large-scale, efficient housing delivery.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

Location	# Social Housing Units	DHLGH Stage
Cosmona	56	Procurement ongoing
Dunlo Hill	16	Under Construction
Claregalway (Droim na Gaoithe)	22	Under Construction
Garbally Drive	2	Procurement ongoing
Gort Mhaoilir, Athenry	43	Contract Awarded
Main Street, Moylough	4	Stage 3 Approval Pending
Cullairbaun, Athenry	16	Procurement ongoing
Total	159	

TURNKEYS

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

Turnkey acquisition remains a key delivery stream under the *Housing for All* programme, particularly in areas where access to suitable development land is constrained. The scheme is open to both Galway County Council and the Approved Housing Body (AHB) sector.

Expressions of interest for turnkey social and affordable housing developments were invited in January, May and October 2025:

- January 2025: 6 expressions of interest received
- May 2025: 20 expressions of interest received, all with planning permission

For 2025, Galway County Council has allocated a budget of €55,139,942 for direct turnkey projects, relating to 106 proposed social housing units.

Location	# Social Housing Units	Cost	Stage
An Choill Fhada, Kilgarve (phase2)	16	€6,231,074	Completed
Vicar Choral (Tir and Choir)	6	€2,195,096	Completed
An Gort Fada, Ballinasloe	1	€406,145	Completed
Westport Road, Clifden	9	€3,760,809	Completed
Tobar na Luachra, Tuskey East, Barna	16 (22 in total)	€9,332,325	Nearing Completion
An Choill Fhada, Kilgarve (phase3) Ballinasloe	4	€1,412,256	Nearing Completion
Ashford Court, Headford	8	€2,800,000	Nearing Completion
Ceathru an Iarla (Caherwalter), Loughrea	18 (22 in total)	€13,555,430	Nearing Completion
Harbour Road, Ballinasloe	3 (9 in total)	€408,637	Nearing Completion
Westport Road, Clifden	12	€ 4,627,129	Nearing Completion
Parice Na Coille, Raheen, Athenry	13	€ 10,411,041	Nearing Completion
Total	106	€55,139,942	

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

Turnkey developments are expected to play a significant role in Galway County Council's social housing delivery in 2026. Several proposals are currently under consideration and are intended to support unit delivery over the remainder of the *Housing for All* programme.

Funding for turnkey construction projects is fully recoupable from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

DEVELOPERS OBLIGATIONS UNDER PART V

Under Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2001 (as amended), Galway County Council continues to acquire housing units as part of developers' statutory obligations.

Following legislative changes in August 2021:

- A 20% Part V requirement applies to land purchased on or after 1 August 2021
- A 10% requirement applies to land purchased between 1 September 2015 and 31 July 2021, where planning permission is granted before 31 July 2026

In 2025, the Council will acquire 29 units under Part V, with a further 9 units being progressed for delivery through Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs). An additional 120 units (107 Local Authority and 13 AHB) are planned for delivery in 2026 and 2027.

The number of units delivered under Part V is expected to increase in future years, as recent amendments now allow for up to 20% of a development to be acquired by the local authority, with at least half of these units allocated to social housing applicants.

Part V – 2025

Location	#Social Housing Units	Cost	Stage
Tir an Choir, Vicars Coral, Tuam	1	€269,700	Completed
Lorrogate, Athenry	2	€610,000	Completed
Ard Raithni, Barna	6	€2,044,843	Completed
Cluain na Cathrach Athenry	4	€1,288,254	In Conveyancing
The Waterfront, Loughrea	1	€191,202	Nearing Completion
Ard Raithni, Barna	6	€1,954,743	Nearing Completion
Bothar na Mine, Kinvara	5	€1,370,085	Nearing Completion
Cnoc Fearnáin, Station Road, Oranmore	2	€504,548	Nearing Completion
Harbour Road, Ballinasloe	2	€664,053	Nearing Completion
Total	29	€8,897,428	

Part V (Approved Housing Bodies) 2025

Location		
Clochans, Tuam	4	Under construction
An Doireann Ballyquirke, Moycullen (Tuath Housing Association)	5	Under construction
Total	9	

Part V - 2026 and 2027

Location	# Social Housing Units	Stage
Mountain Road Moycullen	2	Under Construction
Bilberry, Loughrea	6	TBC
Moneyduff (Phase 1), Oranmore	8	Under construction
Moneyduff (Phase 2), Oranmore	5	Under construction
Moneyduff (Phase 3), Oranmore	8	Under construction
Westport Road, Westport	3	Under construction
Bog Road, Oranmore	1	Under construction
Creathru an Iarla, Danefort, Loughrea	5	Under construction
Moycullen	4	Under construction
Rindifin, Ennis Road, Gort	2	Under construction
Main Street, Ahascragh	2	Under construction
Church Road, Headford	5	Under construction
Garrai na Cloiche, Ennis Road, Gort	1	Under construction
Kilcummin Field, Oughterard	2	Under construction
An Maolan, Turskey East, Bearna	5	Under construction
An Moinear Ard	3	Under construction
An Cnocan Carrach, Bearna	2	TBC
Cong Road, Headford	2	TBC
Tullagh Hill, Loughrea	2	Onsite
Moylough,(behind Somers bar)	2	TBC
Cregboy, Claregalway	18	Under construction
Cul na Coirre , Headford	5	Under construction
An Caiseal Ennis Road Gort	14	Under construction
Total	107	

2026 Part V (Approved Housing Bodies)

Location	#Social Housing Units	Stage
Cosmona (Co-operative Housing Ireland)	2	Under Construction
Lakeview (CHI) developer Damree	11	Under Construction
Total	13	

The Planning and Development Act 2024, signed into law on 17th October 2024, replaces the Planning and Development Act 2000 and introduces a modernised framework for planning and development in Ireland, with a strong emphasis on housing delivery and land use.

Under Part 7 of the Act, each planning authority must prepare a housing strategy as part of its development plan. This strategy must:

- Zone sufficient land to meet projected housing need.
- Provide for social, affordable purchase, and cost rental housing.
- Align with national and regional planning policies.
- Be regularly monitored and updated to reflect changing demand.

Part 7 replaces the previous Part V and strengthens the role of local authorities in proactively planning for inclusive and sustainable housing development.

APPROVED HOUSING BODIES

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

Galway County Council continues to work closely with the voluntary sector to support its target of delivering 40% of new build supply under *Housing for All*. The Council aims to maximise output through the Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS), Capital Advance & Leasing Facility (CALF), and Part V.

- 56 additional housing units are planned for delivery in 2026 through AHB-led projects
- 51 units are expected to be delivered in 2025
- The AHB Forum provides a structured partnership between the Council and the sector
- AHB funding combines public and private finance, depending on the delivery model

CAPITAL ASSISTANCE SCHEME (CAS)

The Capital Assistance Scheme funding is provided by the Department through the Local Authority for the provision of housing. There are 21 CAS funded schemes to be completed in 2025.

CAS PROJECTS PROGRESSING/UNDERWAY:

Location	# Social Housing Units	Stage
An Doireann, Ballyquirke, (Tuath Housing) Moycullen	9	Completed
Gilligans, (Sophia Housing), Tuam	7	Completed
Shannon Road, Portumna, Carrig Dubh Housing	5	Progressing
Total	21	

2026 AND 2027 CAS PROJECTS:

Location	# Social Housing Units	Stage
St Veronicas (Sophia Housing)	9	Progressing
27 The Willows, Athenry (Peter Treist Housing Association)	1	Progressing
Springfield, Ballinasloe, (Peter Treist Housing Association)	4	Progressing
Doctor McGarry Housing, Milltown Phase 2 (Milltown Housing Association Ltd)	2	Progressing
Total	16	

CAPITAL ADVANCE AND LEASING FACILITY (CALF) AND MORTGAGE TO RENT (MTR)

The Capital Advance and Leasing Facility (CALF) and Mortgage to Rent Scheme continue to support social housing delivery through off-balance sheet current expenditure. Under *Housing for All* commitment 4.10, the Department of Housing reviewed the structure and operation of CALF to improve viability for Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs), particularly in areas with lower market rents such as Galway County. Rising interest rates and construction inflation had further impacted project viability under the previous P&A-CALF model.

Key recommendations from the review include:

- Calculating the initial P&A amount to meet a debt-service cover ratio (DSCR) target, with a minimum 25% CALF contribution
- Establishing a departmental working group to examine gearing in the AHB sector
- Exploring early repayment options for CALF loans, subject to Housing Finance Agency agreement
- Linking P&A-CALF applications explicitly to each Local Authority's Housing Delivery Action Plan (HDAP)

These changes are expected to support the delivery of additional voluntary housing by AHBs in Galway's main towns from 2026 onwards.

PROJECTS WITH CALF FUNDING FOR COMPLETION IN 2025:

Location	# Social Housing Units	Stage
Woodfield, Tuam, (Co-operative Housing Ireland)	6	Practical Completion
The Old Mill, Milltown, (Co-operative Housing Ireland)	7	Practical Completion
Total	13	

PROJECTS WITH CALF FUNDING PROGRESSING IN 2026

Location	# Social Housing Units	Stage
Cosmona (Co-operative Housing Ireland)	9	Progressing
Clochans (Co-operative Housing Ireland)	4	Progressing
Lakeview (Co-operative Housing Ireland)	27	Progressing
Total	40	

The following units were delivered under the Mortgage to Rent Scheme in 2025 which enables homeowners in mortgage difficulty to switch from owning their home to renting their home as social housing tenants.

Scheme	# Social Housing Units	Stage
Mortgage to Rent Scheme (MTR) Irish Homes	8	Completed
Mortgage to Rent Scheme (MTR) iCare Housing	3	Completed
Total	11	

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

Galway County Council will continue to engage proactively with Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) to source additional housing units under the relevant funding model. The Housing Unit will also assess the potential for AHB-led delivery of further homes on Council-held lands.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING DELIVERY

On 30 March 2022, Galway County Council was advised by the Department of Housing of its affordable housing target of 226 homes for the period 2022–2026. Significant delivery is expected through the Advance Purchase Scheme in particular.

Proposed Affordable Delivery	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	Total
LA Build Affordable Purchase	0	0	40	40	30	110
Part V	n/a	n/a	10	10	10	30
LA Turnkey Affordable Purchase	15	42	9	5	15	86
Total	15	42	59	55	55	226

Affordable housing in County Galway is being delivered through several key pathways:

- Local Authority construction
- Part V affordable housing units
- Advance purchase (turnkey schemes)
- Cost rental
- First Homes Scheme
- Home Loans Scheme (formerly Rebuilding Ireland Home Loans)

An affordable homes developed in County Galway are nearing completion in Baile Chláir. A total of 61 units are being delivered in the Garraí Na Gaoithe development, the first turnkey scheme to include affordable housing under the Government's *Housing for All* policy.

- Phase 1: 17 homes completed (2 two-bedroom, 9 three-bedroom, 6 four-bedroom)
- Phase 2: 16 homes due for completion in Quarter 4 2025
- Phase 3: 28 homes to be developed in Quarter 1 2026

Located on Lakeview Road, the scheme includes a crèche and benefits from proximity to local amenities.

The Affordable Housing Pipeline is as follows:

Status	Scheme Name	No. of Affordable Purchase	Delivery Due
Approved	Garrai Na Gaoithe, Baile Chláir (Phase 1)	17	Delivered in Q2 2025
Approved	Garrai Na Gaoithe, Baile Chláir (Phase 2)	16	Q4 2025
Approved	Garrai Na Gaoithe, Baile Chláir (Phase 3)	28	Q1 2026
Project in development	Droim na Gaoithe, Baile Chláir	66	Q4 2026
Project in development	Raheen, Athenry	28	Q1 2027
Project in development	Páirc na hAbhainn, Athenry	16	Q1 2027
Totals		171	

In September 2025, Galway County Council signed contracts for the construction of 88 new homes in Baile Chláir (Claregalway), comprising 66 affordable and 22 social units. The 2.7hectare site will also include a crèche, community playground, car parking, landscaping, roads, footpaths, amenity spaces, public lighting, and service connections. Construction began in early October, with Minister James Browne performing the official sod-turning ceremony on 11 October 2025.

Design contracts have been signed with Studio PKA (Paul Keogh Architects) for two affordable housing schemes in Athenry: 28 homes at Raheen and 16 at Páirc na hAbhainn. Site surveys and topology reports are complete, and planning documentation for Páirc na hAbhainn is expected to be submitted in Q4 2025. Completion is anticipated in Q4 2026 or Q1 2027.

The Council continues to assess Part V developments for affordable housing potential. Three Part V affordable units will be available in Kinvara in Q1 2026, with a further eight anticipated in Claregalway later in 2026.

Additional affordable housing opportunities are being explored across County Galway, both on Council-owned land and through Part V. A countywide survey conducted in September received over 830 responses. A targeted follow-up survey in the Loughrea Municipal District received over 200 responses, confirming strong interest in affordable housing in the area. Further targeted surveys are planned to assess demand in other locations.

HOUSING ACQUISITIONS

Galway County Council continues to actively engage in the Second-Hand Social Housing Acquisitions Programme as part of its strategy to meet urgent housing need.

- In 2025, the Council received a €6 million capital allocation from the Department of Housing
- Funding is targeted at priority categories including Tenant-in-Situ cases, Housing First one-bedroom units, and homes for older persons and individuals with disabilities
- Despite operational challenges, particularly the late funding notification on 1 April, the Council progressed a number of acquisitions during the year

Second Hand Acquisition for 2025:

Location	# Social Housing Units	Stage
Country Meadows (TIS)	1	Purchase complete
Lakeview Glennamaddy (TIS)	1	Purchase complete
Deerpark Woods, Headford (TIS)	1	Purchase Complete
Rosewood, Gort	1	Purchase Complete
Grove House, Gort	1	Purchase Complete
Riverside Court, Tuam	1	Conveyancing in progress
Lowville, Ahascragh, Ballinasloe (TIS)	1	Conveyancing in progress
Liss, Headford (TIS)	1	Conveyancing in progress
Cuirt Na hAbhann, Claregalway	1	Conveyancing in progress
Total	9	2025

Galway County Council continues to assess private housing stock to meet local housing need, based on demand, compliance criteria, engineering reports and legal review.

- In 2025, 9 second-hand units were acquired at a total cost of €3,874,073.
- 5 of these were purchased under the Tenant in Situ Scheme.
- All costs are fully recoupable from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
- Acquisitions of this nature will remain limited and focused on cases of specific need.

TENANT IN SITU SCHEME

In 2025, the Department of Housing introduced revised criteria for the Tenant in Situ (TiS) scheme, which enables local authorities to purchase properties from landlords to prevent homelessness. The updated scheme prioritises families with children, older persons, and individuals with disabilities. Key restrictions include:

- Minimum two-year HAP or RAS tenancy
- RTB registration and valid Notice of Termination
- Refurbishment costs excluded
- Chief Executive sign-off required for each acquisition

Galway County Council faced operational challenges due to the late funding notification (1 April), which delayed progress and contributed to a national 60% drop in acquisitions compared to the same period in 2024. Several negotiations were paused due to budget constraints and tightened eligibility rules.

In August 2025, Circular Housing 11/2025 introduced critical flexibility, allowing local authorities to begin negotiations on eligible acquisitions that may not close until early 2026. This extension has been welcomed by housing teams, enabling improved planning and engagement with landlords following earlier delays.

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR HOUSING LANDS

The active management of the housing land bank is part of a range of actions being taken under Housing for All designed to accelerate and increase housing output.

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- Continued to advance sites to development stage at the earliest date possible.
- Continued to expand the bank of lands available to the Council for public housing.
- Progressed the approved Housing Delivery Action Plan for delivery of the build programme by Galway County Council and AHBs of both social and affordable housing for the period 2022-2026.

Land availability with Residentially Zoned Land (RI zoning) remains a key constraint in meeting housing need. The delivery of Social and Affordable Housing by Galway County Council is determined by the availability of critical infrastructure and the Council's identified areas of housing demand.

To address these constraints, the Housing Activation Office (HAO) was established in April 2025 within the Department of Housing. The HAO is tasked with accelerating housing delivery by unblocking infrastructure delays, coordinating public infrastructure investment, and engaging with local authorities, utility providers and industry stakeholders. This initiative is a core commitment under the *Programme for Government 2025* and aims to enable large-scale, efficient housing delivery on zoned and strategic sites.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

Galway County Council's Housing Unit will continue to advance the delivery of high-quality, sustainable social and affordable housing through strategic land management and acquisition:

- Progress social housing schemes on suitable portions of the Council's remaining landbank, subject to planning and in partnership with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
- Advance sites under the Affordable Housing Fund, aligned with departmental guidelines and approvals
- Maximise the landbank's potential to support affordable and cost rental housing, subject to appropriate schemes and funding streams
- Seek opportunities to acquire strategic lands in areas of high housing demand, aligned with the Housing Delivery Action Plan
- Submit proposals for land acquisition through the Housing Agency Land Acquisition Fund or, for R2 lands, via borrowing recoupable on delivery of housing

LONG TERM LEASING INITIATIVE

Long-Term Leasing was introduced under Pillar 2 of *Rebuilding Ireland* to support the delivery of social housing and continues on a reduced scale under *Housing for All*. Under this model, the Local Authority or Approved Housing Body (AHB) acts as landlord, with no direct relationship between the property owner and tenant.

- Lease terms range from 10 to 25 years
- Rent is discounted by 15–20% from open market valuation
- Rent is guaranteed even during vacancy
- Property owners have no day-to-day maintenance responsibilities

Galway County Council issued Calls for Expressions of Interest in May and July 2025. One long-term leasing project was completed in 2025, with a second expected to conclude before year-end.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

Under the Government's Housing for All programme, current long-term leasing models are being phased out by the end of 2025. This policy shift, first announced in 2022, aims to prioritise delivery models that secure long-term ownership of social housing stock. While new entrants to long-term and enhanced leasing arrangements are being discontinued, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage will retain flexibility for Local Authorities to use short-term rental availability agreements (RAS-type) to meet housing need where appropriate.

VACANT HOMES

VACANT PROPERTY REFURBISHMENT GRANTS (CROÍ CÓNAITHE (TOWNS) FUND):

The Vacant Homes Officer plays a key role in delivering the National Vacant Housing Reuse Strategy locally, with a primary focus in 2025 on advancing the Croí Cónaithe Scheme and revisiting properties identified in the initial GeoDirectory Vacancy Data Survey. These revisits informed Galway County Council's Vacant Homes Team Plan for the 2025 CPO Activation Programme.

The Croí Cónaithe (Towns) Fund supports the refurbishment of vacant properties for owner-occupation or rental use in towns and villages:

- Grants of up to €50,000 are available for eligible pre-2008 properties vacant for at least two years.
- A top-up grant of €20,000 is available for properties confirmed as derelict.
- Island properties (Inishbofin, Árainn, Inis Oírr, Inis Meáin) may qualify for up to 20% additional support—up to €60,000 for vacant and €84,000 for derelict properties.
- The scheme also supports new builds on serviced sites in urban areas; Galway County Council currently has no serviced sites available but will keep this under review.

As of end October 2025, Galway County Council has received 638 applications under the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant scheme:

- 416 applications approved, with a combined value exceeding €23 million
- 79 applications currently in progress
- 142 applications withdrawn or deemed ineligible
- 81 grants paid to date, totalling over €4 million

VACANT HOMES SURVEY UPDATE:

Under the Government's *Housing for All* Pathway 4, Galway County Council conducted a GeoDirectory Vacancy Data Survey to identify and confirm vacancy in private properties, with the aim of advising owners on reuse options to reduce overall vacancy.

- 43 urban settlements across Galway County were surveyed within a 1km perimeter of central hub points, including 7 large towns, 11 major settlements and 25 minor settlements.
- A total of 1,708 properties were surveyed; 817 were deemed vacant or derelict (773 vacant, 44 vacant and derelict).
- From late 2024 to May 2025, these properties were revisited. 215 have since been activated, including 20 supported by the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant.
- The remaining 195 were privately activated through sale, renovation, planning applications or ongoing works.

THE COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER (CPO) ACTIVATION PROGRAMME

Galway County Council continues to implement a proactive and systematic approach to activating vacant and derelict properties under the CPO Activation Programme. Targets for 2025, set by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, include the activation of 175 properties and five compulsory acquisitions.

- In November 2024, 40 properties were identified across the five municipal districts: Tuam (9), Loughrea (7), Ballinasloe (7), Connemara (9), and Oranmore/Athenry (8)
- Owners were contacted and provided with information on available schemes and supports
- Many properties have since been privately activated following resolution of title, probate or planning issues
- Where no engagement occurred, Notices of Inquiry in contemplation of Compulsory Acquisition were posted
- Statutory timelines under the Derelict Sites Act 1990 and Housing Act 1966 allow owners time to respond before acquisition proceeds

In October 2025, a second tranche of 18 properties was identified. Initial letters have been issued, and the Vacant Homes Team is working with the Environment Section to place properties on the Derelict Sites Register. Where engagement fails, Galway County Council will consider issuing Notices of Intention to Acquire.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

Galway County Council continues to implement measures to bring vacant and underused properties back into use for social housing:

- Investigate vacant properties listed on www.vacanthomes.ie for suitability
- Implement local actions under the Reuse Strategy to maximise reuse of privately owned vacant stock
- Promote all relevant schemes—including Repair and Lease and Croí Cónaithe—via local and social media
- Secure accurate vacancy data, particularly in high-demand urban areas
- Roll out the Croí Cónaithe scheme to the maximum number of eligible homes
- Use survey data to engage with additional property owners
- Progress acquisitions under the CPO Activation Programme, using legislative means where necessary

REPAIR AND LEASING SCHEME

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

Developed under Action 5.7 of *Rebuilding Ireland*, the Repair and Lease Scheme supports private property owners and Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) in bringing vacant homes back into use for social housing. Properties must be vacant for at least one year and leased to a Local Authority or AHB.

- Interest-free loans of up to €80,000 (incl. VAT) are available per unit, repayable over 5–25 years
- A maximum of €320,000 may be provided for properties converted into four homes

- Continued engagement is underway with property owners, estate agents and solicitors to encourage uptake

The expanded Croí Cónaithe Scheme, which offers a grant (not repayable if the property is retained for 10 years), has impacted interest in Repair and Lease. Nonetheless, promotion of the scheme continues through local and social media, with prompt follow-up on all enquiries.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

Galway County Council will continue to promote the Repair and Lease Scheme through regular advertising in local and social media. Property owners who enquire will be promptly provided with all relevant information and guidance on the scheme.

HOUSING GRANTS

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

As of end October 2025, Galway County Council has paid €3,725,571 in Housing Adaptation Grants:

- 400 Housing Aid for Older People Grants (€2,351,767)
- 142 Mobility Aid Grants (€740,875)
- 72 Housing Aid Grants (€632,929)

Expenditure is up 22.59% on 2024, with a 41% increase in HAOP grants paid and a 45% rise in associated costs, driven by revised means testing, increased grant limits and higher income thresholds.

Department funding to date totals €3,055,536, with €539,213 co-funded from the Council's 2025 Revenue Budget. A further €647,055 is anticipated by year-end, bringing the combined capital allocation to €4,313,699.

As of 24 October 2025, 956 grant inspections have been completed. Full drawdown of Department funding is expected by year-end.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

Galway County Council will continue to administer the Housing Aid for Older People, Mobility Aids Grants and Housing Aid Grants, subject to the availability of co-funding from the Council and grant funding from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

Following the 2024 budget review:

- Grant limits increased by 30%
- Income thresholds increased by 25%
- Adjustments made to the means test
- Local Authority contribution reduced to 15%, with the Department funding the remaining 85%
- Grant allocations for 2026 are dependent on Galway County Council's ability to provide the required 15% matching contribution. Internal Capital Receipts may no longer be used to fund this contribution from 2024 onwards.
- The Council will continue to attend community information sessions to promote awareness and understanding of the grants available. An increase in applications is expected in 2026. Difficulties in sourcing contractors and weather-related delays have led to a rise in extension requests, which has informed the proposed increase in matching funds in the 2026 budget.

HOUSE PURCHASE LOANS (PRIVATE AND TENANT PURCHASE LOANS)

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

Galway County Council continues to support first-time buyers through the Tenant Purchase Scheme and the Local Authority Home Loan Scheme. The Rebuilding Ireland Home Loan scheme concluded in 2022, and future reporting will focus solely on Local Authority Home Loans.

Status at end October 2025:

- 2025: 9 Local Authority Home Loans and 1 Tenant Purchase approved in principle (€2,086,670); 4 expired, 6 remain outstanding (€1,317,960)
- 2024: 27 Local Authority Home Loans approved in principle (€4,479,168); 5 expired, 6 drawn down (€603,900), 16 outstanding (€2,771,788)

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Galway County Council will continue to assess and process housing loan applications in line with the Local Authority Home Loan scheme
- Increased interest is expected due to the Affordable Housing Programme, Tenant Purchase and Vacant Homes Scheme
- New promotional materials and reference documents will be developed for the Local Authority Home Loan (LAHL) and Local Authority Purchase and Renovation Loan (LAPR) to reduce invalid submissions
- Weekly information mornings are planned for January and February 2026, followed by monthly sessions, to support applicants face-to-face—particularly those with language barriers, sensory impairments or special needs.

RENTAL STANDARDS

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

Under Statutory Instrument 137 of 2019, which superseded S.I. 17 of 2017, Galway County Council's Inspectorate is responsible for statutory inspections of rented residential dwellings within its functional area.

- The inspection target for 2025 is 1,600 first inspections
- As of 20 October 2025, 686 first inspections have been completed
- A total of 827 residential standards inspections have been carried out to date

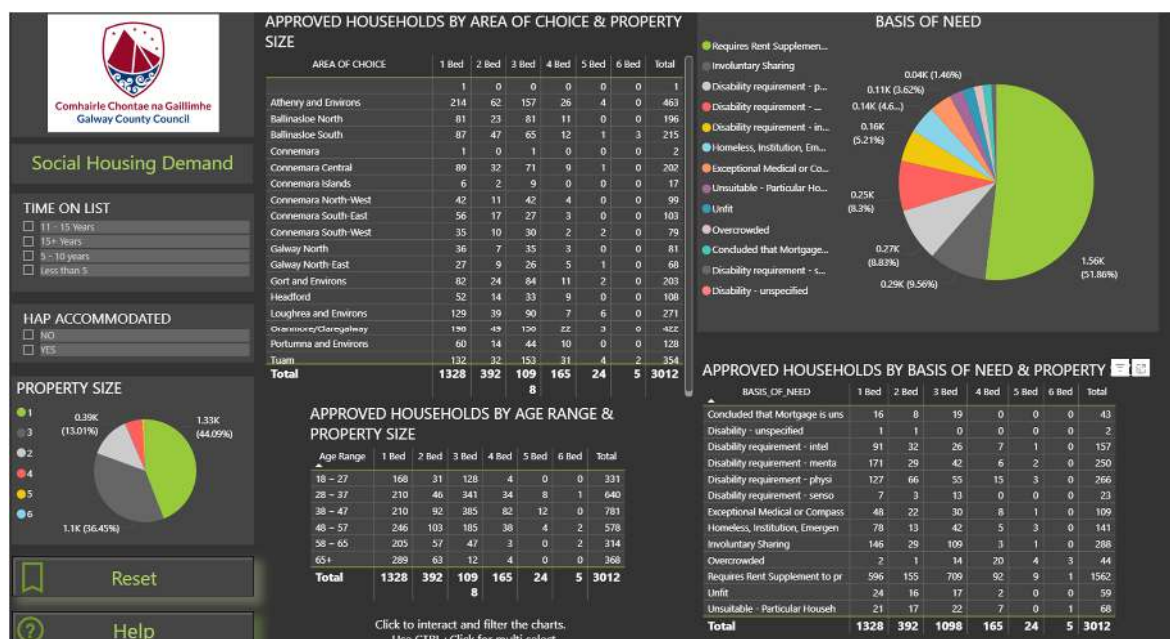
PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

Galway County Council expects to carry out approximately 1,600 first inspections in 2026, subject to confirmation in Q1. Priority will be given to rental properties where complaints have been received regarding the condition of the premises.

SOCIAL HOUSING NEED APPLICATIONS UNIT

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- There are currently 3,012 qualified applicants on the housing waiting list. Galway County Council's interactive Housing Demand and Supply dashboards are available at www.galway.ie/en/services/housing/supplydemand
- The 2025 Summary of Social Housing Assessment (SSHA) reviewed 1,206 applicants; 906 were approved and 140 removed due to ineligibility, non-response or withdrawal.
- 813 new applications have been received to date in 2025.
- 666 Garda checks were requested for 1,027 applicants and family members.
- Business Process Improvements (BPIs) have been introduced, including automation, reporting and internal online forms to enhance service delivery.

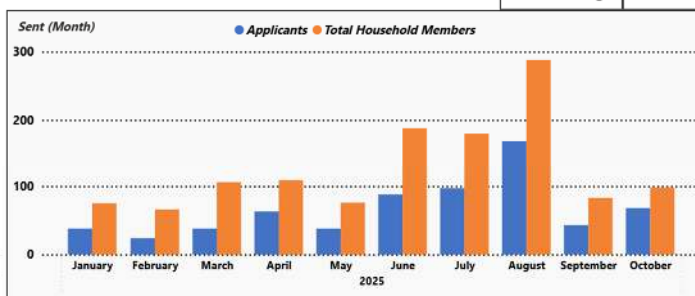


Month	Applicants	Total Household Members
January	38	64
February	24	51
March	38	64
April	63	87
May	38	60
June	88	142
July	97	148
August	169	257
September	43	89
October	68	88
Total	666	1027

Checks Sent 2025

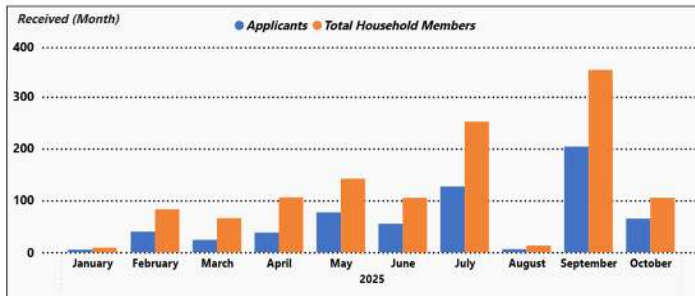
Garda Checks

Checks Outstanding 34



Month	Applicants	Total Household Members	Monthly Avg Days
January	5	9	35
February	40	83	31
March	24	66	22
April	38	106	26
May	77	142	24
June	55	105	20
July	127	252	19
August	6	13	16
September	204	356	25
October	65	105	18
Total	641	1231	23

Checks Received 2025



PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Galway County Council will continue to provide social housing supports to qualified households.
- Ongoing collaboration with Approved Housing Bodies will support the nomination of applicants to voluntary housing.
- Choice Based Letting (CBL) will remain in operation to promote applicant participation.
- The Council will support the development of an online Social Housing Application form and Summary of Social Housing Assessments (SSHA).
- Further development of the CRM system will enhance delivery across housing services.

HOUSING ASSISTANCE PAYMENT (HAP) UNIT

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- 2,840 HAP tenancies have been established by Galway County Council since the programme began in October 2015.

Housing Assistance Payments	
Total HAP Tenancies set-up	2,840
Total Active HAP Tenancies	1,306
2025 HAP Tenancies set-up	129

Key Challenges:

- Limited availability of rental properties continues to impact applicants.
- Rising rents across County Galway remain a significant barrier, as Local Authority contributions are capped based on household size.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Continue transitioning long-term rent supplement recipients from the Department of Social Protection to the HAP scheme, subject to resource availability.
- Process all new housing applications for the HAP scheme promptly.
- Maintain property inspection standards under the HAP scheme.

RENTAL ACCOMMODATION SCHEME (RAS) AND LEASING

Funding has been allocated to local authorities and approved housing bodies to lease or rent private residential properties for applicants on the housing waiting list. The scheme primarily targets individuals in receipt of rent supplement for over 18 months. Since 1 April 2011, applicants housed under RAS-type arrangements are deemed to have their housing needs met.

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- Households Accommodated (RAS & Short-Term Leasing): 365 (including RAS Voluntary)

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- The Continue administration of the RAS Scheme.
- Advance supply initiatives under the Housing for All strategy.

HOMELESS UNIT

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

Galway County Council continues to deliver targeted housing supports for individuals and families with complex needs through a range of funded programmes:

- **Housing First:** 18 individuals are currently tenanted and supported under the Housing First model, with two additional placements expected by year-end.
- **Cold Weather Response:** Operates annually from November to March for rough sleepers who may not access mainstream services. Fourteen individuals have been identified as potentially requiring beds. The facility is managed by COPE Galway in Galway City. Galway County Council is pursuing alternative temporary accommodation using its own housing stock and private sector options.
- **Community-Based Supported Housing:** Since 2022, ten properties have been allocated to Galway Simon Community under licence, supporting 22 residents. Two additional properties will be occupied shortly, with plans to expand to 14 units.
- **Youth Housing Programme:** Introduced in 2023, five Council-owned properties provide shared housing for up to ten vulnerable young people aged 18–25, managed by Galway Simon with multi-agency support.
- **Supported Housing Pilot for Families:** A national pilot programme is underway, supporting four families (two in the County) previously in emergency accommodation. Supports are provided by COPE Galway. An independent review is pending, and the Council has expressed interest in expanding the initiative.
- **Staffing and Funding:** Section 10 funding from the Department of Housing has enabled the implementation of these programmes and the employment of five staff within the Homeless Section.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

Galway County Council continues to expand its homelessness staffing resources in response to the complex needs of service users. Section 10 funding allocated in 2025 will support the recruitment of an additional Tenancy Sustainment Officer in 2026. Any further staffing increases will depend on continued Section 10 funding and matching local resources.

Key priorities and developments include:

- Continued impact of HAP Place Finder, Tenancy Sustainment Officers and Homeless Support Workers in early intervention and reducing time spent in homeless services.
- Development of medium-term supported accommodation and Cold Weather facilities in Tuam, with operations expected to commence in Q4 2027.
- Ongoing collaboration with Galway City Council and homeless services for a coordinated inter-agency response, including Cold Weather provision.
- Expansion of supported emergency accommodation for clients with complex needs, subject to funding.
- Continued delivery of the Housing First Model in partnership with Western Region Local Authorities, Simon, COPE and the HSE, with four additional tenancies planned for 2025.
- Increase in community-based supported housing to 16 properties, providing intensive support for individuals with complex needs.
- Continued support for ten young people under the Youth Housing Programme to prevent early homelessness.
- Ongoing delivery of the Housing Led – Supported Housing for Families Programme.
- Partnership with COPE, Galway Simon, Peter McVerry Trust, Approved Housing Bodies and other agencies to provide tailored own-door accommodation.
- Progression of a housing-led approach across all social housing types, including transitional accommodation for families.
- Continued collaboration with statutory and voluntary bodies via the Homeless Action Team, focusing on tenancy protection and sustainment.
- Ongoing case management with emphasis on move-on to appropriate accommodation.
- Provision of long-term supported accommodation for families and single applicants.
- Advancement of two medium supported housing projects through the Capital Programme.
- Development of Cold Weather Response facilities alongside medium-term supported housing.
- Support for domestic violence accommodation in partnership with stakeholders and government funding.

HOMELESS HAP PLACE FINDER SERVICE

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- The Homeless HAP Place Finder Service was introduced by Galway County Council in November 2018 to support homeless households in securing private rented accommodation amid high demand and limited supply.
- Ongoing support is provided to individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- Referrals in 2025: 69 homeless households were referred to the Place Finder Service.
- Continued engagement with property owners and estate agents to identify suitable accommodation.
- Limited housing availability and rising rental costs across County Galway remain significant challenges in sourcing Homeless HAP properties.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

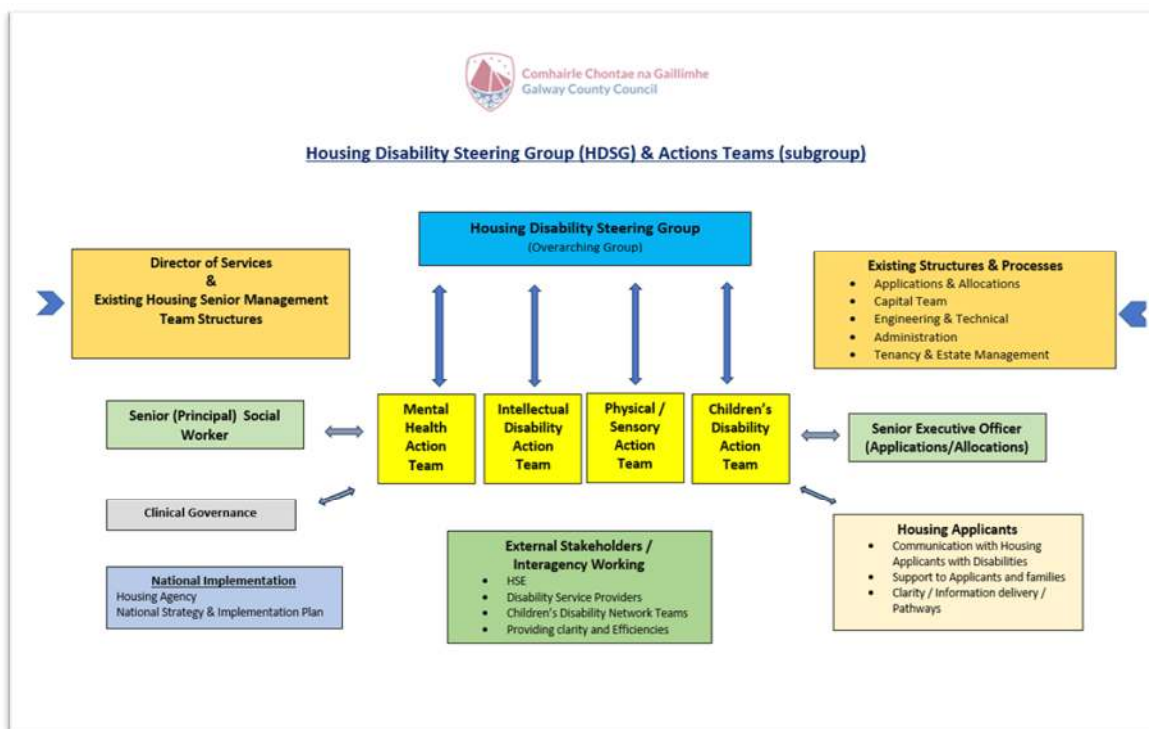
- Maintain support for individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- Continue collaboration with property owners and estate agents to secure appropriate rental units.
- Facilitate access to deposits and advance rent payments for Homeless HAP households.

HOUSING STRATEGY FOR PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

Galway County Council's *Strategic Plan for Housing People with a Disability 2021-2026* underpins a substantial proportion of disability allocations within housing. The main aim of this Strategy is to promote and mainstream equality of access for people with a disability to the full range of housing options available, suited to individual and households need.

The Housing Disability Steering Group has been re-established in addition to a specific Action Teams for specific needs and stakeholders which includes representatives from Galway County Council and HSE Mental Health services.



PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Continue to work within Housing in Galway County Council, Approved Housing Bodies and Disability service providers to provide suitable accommodation in individual tenancies or in shared accommodation, depending on needs and clinical recommendations. The CAS call remains open, and the Council welcomes all applications from Approved Housing Bodies.
- Develop further communication links with stakeholders and clients directly in respect of their specific needs.
- Continue implementation of *Strategic Plan for Housing People with a Disability 2021-2026*.

TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION PROGRAMME

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

Galway County Council's Traveller Liaison Officer (TLO) supports 85 households in Traveller Specific Accommodation, including 14 halting site bays. The TLO plays a key role in identifying, planning and implementing improvements.

Refurbishment and expansion works are guided by the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee, which meets quarterly and includes elected members, Traveller representatives, housing staff and advocacy groups.

Key developments in 2025 include:

- Major refurbishment of two houses at Castleblakeney, Ballinasloe, including boundary works for resident safety.
- Refurbishment and extension of a property in Athenry to accommodate a family with mobility needs.
- Upgrades to 12 houses in Ballygar Traveller Group Housing Scheme, with temporary relocation of families during works.
- Renovation of a rural property in Ballygar, including partial roof replacement.
- Ongoing fire safety equipment monitoring and replacement at Tuam, Capira, Cluain Órtha (Craughwell), and Creggane.
- Dormant Account Funding secured to support redevelopment of Tuam Halting Site in collaboration with CENA; feasibility report confirmed household preference for housing over halting site accommodation.
- The Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee met three times in 2025, with a fourth meeting scheduled for November.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Major refurbishment of seven properties at Gortbride, Loughrea is underway, with consideration for extending one unit to accommodate a large family.
- Refurbishment and energy efficiency upgrades to six properties at Ballydavid, Loughrea will proceed in conjunction with the energy retrofit programme.
- Extension and refurbishment of a property at Mountbellew is subject to funding approval from the Traveller Accommodation Unit.
- Proposals will be submitted for upgrade works to two Traveller-specific rural houses at Carrowmagowan, Tuam.
- Further refurbishment applications will be progressed as staff resources allow.

- Reconstruction of a fire-damaged property at Cloonlyon, Ballygar will proceed following funding agreement.
- Redevelopment of the Tuam Halting Site will be advanced with support from CENA.
- The Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee will continue implementing the 2025–2029 Traveller Accommodation Programme.
- Fire safety training will continue at all halting sites, with equipment monitored and replaced as needed at Tuam, Capira, Craughwell and Creggane.
- The Annual Traveller Census will be completed.

SOCIAL WORK SERVICE

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

Social Work Cases 2025 (up to October 2025)

Carried Over from 2024	Cases closed during 2025	New Referrals in 2025	Current Active Cases
248	115	198	331

Core Functions of Social Work Practice: Engagement, Assessment, Relationship building, Planning (informing service delivery), Implementation, Evaluation, Disengagement.

The aim of the Social Work service is to work with housing clients who are experiencing difficulties in the social areas of their lives. Social Work services may be required either alone or as part of a multi-faceted intervention, multi-disciplinary teams, interagency working etc. Collaborative working with Housing colleagues, in particular Housing Liaison Officers, TLO's, Homeless, TEM's.

LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING STOCK MANAGEMENT - MAINTENANCE UNIT

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

Voids Refurbishment Programme

Galway County Council received an initial allocation of €385,000 in 2025 to refurbish 35 housing units under Circular 4-2025. By October, this funding was fully claimed. Additional provisional funding was approved, contingent on units being completed and tenanted by 21 November 2025; €22,000 of this has already been drawn down.

Despite rising construction costs, the funding cap of €11,000 per unit remains unchanged. Since 2014, properties cannot be funded more than once under the programme, posing challenges for high-turnover units such as OPDs. In 2025, 127 units were refurbished at a total cost of €1.29million. Eight properties required over €40,000 each, with three exceeding €79,000, €92,000 and €109,000 respectively—costs borne by the Council.

Adaptation Works to Council Housing Stock

Adaptations under the Disabled Persons Grant (DPG) programme continued in 2025, supporting older tenants and those with disabilities. Galway County Council received €777,481 (90% of approved costs), with the remaining 10% funded locally. By October, €491,811 was recouped for 45 adaptations and two extensions. In 2024, the Council successfully drew down €777,481 against

an initial allocation of €676,891. The €75,000 cap for property extensions remains insufficient to meet actual costs.

General Housing Maintenance

Maintenance is prioritised for essential plumbing and electrical works. In 2024, 4,618 repairs were logged—80.55% online and 8.07% by phone. The online system, introduced in 2021, is widely used by tenants, particularly those with disabilities and ethnic minorities. Google Translate has enabled non-English-speaking communities to access services independently. During Storm Éowyn (24–26 January), 113 of 136 logged repairs were submitted online, mostly for roof damage. Council staff supported offline submissions during this period.

Planned Maintenance Programme

The Council's planned maintenance programme focuses on meeting minimum rental standards. Electrical inspections for homes over 10 years old are nearing completion, with fire and carbon monoxide alarms installed to current regulations. In 2025, 250 heat pumps were serviced at a cost of €50,000. A stock condition survey is underway. Asbestos removal continues in pre-2000 properties, often involving costly removal of roofing, ceilings and flooring materials.

Energy Retrofit Programme

Under Circular 05-2025, Galway County Council received preliminary approval to upgrade 67 homes to BER B2 standard. The Council is achieving BER A2 ratings and continues to fund additional items such as solar PV and mechanical ventilation from its own resources. By October 2025, 75 properties had been retrofitted in Portumna, Ballinasloe, Woodford, Gort, Conamara and Tuam, with a total of 99 expected by year-end.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- The return of void housing units remains dependent on continued funding under the Voids Programme; the €11,000 cap per unit presents increasing financial challenges.
- Subject to funding, a Deep Energy Retrofit of 100 houses will progress in 2025, including windows, doors, insulation, heat pumps, and—where feasible—solar PV and mechanical ventilation.
- Adaptation works based on medical need will continue, subject to approved funding, alongside a priority-based response maintenance programme.
- A new contract for servicing heat pumps will be tendered and awarded in 2026, covering 300 houses at an estimated cost of €60,000.
- A contract for radon testing of at-risk properties will also be tendered in 2026, in line with the updated EPA Radon Risk Map.
- Ongoing detection and removal of asbestos-containing materials continues in Council-owned properties built before 2000.

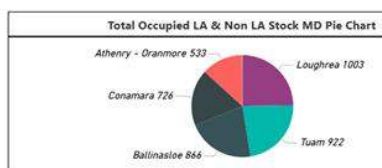
TENANCY AND ESTATE MANAGEMENT

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- The Tenancy and Estate Management Unit continued to support vulnerable families in sustaining their tenancies.
- To date in 2025; 119 tenancies have been created in local authority units and 62 in non-local authority properties (i.e. AHBs).

Total Occupied LA & Non LA Stock	
LA Stock	Count of TenancyID
LA Constructed Property	1907
LA Turnkey Property	436
LA Acquired Property	293
LA Part V Property	287
LA Traveller Specific Accommodation	79
LA Owned (on SLA to AHB)	27
LA Acquired – Tenant in Situ	20
LA Affordable Housing	15
LA Mortgage to Rent	1
LA Repossessed Property	1
Total	3066
Non LA Stock	Count of TenancyID
AHB CAS	297
AHB CALF	289
AHB RAS	217
RAS – Housing (Private)	92
AHB CLSS	49
Enhanced leasing (> 25 years)	40
Private MTR	36
AHB Leased- (3rd Party)	30
AHB Mortgage to Rent	22
AHB–Housing Agency Acquisitions (CALF)	19
Short Term Leasing < 10 years	15
Long term leasing > 10 years (Maint Respons)	12
Long term leasing > 10yrs	1
Repair & Lease	1
Total	1120
Grand Total of LA & Non LA Stock	4186

Occupied Stock Stats



Stock Occupied During 2025

LA Stock	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	Total
LA Constructed Property	4	3	2	2	5	12	2	4	12	11	57
LA Turnkey Property				1	1	21	2	1	2	1	38
LA Part V Property						3	4	2		2	11
LA Acquired Property			1			1	1			1	4
LA Owned (on SLA to AHB)							1			2	3
LA Traveller Specific Accommodation	1						1	1			3
LA Acquired – Tenant in Situ					1						1
Total	5	4	3	4	31	20	6	6	18	22	119
NON LA Stock	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	Total
AHB CAS	1	1	5		14	1		3	2		27
AHB CALF	7		2	1				1		1	13
Private MTR				3	1		2	1		1	8
AHB RAS						1	1	2			4
AHB Mortgage to Rent				1	1		1				3
AHB Leased- (3rd Party)						1	1				2
AHB CLSS						1	1				2
RAS – Housing (Private)							1		1		2
Long term leasing > 10 years (Maint Respons)						1					1
Total	8	1	8	5	19	5	6	5	4	1	62
Grand Total	13	5	11	9	50	25	12	11	22	23	181

- The “Boots on the Ground” initiative expanded in 2025, with visits to 16 housing estates across Municipal Districts. Referrals were made to the Social Work Department and Tenancy Sustainment Officer, and vulnerable tenants were identified for support during extreme weather events.
- Tenancy Enforcement and Housing Liaison Officers worked countywide with An Garda Síochána, Council departments and external agencies to address waste management breaches, unlicensed pets, restricted dog breeds and changes in household occupancy.
- The Council’s strategy continues to promote early identification of anti-social behaviour and tenancy breaches through active community engagement.
- Engagement is ongoing with tenant groups seeking to establish residents’ associations
- Regular collaboration between Housing Liaison Officers and An Garda Síochána supports anti-social behaviour interventions.
- Three possession orders were granted by the District Court in 2025.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Enforcement actions will continue under the Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy, Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2014, and Control of Horses Byelaws.
- Tenants, especially in new estates, will be supported in forming Residents’ Associations to encourage local stewardship of public spaces.
- Collaboration with the Local Community Safety Partnership (LCSP) will be strengthened to promote community engagement and co-designed solutions.
- Tenancy and Estate Management visits will continue, targeting four estates per quarter, through a coordinated interdepartmental and interagency approach involving:
 - Dog Warden Service
 - Maintenance Staff
 - Traveller Liaison Officer
 - Housing Liaison Officers
 - Community Wardens
 - Tenancy Enforcement Officer

TENANT PURCHASE SCHEME

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

The Incremental Tenant Purchase Scheme, introduced in 2016, enables eligible local authority tenants to purchase their homes. Updated guidance reflecting the **Housing (Sale of Local Authority Houses) (Amendment) Regulations 2023** and recent **Reckonable Income Directions** under Section 24 of the *Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2014* came into effect on 29 January 2024. Key changes include:

- **Minimum Income Requirement:** €11,000 per annum.
- **Social Housing Support Duration:** Tenants must have received support for 10 years; for joint tenancies, only one tenant must meet this requirement.
- **Primary Sources of Income:** In addition to State Pension (Contributory and Non-Contributory), the following are now considered primary income sources: Widow's/Widower's/Surviving Civil Partner's Pension, Blind Pension, Invalidity Pension, and Disability Allowance.

Activity in 2025:

- Applications received: 37
- Sales completed: 5

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Continue processing all tenant purchase applications promptly in line with the Incremental Tenant Purchase Scheme 2016.

HOUSING RENTS

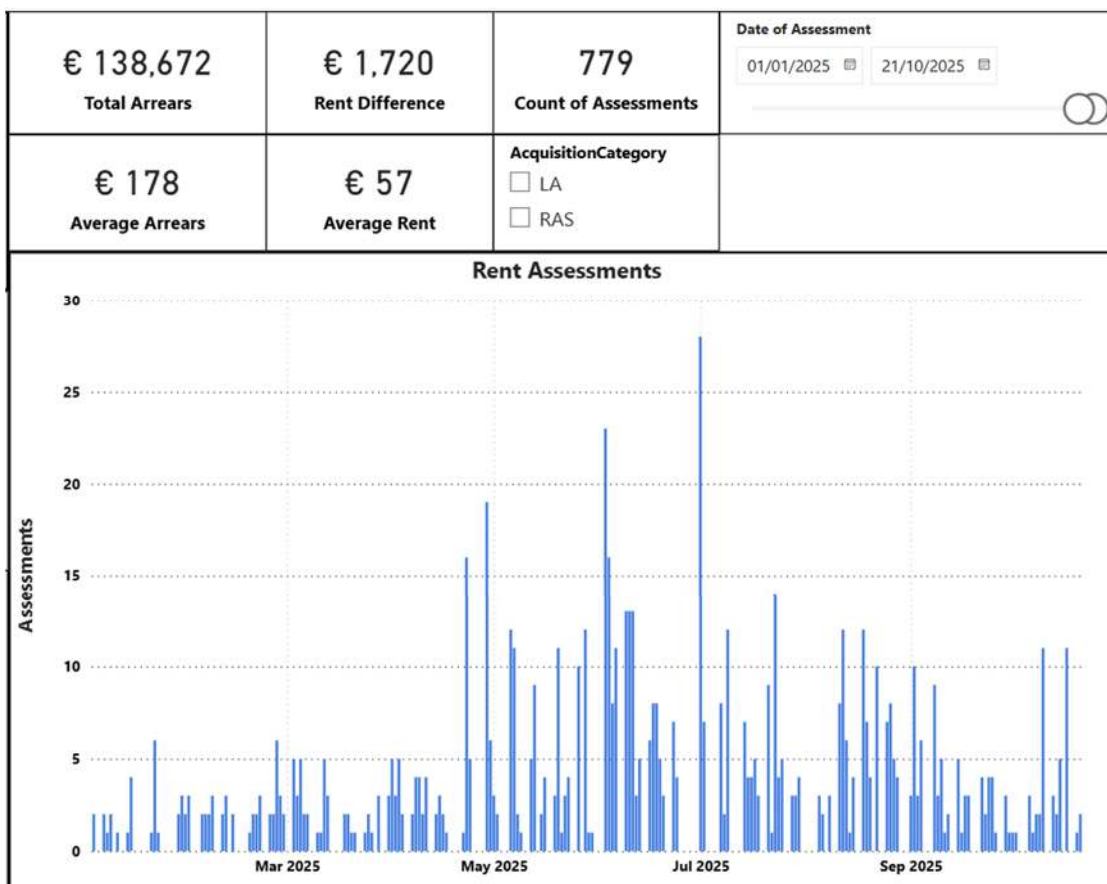
INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

A dedicated Rents Section was established in November 2024, comprising five staff members. In collaboration with Housing and Finance, processes were developed to support the rent review of all Council, RAS and HAP tenancies, which commenced in January 2025.

Since then, 914 assessments have been completed:

- 779 Council tenancies (including 35 linked to Tenant Purchase)
- 15 RAS tenancies
- 120 HAP tenancies (administered via HAP Shared Services, Limerick County Council)

The Council intends to move towards annual rent reviews once all current tenancies have been assessed.



Rent Assessments completed by Rents Team (Jan 2025 - Oct 2025 (excl. new subscriptions)

The weekly rent accrual payable for the 3,205 Galway County Council owned and leased properties currently stands at €214,920, as of the 14th October 2025.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

The rent review of all tenancies will continue in 2026, with progress towards an annual review cycle. Galway County Council intends to update its Differential Rent Scheme, first implemented in 2017, to reflect a fair and equitable structure based on household income. The revised scheme will also address rising maintenance costs and support the long-term sustainability of housing services.

CONTROL OF HORSES

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- The Council continued to implement its Control of Horses protocol in partnership with An Garda Síochána
- The Control of Horses Act is under national review to simplify and improve the legislation
- One stray horse was seized by the Council in 2025

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Galway County Council will continue working with An Garda Síochána to address stray and abandoned horses on public roads and Council-owned land.
- Once new legislation is enacted, the relevant Bye-Laws will be redrafted to reflect the changes.

STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

The Housing Strategic Policy Committee met three times in 2025, with a fourth meeting scheduled for November. Topics discussed included Housing for All, the Vacant Homes Action Plan 2024–2029, Traveller Accommodation Programme 2025–2029, Affordable Housing, Housing Delivery Action Plan, Homelessness, Refugee Programme, Vacancy Action Programme, Differential Rent Review, and the Housing Capital Programme.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

The Housing Strategic Policy Committee is expected to examine key policy areas including the Homeless Action Plan, Housing for All, Affordable Housing, and Vacant Homes, with a particular focus on CPO activation.

CORPORATE SERVICES; RURAL, COMMUNITY & TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND INTEGRATION

CORPORATE SERVICES

WATER SAFETY PROGRAMME

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- A panel of 55 trained beach lifeguards was recruited for 10 County locations (including six Blue Flag beaches) and six City locations under a Shared Service Agreement with Galway City Council.
- The service operated weekends in June, full-time in July and August, and two weekends in September, with lifeguard hours from 11am to 7pm.
- Extensive upgrades were carried out in 2025, including new flag poles, ISO safety signage, and internal improvements to lifeguard huts (shelving, desks, floors, first aid equipment, spinal boards and stretchers).
- A new lifeguard hut was installed at Trá Chill Mhuirbhígh, with full internal fit-out, improved accessibility, new signage, bicycle racks, bollards and a beach wheelchair available during the bathing season.
- Public rescue equipment was upgraded, and an annual hut maintenance schedule was delivered
- A contribution of €6,150 was made to Water Safety Ireland

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Continue seasonal Water Safety Programme, including induction training for beach lifeguards, subject to funding.
- Implement our *summer ready programme* to have lifeguards commencing earlier in the season.
- Promote the lifeguard programme via websites, social and local media.
- Maintain financial contributions to Water Safety Ireland, subject to Council approval and funding.
- Implement Water Safety Guidance Notes and risk assessment recommendations.
- Explore provision of lifeguard services and infrastructure at an additional Designated Bathing Area, subject to feasibility and resources.
- Continue developing Water Safety Awareness initiatives.
- Replace ringbuoys and complete audits in line with WSI guidance.
- Install signage as recommended in risk assessments.
- Maintain a countywide register of ringbuoy locations.
- Review opportunities to streamline administration through technology.
- Review lifeguard and water safety service resourcing.

RECREATION AND AMENITY – PARKS, PITCHES, RUNNING TRACKS, OPEN SPACES AND PLAYGROUNDS

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- Continued to implement program of works required for the ongoing opening and maintenance of the following parks and amenities for safe enjoyment by the public.

Facility	Number	Description
Parks	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rinville Park, Oranmore (managed by Galway County Council - owned jointly with Galway City Council) Palace Grounds, Tuam
Open Spaces	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dunlo Recreational Park & Running Track, Ballinasloe Loughrea Lakeside & Fairgreen Clarinbridge Cow Park Fair Green Ballinasloe Portumna Open Spaces
Playgrounds	79	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 Directly Owned/Maintained by Galway County Council 64 Community run with insurance provided by Galway County Council
Pitches	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Weather Pitch, Tuam
Outdoor Gyms	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rinville Park, Oranmore Loughrea Lakeside Dunlo Recreational Park Ballinasloe Portumna Community run - Outdoor Gym – Kilannin
Visitor / Heritage Centres	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Battle of Aughrim Visitor Centre

- Rinville Park remains a designated Wild Atlantic Way location, with maintenance co-funded by Galway City Council and supported by local groups; the refreshment concession continued from March to October.
- Palace Grounds Park, Tuam retained its Green Flag and Green Heritage Award in 2025; maintenance was delivered via a Council-sponsored Community Employment Scheme.
- Maintenance of parks and open spaces continued in Ballinasloe throughout 2025.
- An inclusive carousel and benches were installed at the Palace Grounds playground, Tuam, funded by an €18,887 DCEDIY grant with 10% Council contribution.
- Wheelchair-accessible gym equipment was maintained at Dunlo Park (Ballinasloe), Palace Grounds (Tuam), and Castle Avenue (Portumna).
- Tuam Celtic Football Club continued to operate the Council's All-Weather Pitches under licence.
- A self-service booking and keypad system was installed at Dunlo Running Track, extending public access by 42 hours weekly.
- Insurance was provided for 64 community-run playgrounds and one outdoor gym; training

for 44 playground inspectors was delivered in October and November 2025, fully funded by the Council.

- Independent annual inspections were completed across all community and Council-owned playgrounds.
- Administrative and advisory support continues for community groups developing recreational initiatives, subject to staff resources.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Continue maintenance and upgrades of Council-owned playgrounds, subject to funding, and apply for further DCEDIY support.
- Provide additional inspection training for committees and ensure independent inspections for all 64 community-run playgrounds as required.
- Support improved access to recreation and amenity facilities for persons with disabilities, subject to available finance.
- Implement parks maintenance programmes, including grass cutting, prioritising public parks such as Rinvile Park, the Palace Grounds, Cowpark and other open spaces.
- Ongoing maintenance works to continue at Rinvile Park as funding allows.
- Continue providing administrative and advisory support to community groups developing recreational initiatives, subject to staff availability.

LEISURE CENTRES – TUAM AND BALLINASLOE

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- Coral Leisure Ltd. continues to operate the Tuam and Ballinasloe Leisure Centres under a new licence agreement until 2035.
- A Management Liaison Committee, chaired by Corporate Services, meets quarterly to oversee implementation and monitor costs, particularly in light of rising wages, energy costs and the ageing condition of the facilities.
- Corporate Services, via the Facilities team, maintains oversight of essential maintenance and health and safety works.
- Sports Capital Grant-funded dressing room upgrades at both centres were completed in 2025.
- A Leisure Centre Steering Group was established with the Atlantic Seaboard Northern Energy Bureau and regional local authorities to advance carbon reduction strategies.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Leisure centre management and associated costs will remain under close review throughout 2026, with oversight by the management liaison committee.
- EXEED funding application is progressing, with Stage 1 approval secured and Stage 2 underway; each centre is expected to receive €1m–€1.5m to reduce carbon emissions by over 200 tonnes annually.
- PV arrays with 100kW capacity are being installed at Ballinasloe and Tuam Leisure Centres in collaboration with the management company.
- A Pathfinder funding application is planned for 2026, in partnership with the Climate Action Team, to support building fabric upgrades and improve energy efficiency.

COUNCIL FACILITIES FOR LOCAL ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY BENEFIT, HERITAGE, INTERPRETATIVE FACILITIES OPERATIONS

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- Funding supported the operation of Athenry Heritage Centre, managed under sublease from Galway County Council.
- The Battle of Aughrim Visitor Centre extended its 2025 season by four weeks, with improvements to the building and car park to support increased footfall and filming for a new booking engine.
- The 2025 Summer Lecture Series at Aughrim was a success, with six events including a TG4 musical showcase and full capacity heritage day, supported by Cath Eachroma Community Group.
- Events between June and September 2025 rose by 60% compared to 2024, with a 20% increase in footfall and strong engagement from schools, heritage groups and visitors
- TG4 filmed a musical showcase at the Centre in September 2025, scheduled to air in 2026, enhancing national visibility.
- Galway Bay FM featured a Summer Lecture Series interview in August 2025, highlighting the Centre's cultural significance.
- Strategic support was provided to the Tourism Officer and JTF Co-ordinator to develop the Centre as a key tourist destination and launch the new booking engine in 2026.
- Aesthetic improvements to the Centre's car park and exterior were completed in collaboration with the Facilities team.
- Access improvement works for Oranmore Library are progressing to contract and tender stage.
- Ongoing maintenance and enhancement of Rinvile Park continued in partnership with the Community Employment scheme.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Subject to funding, financial support will continue for the Athenry Heritage Centre and Battle of Aughrim Visitor Centre.
- The Aughrim Centre's profile will be enhanced through 2026 events and media engagement.
- Collaboration with Cath Eachroma Community Group will continue to develop the 2026 lecture series.
- Support will be provided for the launch and promotion of the Aughrim Centre's online booking engine.
- Subject to budget, the opening season will be extended from 1 May to end September 2026.
- Critical works to maintain the Aughrim Centre will continue, subject to funding.
- Access improvements to Oranmore Library will proceed in line with planning and fire safety approvals, subject to funding.
- Consultants will be appointed, subject to funding, to update the Forest Management Plan.
- Measures to remove trees affected by Ash Dieback will continue to be undertaken, subject to funding.

OPERATION OF MARKETS & CASUAL TRADING AND REQUESTS FOR FILMING

Outlined below are the key activities undertaken in 2025 and proposals for 2026 in relation to casual trading and filming requests across County Galway.

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

Casual Trading Licenses Issued

Licenses were issued in accordance with the Casual Trading Bye-Laws for the following towns and villages: Athenry (5), Ballinasloe (7), Clifden (5), Dunmore (2), Gort (7), Loughrea (3), Mountbellew (7), Headford (1), Portumna (6), Tuam (8), Glenamaddy (1).

Event-Based Casual Trading Licenses

Additional licenses were issued for specific events:

- Ballygar Festival (14), Dunmore (14), Cruinniú na mBád (8), Clifden Show (20), Clifden Arts Festival (3), Maam Fair (9), Tuam Christmas Stall (1), Ballinasloe Christmas Stall (2)

Area	2024	2025	Percentage Difference
Athenry	5	5	0%
Ballinasloe	10	7	-30%
Clifden	6	5	-16%
Gort	5	7	40%
Loughrea	3	3	0%
Mountbellew	4	7	75%
Headford	1	1	0%
Portumna	6	6	0%
Tuam	8	8	0%
Glenamaddy	1	1	0%
Kinvarra Crinniú na mBád	0	8	100%
Ballygar	24	14	-41%
Dunmore	27	14	-48%
Clifden Show	11	20	81%
Clifden Ards Festival	1	3	200%
Maam Fair	9	9	0%
Ballinasloe (Christmas Wreaths)	1	1	0%
Tuam (Christmas Wreaths)	1	1	0%

Overall Casual Trading Figures

- Total in 2024: 123
- Total in 2025: 120
- Overall Percentage Change: -2.44%

Despite notable increases in events such as the Clifden Show and Kinvara Crinniú na mBád, overall figures show a slight year-on-year decline. This is partly due to several one-day events choosing not to include toy sellers, reflecting a growing emphasis on environmental sustainability and reducing plastic-based products.

Filming Requests

Film requests rose by 42% from 2024 to 2025, with 10 applications processed during the period. The majority were for locations in the Connemara Municipal District, with one request from Tuam related to the production of *The Lost Children of Tuam*.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

Bye-Laws Review: Begin review of 1998 Bye-Laws with relevant stakeholders to reflect current trading needs, tourism trends, and sustainability.

Signage: In conjunction with the MD Offices, install updated signage for trading bays across the County subject to funding being available.

Filming Support: Continue fast-tracking filming requests to promote County Galway prime filming destination by highlighting its diverse landscapes, cultural heritage, and local talent, while also encouraging economic activity and tourism through increased media exposure.

PROMOTION OF THE IRISH LANGUAGE

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- Irish language classes (beginner and intermediate) continued for staff and interested Elected Members, with online delivery; 8 staff sat the oral TEG exam.
- Applications for Pádraig Pearse Gaeltacht Scholarships rose from 86 in 2024 to 226 in 2025, with 16 awarded to second-level students.
- Scoil an Phiarsaigh partnered with library services to host Irish-medium events exploring Pearse's legacy through arts and literature; approx. 280 attended.
- Staff received ongoing guidance on language duties and bilingualism, supported by new Employee Guidance Notes under the Language Scheme and Official Languages Acts.
- The Council continued to cooperate with An Coimisinéir Teanga on public queries regarding Irish language services.
- Seachtain na Gaeilge was marked by Branar's Irish-language theatre show "Clann Lir" across municipal districts, attended by approx. 600 schoolchildren.
- On 24 February, music and entertainment were held in the County Hall Atrium, with the Gaeltacht Scholarship draw streamed live.
- On 7 March, scholarship certificates were presented in the Chamber, followed by performances from Branar, Coláiste Chroí Mhuire, Máirtín Ó Dubhghaill and Comhaltas Cheoltóirí Charna.
- Support continued for the Wonder Wander bilingual project in An Spidéal and the Soapbox debating initiative with Ballinasloe Library and Europe Direct.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Continue providing staff with guidance on language duties and bilingualism in line with the Council's language scheme.
- Maintain and expand language awareness resources to support Irish-language service delivery.
- Increase the number of Irish classes and courses for staff and Members, with a focus on conversational Irish and Gaeltacht immersion (subject to funding).
- Continue awarding Pádraig Pearse Scholarships in partnership with Irish colleges in the county.
- Prioritise promotion of the Irish language category in community grants and Gradaim an Chathaoirligh.
- Lead Council participation in Seachtain na Gaeilge events in March 2026.
- Continue liaising with community groups to promote the Irish language.
- Participate in Cruinniú na nÓg.
- Support Soapbox debating with Ballinasloe Library and Europe Direct.
- Assist with the bilingual Wonder Wander project in An Spidéal.

FACILITIES MANAGEMENT – COUNCIL PROPERTIES / HEALTH & SAFETY

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- Caretaking and facilities management services continued across Council offices, libraries and civic venues.
- Safety Management Programme requirements were met, including PAT testing, electrical inspections, VDU assessments, lightning and fire safety systems, and static risk assessments.
- Energy efficiency remains a key focus for the Facilities Unit.
- A feasibility study on office accommodation was completed, with a design team to be appointed for the County Hall extension and deep retrofit.
- Procurement processes for facilities contracts continue to ensure value for money and service quality.
- Plans are underway to install a back-up generator, led by the Fire Service in partnership with IT.
- Legionella risk assessments and monitoring continue across office and library buildings.
- Essential maintenance works were carried out at the old Maam Courthouse to keep the building weather tight and manage site overgrowth.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Corporate Services are progressing the appointment of a design team for the County Hall extension and deep retrofit.
- Maintenance contracts will remain under review to sustain and further reduce costs.
- Subject to funding, a hot food service will be developed in the canteen and improvements made to Centrepont.

MANAGEMENT OF ARCHIVES AND RECORDS

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- Core archival services continued, including updates to descriptive lists and the online catalogue, and monitoring of environmental conditions.
- Security backups and reference surrogates progressed for key collections, including the Jimmy Walshe photographs and Loughrea Board of Guardian Minutes, the latter highlighted during Heritage Week with Heritage Council support.
- The Digital Archive continues to provide 24/7 global access to a wide range of collections.
- The off-site map survey project remains ongoing, reviewing materials for retention or disposal.
- Conservation work was commissioned for several Kelly of Castlekelly parchment documents.
- Reader services continued, with research queries supported and guidance provided.
- Archive processing continued across new and existing collections, including Executive Orders, Registers of Electors, Municipal District Minutes and historic court records.
- Records management advice was provided to Council units, with updates to Retention Schedules and Disposal Certificates.
- ArcLink remains in use for managing off-site records, with 679 retrieval requests processed by mid-October and over 146,850 entries recorded.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026

- Continue processing archive collections and providing access and advice to researchers.
- Maintain the programme of security backups and reference surrogates.
- Promote awareness of Galway County Council Archives' collections.
- Progress the map survey project, reviewing off-site maps and drawings for retention or disposal.
- Manage commercial storage and retrieval of non-current records.
- Support Council Sections in developing and maintaining file classification and retention schedules.
- Continue working with Corporate Services and the Library service to secure improved archive and record store accommodation.
- Collaborate on a digital preservation policy and ensure proper management of digital-born records.

REGISTER OF ELECTORS

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- Preparations were undertaken for the Presidential Election in October 2025.
- The Register of Electors was actively managed, with new applications and updates processed.
- LGERS Modernisation Project progressed, with migration to the national database due by end 2025.
- Duplicate entries were removed, particularly across local authorities (Phase 2).
- Accuracy improved through collection of PPSNs, DOBs and Eircodes; preregistration of 16–17-year-olds also supported.
- A workshop for Elected Members was held in July 2025.
- A social media campaign promoted awareness of LGERS.
- Connemara Community Radio interview highlighted data cleansing efforts.
- Staff received guidance on updating personal details via www.checktheregister.ie

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Continue managing the Register of Electors, including updates via www.checktheregister.ie
- Validate applications using PPSNs, DOBs and Eircodes against Department of Social Protection records.
- Progress Phase 3 of the LGERS Modernisation Project, with migration to Voter.ie scheduled for Q2–Q3 2026.
- Run local campaigns to encourage electors to review and update their details
- Prepare for potential electoral events in 2026.

CORPORATE PLANNING & SUPPORT / LOCAL REPRESENTATION / CIVIC LEADERSHIP

Administrative support is provided for the Chief Executive, Cathaoirleach, Elected Members, Corporate Policy Group and Council Meetings.

SERVICES DELIVERED FOR PLENARY COUNCIL MEETINGS AND MEMBERS

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- Agendas prepared and minutes recorded for Ordinary, Special and Annual Plenary Council Meetings.
- Agendas, minutes and documentation published to the Extranet.
- Corporate Policy Group meetings facilitated.
- Expressions of interest managed for training and conferences, with reports compiled for Council authorisation.
- In-house training arranged in line with the Members' Training and Development Plan.
- Travel, subsistence and representation claims processed for Members.
- Conference summaries submitted by Members and reports prepared for Council agendas.
- Attendance database maintained for all Council meetings, including SPCs, MDs and committees.
- Public Register of Councillor attendances and payments compiled.

- Ethics Register maintained for Councillors and support provided for Donations Declarations.
- Civic Receptions facilitated in response to Plenary Council proposals.
- Meetings with visiting Ambassadors coordinated with the Cathaoirleach and Chief Executive.
- Corporate Plan 2025–2029 adopted on 25 November 2024.
- Annual Service Delivery Plan 2025 adopted on 27 March 2025.

SERVICES PROVIDED BY CORPORATE SERVICES FOR THE ORGANISATION

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- Ethics Register maintained for relevant staff.
- Chief Executive's Orders recorded and numbered by Corporate Services for Corporate Services and Finance.
- Corporate Services acts as liaison with the Office of the Ombudsman, coordinating all correspondence through a tracking system.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Corporate Services will continue to support the Cathaoirleach, Elected Members and Plenary Council Meetings.
- The Council will maintain the Ethics Register and assist Members with Donations Statements.
- Details of all payments to Elected Members, including those for Outside Bodies, will be published.
- The Unit will actively support the Corporate Policy Group.
- Statutory compliance with Data Protection, FOI and AIE legislation will continue, along with support for Ombudsman queries.

DATA PROTECTION

- Data protection remains central to Galway County Council's governance and service delivery. The Council continues to operate in full alignment with the GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, embedding principles such as Privacy by Design, Privacy by Default and Transparency across all operations.
- The Data Protection Officer (DPO), based in Corporate Services, advises on compliance, monitors data practices and ensures lawful, fair and transparent processing. The DPO also leads on emerging challenges including AI ethics, cybersecurity and digital transformation, and maintains direct engagement with the Data Protection Commission.
- Staff training and awareness are delivered on an ongoing basis to ensure consistent understanding of data protection obligations.
- Looking ahead, the Council will continue to strengthen its data governance framework, embedding privacy into innovation and maintaining public trust in all data-driven initiatives.

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- Privacy Engine remains the central platform for GDPR compliance, with enhanced dashboards and DSAR workflows introduced in 2025.
- Each Council Unit has a designated Data Champion to support local ownership of data protection.
- Privacy Notices, Data Processing Agreements and RoPA were reviewed and updated to reflect evolving requirements, especially for third-party and cloud services.
- A new suite of training modules was rolled out mid-year, now delivered continuously rather than periodically.
- Online training was streamlined into concise quarterly sessions, with auto provisioning ensuring accurate staff records.
- In-person training was prioritised for high-interaction roles, including Beach Lifeguards, Roads Unit and NRPO.
- Monthly email updates replaced the quarterly newsletter, supported by regularly updated intranet resources.
- 28 DSARs were processed by October 2025, many involving complex datasets and cross-unit coordination. Refusals were limited to cases where data was unavailable or outside legislative scope.
- A full CCTV inventory was completed to ensure compliance with Data Protection Commission guidance and prepare for future changes to community-based systems.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Embed AI governance in line with the EU AI Act and GDPR, ensuring transparency, fairness and oversight for high-risk systems.
- Prepare for the EU Data Act (from September 2025) and updates to the Irish Data Protection Act 2018, focusing on data-sharing and portability.
- Improve handling of complex DSARs through automation and cross-unit collaboration.
- Deliver quarterly micro-learning on AI ethics, DPIAs and emerging compliance topics.
- Update DPIA frameworks to include AI and cybersecurity risks for all new projects.
- Expand and maintain clear policy and guidance resources for staff across all sections.
- Run structured data protection audits and compliance reviews to identify risks and improve practice.
- Issue monthly staff updates on data protection developments, replacing the quarterly newsletter.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION/ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON THE ENVIRONMENT

The FOI/AIE Officer, based in Corporate Services, acts as the central contact for FOI and AIE Decision Makers and Appeals Officers, as well as the LGMA and the Information Commissioner's offices. All FOI and AIE requests are processed and tracked through Corporate Services, with a Disclosure Log maintained for FOI requests.

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

166 requests were received up to the end of October 2025. Decisions were issued as follows:

- 25 granted, 60 part-granted, 29 refused, 20 withdrawn, 15 withdrawn and dealt with outside of FOI, 2 transferred to another authority, 15 pending decisions.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON THE ENVIRONMENT INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

31 requests were received to end October 2025. Decisions were issued as follows:

- 8 granted, 5 part-granted, 11 refused, 1 transferred to another authority, 6 pending decisions.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE INCLUDING PUBLIC SECTOR DUTY

Corporate Governance provides the framework for oversight, accountability and strategic coordination across key areas including Risk Management, Child Protection, the Corporate Plan, Public Sector Duty and Business Continuity.

A cross-organisational Governance Working Group continues to lead and embed best practice across the Council, promoting shared ownership and continuous improvement.

In line with Section 42(2)(a) of the IHREC Act 2014, Galway County Council reviewed and updated its Public Sector Duty Implementation Plan and Evidence Book in March 2025 to reflect IHREC guidance issued in December 2024. This ensured consistency with the Corporate Plan 2025–2029 and informed the Annual Duty Action Plan 2025, approved by the Management Team on 25 March 2025.

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- Corporate Plan 2025–2029 implementation is underway, with the 2025 Annual Service Delivery Plan adopted.
- ViClarity Risk Management system is fully operational, with workshops held in May 2025 and ongoing updates.
- Updated Child Protection and Welfare Policy and Safeguarding Statement published, with a Unit Risk Assessment completed in June.
- Key policies reviewed under the 2025 Annual Duty Action Plan, including Human Rights and Equality Impact Assessments.
- Updated documents: Child Protection Policy, Safeguarding Statement, Customer Service Action Plan, Risk Management Policy and Community Climate Action Fund.
- Three of four mandatory Public Sector Duty training webinars completed in 2025.
- Business Continuity Management System Appendix 3 is being updated, with a full review planned for 2026.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Quarterly risk reviews will continue throughout 2026 via the ViClarity Compliance System.
- Corporate Plan progress will be reported quarterly, supported by new software for structured monitoring.
- Public Sector Duty work will continue under the 2026 Annual Duty Action Plan.
- The Corporate Governance Working Group will report updates to the Management Team and publish outcomes in the Annual Report.
- Monthly Management Reports will include updates for Elected Members.
- A review of the Business Continuity Management System will begin in Q1 2026.

CUSTOMER SERVICE, COMMUNICATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

Corporate Services continued to coordinate customer service activities across the Council. The Customer Services Team remained the first point of contact for the public following initial engagement through the switchboard. The ground floor Customer Services Reception Desk at Áras an Chontae continued to operate effectively, providing efficient referral and query handling for visitors. The phone service was also maintained from this location, with additional support provided by the Customer Services Centre on the second floor.

- Social media following rose by 11% across X, Facebook and Instagram, with increased staff-generated content and integration into Council campaigns.
- A review of the Social Media Policy began, with completion due in early 2026.
- The team led 'Your Council Day 2025', producing in-house materials and coordinating cross-directorate input.
- Email addresses customerservices@galwaycoco.ie and gaeilge@cocogaillimh.ie remain key contact points for staff and public queries.
- Customer Services acts as the Council's central contact for Government Public Consultations.
- Door and car park access systems are managed by Customer Services, with an updated access policy introduced in 2025.
- Luware Nimbus phone system monitoring continues, with training scheduled for 5 November 2025.
- The Communications Strategy Project will conclude by December 2025, improving internal and external communications.
- A staff newsletter was issued in December 2024, with plans to repeat in December 2025.

Customer Service Strategy and Systems

- The Customer Services Officers Group was reinstated, meeting quarterly to share best practice.
- A new Customer Service Action Plan will launch in December 2025, incorporating Public Sector Duty, CCMA complaints guidance and EU accessibility compliance.
- A Customer Case Management Tracker System was introduced to improve query handling and accountability.
- The Customer Enhancement Strategy Project began in August 2025 to improve service delivery and accessibility.

Facilities Collaboration

- Grosvenor was onboarded in July 2025, with monthly audits now in place across Council sites.
- A revised Door/Access Fob Policy was introduced to strengthen building security.

Staff & Community Engagement

- Five days of End-of-Year Staff Appreciation events were held in Áras an Chontae, recognising staff dedication and encouraging informal engagement.
- Customer Services supported Irish Office events in County Hall and Ros Muc, engaging over 400 participants in Scoil an Phairsaigh and Seachtain na Gaeilge celebrations.
- Assisted the Irish Officer in hosting the 2025 Gaeltacht Scholarships, which saw a marked rise in applications due to improved publicity.

Weather Events

During Storm Éowyn (24–26 January 2025), the Customer Services and Communications teams delivered a coordinated response across all platforms.

- 79 storm-related social media posts were issued, providing timely updates to the public, elected members, Oireachtas representatives and staff.
- Posts generated a record 820,000 impressions in January 2025.
- The team operated seven days a week during the storm, ensuring public safety and service continuity.
- Customer Services continues to manage all weather-related communications, including weekend coverage, with a notable rise in activity over the past year.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Deliver the Customer Service Action Plan in line with the Quality Customer Services Strategy.
- Roll out the Communications Strategy to improve internal and external information management, aligned with equality and corporate goals.
- Introduce new branding and report templates as per RPS audit recommendations.
- Maintain Customer Services Officers Group meetings to support collaboration.
- Target 10% growth in social media platforms by 2026.
- Improve service access for persons with a disability, supporting Public Sector Duty commitments.
- Expand use of social media as a key customer communication channel.
- Review the Customer Services Strategy to reflect changing needs and priorities.
- Plan a stronger 'Your Council Day 2026' to boost public awareness.

INTERNAL AUDIT ACTIVITY

Internal auditing is an independent, objective assurance and advisory activity that adds value and improves organisational operations. It supports the achievement of objectives through a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluating and enhancing risk management, control and governance processes. The Internal Audit Unit provides assurance to the Chief Executive on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's internal control and risk management systems. Its work is guided by the annual Internal Audit Plan, developed in collaboration with the Executive Team and Audit Committee.

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

Five audit reports were completed under the 2025 Internal Audit Plan, with two reviews ongoing at year end. Compliance checks were carried out on Prompt Payment Interest penalties, LVPs, MTO refunds and exempted discs.

Follow-up work addressed outstanding recommendations from previous audits and the LGA Management Letter. Quarterly checks of cash office receipts and lodgements were completed, alongside periodic and year-end stock takes at Áras an Chontae and biannual checks at MTO offices in An Cheathrú Rua and Ballinasloe.

Secretarial duties were provided to the Audit Committee, which met five times, and to the national LGIAN. The team also actively participated in the NWIAN and completed statutory reports on AFS2024 and annual Audit Committee activities.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

Key priorities for 2026 include drafting the Internal Audit Plan for approval, reviewing recommendations from 2025 audits and completing scheduled audits. The team will continue to support the Audit Committee, attend network meetings and ensure compliance with the Public Spending Code.

Ongoing work will focus on policy compliance, value for money testing and periodic checks on Low Value Purchase Cards, Fuel Cards, the Motor Tax and Cash Office, Prompt Payment Interest Penalties and other income streams, subject to available resources.

RURAL, COMMUNITY & TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND INTEGRATION

The Rural, Community and Tourism Development and Integration section continues to support sustainable development across County Galway, delivering a wide range of strategic and grassroots initiatives despite limited resources. Strong partnerships with diverse stakeholders have helped maximise impact.

Key areas of focus included tourism, sports and cultural development, alongside broader rural and recreational investment through programmes such as CLÁR, TVRS and ORIS.

Through the work of the LCDC, PPN, Healthy Galway County and initiatives like SICAP, CSS, CEP, Age Friendly, Community Integration Forum and Tidy Towns, the department continues to empower communities and improve quality of life.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (LCDC)

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- The LCDC has held four meetings to date in 2025, alongside sub-committee meetings on SICAP, Health and Wellbeing, and presentations from external agencies. Two further meetings are scheduled for November and December.
- An allocation of €183,086 was received under the Local Enhancement Programme for capital supports, prioritising small-scale repairs, energy efficiency works and equipment for community use. A total of 111 applications were funded, with all grants drawn down in 2025. A separate Current Fund of €30,514 supported 51 groups with running costs such as electricity, insurance and rent.
- LCDC support staff attended a national networking event on 15 October in Carrick-on-Shannon, where updates were shared on LCDC operations, SICAP, the Local Enhancement Programme, and related strategies and pilots.
- Following the withdrawal of Galway Rural Development from the SICAP Galway Islands Lot, Comhar na nOileáin was appointed and began delivery in January 2025. The LCDC approved the 2025 SICAP Annual Plan across three Lots, supporting community groups, social enterprises and individuals through training, education and employment supports. A case study will be presented at year-end.
- The Empowering Communities Programme continues in Ballinasloe Urban Small Area ID 067017010, one of the most disadvantaged areas nationally. Galway Rural Development CLG leads the programme, working with local stakeholders and agencies to address identified needs through an annual Work Plan and Budget.

HEALTHY COUNTY GALWAY 2025

The 2025 programme continues to strengthen health and wellbeing across all communities in County Galway. Supported by the proposed budget, a wide range of initiatives have promoted physical, mental and social wellbeing. The programme places strong emphasis on inclusion, empowerment and sustainability, ensuring access to meaningful supports that improve quality of life.

WOMEN'S EMPOWERING HEALTH PROGRAMME

This targeted initiative supports women's health and wellbeing across County Galway and its offshore islands. Hybrid talks streamed to multiple locations have provided expert-led discussions on key health topics, while local activities and women's groups have promoted engagement and healthy living.

The programme aims to educate, empower and connect women by integrating health-promoting practices into daily life. Key partners include the HSE, Comhairle na nOileáin, Forum Connemara, Broadband Connection Officers and local resource centres.

DEMENTIA CAFÉ CONNEMARA PROGRAMME

In response to local need, monthly Dementia Cafés have been established in five areas of Connemara through a partnership with Forum Connemara, the Alzheimer Society of Ireland and funding from Healthy Galway, Creative Ireland and the HSE Lottery Fund.

Building on the success of cafés in Roundstone and Letterfrack, the programme offers refreshments, arts and crafts, and gentle exercise in a dementia-friendly setting. Personalised memory books, supported by Creative Ireland, help preserve individual stories.

Facilitator training has been delivered to support quality and sustainability. A new awareness campaign, Understand Together, will be launched with the HSE to promote greater understanding and community support.

FARMERS' HEALTH AND WELLBEING PROGRAMME

Recognising the specific challenges faced by the farming community, this programme has delivered targeted health and wellbeing supports across the county. Initiatives included mobile health checks at marts and agricultural events, mental health campaigns, and workshops on stress management and physical activity. The programme aims to meet farmers where they are, offering accessible and relevant supports to promote long-term wellbeing. Key partners include Teagasc, the IFA, Mental Health Ireland, the HSE and Healthy Ireland Mayo and Roscommon. Significant progress was made in 2025 to support farmers' health.

COMMUNITY PROJECTS AND EVENTS

Funding has supported grassroots projects that build community connection and promote healthy living. These include running groups, holistic events, aerobic classes, intergenerational wellbeing activities, awareness days and support for community gardens and food growing. The aim is to strengthen social ties and encourage healthier lifestyles through inclusive, community-led action. Funding was allocated to groups across the Galway Community and Voluntary Sectors, as well as local community organisations.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- A key focus for 2026 will be developing a Monitoring System to track delivery of the first LECP Implementation Plan, with regular reporting to the LCDC. SICAP Annual Plans will also be prepared to address disadvantage and social exclusion across the county's three Lots.
- Mental health supports will continue across Galway County and the offshore islands through workshops, support groups and awareness campaigns. Building on Healthy County Galway programmes, efforts will focus on sustaining initiatives such as the Dementia Café, the Women's Programme and Taking Stock for farmers.
- New programmes will promote physical activity and wellbeing through walks, fitness classes and sports events. Healthy eating will be encouraged through cooking workshops and nutrition-focused activities in community settings.
- As community events are relaunched, there will be a strong emphasis on health and wellbeing, with targeted education, resources and talks to support both women's and men's health. These efforts aim to increase social and leisure engagement across key groups.

SOCIAL INCLUSION FORA AND INITIATIVES

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- Galway County and City Councils jointly hosted the National Age Friendly Awards in 2025, with two Galway projects shortlisted. The Galway Age Friendly Strategy was adopted during the year, and an interdepartmental team was formed to oversee its implementation. The Age Friendly Alliance met twice, and the Directory of Services for Older People was reviewed and republished, with a further review planned for 2026. The Older Persons Council met regularly and received updates from the regional coordinator and national programme.
- The Comhairle na nÓg Steering Committee met throughout the year to advance the 2025 work programme and improve local engagement. The AGM was held on 21 October in County Hall, with strong attendance from schools across the county.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Interdepartmental meetings will be held to advance agreed Age Friendly actions. All partners, within and beyond the Local Authority, are expected to contribute. While savings will be made on strategy compilation and national awards from 2025, these will be offset by costs to deliver the agreed actions.
- Comhairle is exploring ways to boost school participation. Local meetings at Municipal District level may support this, and funding to host them has been requested in the 2026 budget.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION NETWORK (PPN)

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- In 2025, Galway County PPN contributed to several consultative processes, including the Age Friendly Strategy, and helped organise public consultation sessions across the county.
- The PPN continues to support community representatives on various decision-making bodies and has a County Galway representative on the National Working Group, which recently published the PPN Implementation Roadmap.
- As an information hub, the PPN issues a Weekly Digest and Monthly Newsletter, and has enhanced its website and Event Calendar. It also facilitates Council Departments and other agencies in sharing funding information through webinars and plenary meetings.
- Two plenary meetings were held in September and November. The September event, held in person, brought together over 100 attendees and 25 exhibitor tables hosted by Galway County Council and service providers. The event provided updates, networking opportunities and practical advice, including a keynote on Wills and Estate Planning.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- The PPN will continue to serve as an information hub for Member Groups and the local authority, hosting funding sessions and supporting policy development. It will identify training needs to strengthen representation and community impact and carry out succession planning to refresh the Secretariat.
- Two plenary meetings will be held in 2026, with themes guided by a recent member survey. The PPN will also finalise the annual SLA, MOU, workplan and Annual Report, and coordinate elections information across its pillars and sectoral groups.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT SCHEMES

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

A total of €107,500 was allocated in 2025 for the community development element of the Community Support Scheme. Sixty-four applicants received funding offers.

The first funding category, *Tidy Towns Activities*, recognises the contribution of Tidy Towns Groups to community wellbeing and the visual appeal of towns and villages. Recommended projects included Biodiversity Plans for pollinator planting, long-life seating and planters, and other centre enhancements. A key feature this year was funding for professional maps to support performance in the National Competition.

The second category, *Community Amenities*, was highly over-subscribed. Priority was given to replacement and repair works, especially where facilities were damaged by Storm Éowyn. Requests for equipment or capital works at community facilities were referred to the Local Enhancement Programme.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

The Community Support Schemes will continue to be targeted to support volunteer activity throughout the County and promote economic, cultural, and social development.

COMMUNITY AWARDS

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

The Cathaoirleach Awards celebrate the dedication of individuals and groups involved in unpaid community and voluntary work, recognising its positive impact on local quality of life.

The 2025 ceremony took place on 16 May at Raheen Woods Hotel, Athenry. Jointly sponsored by the PPN and County Council, the winners were:

- *Arts and Culture*: Féile Cheoil Larry Reynolds
- *Heritage Contribution*: Katie Duane
- *Heritage Publication*: Michael J. Hurley
- *Irish Language*: Forám Chois Fharraige Um Pleanáil Teanga
- *Environment and Climate Action*: Jacinta Barrins
- *Social Inclusion*: Sarah Ann Buday
- *Sports*: South Galway Lakers Special Olympics Sports Club
- *Pride of Place*: Clarinbridge Tidy Towns and Marconi Mens Shed Clifden
- *Tidy Towns Recognition*: Tuam Tidy Towns
- *Special Recognition*: Bernie Rogers (Individual), Moyne Villa FC (Group)

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- The Community Department will continue to support Tidy Towns Groups through targeted training, funding and collaboration with other Council areas. These efforts aim to improve performance in the National Competition and address local issues. The Department will also work with the PPN to promote best practice via local and national award schemes.
- Preparations for the Cathaoirleach Awards will include agreeing the ceremony format, judging structure, award date, craftspeople, photographer and any Special Recognition Awards. Final judging panels will be confirmed in consultation with the Cathaoirleach.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

TOWN AND VILLAGE RENEWAL SCHEME

Funded by the Department of Community, Rural Development and the Gaeltacht, it supports capital projects that improve public spaces, tackle vacancy and enhance town and village centres. Each year, the Unit runs an Expression of Interest and Shortlisting process to identify impactful projects. It then advises Community and Voluntary Groups or Lead Partners on design, delivery and grant administration.

In recognition of the North-Western region's EU Transition status, the Scheme offers up to 95 percent grant aid in counties like Galway. The remaining 5 percent must be provided as a cash contribution from local or community sources.

PROGRAMME DELIVERY IN 2025:

The 2023 Town and Village Renewal Scheme (TVRS), approved in April 2024, continued active delivery throughout 2025. The Unit provided grant administration and technical guidance to community and voluntary organisations approved for funding under the Scheme.

To strengthen delivery capacity, two technical staff joined the newly established Capital Delivery Team in 2025. These roles are currently supporting final site inspections as projects near completion.

Projects Nearing Completion in 2025

- Maree Community Centre received €250,000 to upgrade its roof, ensuring continued use of the facility as a vital social and sports hub. Works are substantially completed, with final claims and inspections scheduled.
- Dunmore Town Hall, celebrating its centenary, is nearing completion of extensive upgrades including re-roofing, disability access, lighting and insulation.

Gort Streetscape and Shopfront Enhancement Scheme

A flagship initiative in 2025 was the relaunch of the Gort Streetscape and Shopfront Enhancement Scheme, originally commenced in July 2024. The relaunch was delivered in partnership with the Planning and Housing Departments, including Conservation, Regeneration and Vacant Homes Teams. The Scheme focused on the Architectural Conservation Area of Market Square, Crowe Street and Bridge Street.

Property owners and tenants within the zone were invited to apply for individual grants, requiring match funding of 20 to 30 percent to upgrade shopfronts, signage, repairs or painting of property facades. Many properties in Market Square are three storeys, some with original fanlights. The overall quality and type of work undertaken required careful monitoring to ensure alignment with the town centre's character and the County Council's Shopfront Guidelines. The Spring Workshop Series provided guidance on conservation principles and housing and property grants, fostering informed participation.

By October 2025:

- 71 facades, both commercial and residential, were grant-aided for shopfront improvements and repainting
- Over 60 properties completed works and received grant payments
- A Colour Consultant engaged by Galway County Council conducted over 30 one-to-one sessions with property owners

The Gort Town Team played a pivotal role in promoting the Scheme. The Council facilitated Claim Clinics at the Gort Resource Centre, streamlining paperwork and boosting engagement. Over 90 percent of allocated funding is expected to be expended by mid-November, with potential to support a further 5 to 8 properties pending departmental approval.

Visual Impact and Legacy

The scale of participation in the Gort Streetscape Enhancement Scheme has delivered a transformative visual impact, significantly enhancing the character and appeal of the town centre.

Project Development Measures delivered in 2025:

Planning permission was secured for three projects approved under the 2024 Project Development Measure: Ahascragh Community Centre, Eyrecourt Public Park and Community Playground on a greenfield site in the village centre, and An Fhairce-Clonbur upgrade to Áras Pobal/Community Centre.

2025 Programme - Bids for Funding Submitted and Approval Pending

A public Expressions of Interest process ran from early April to 15 May 2025, with shortlisting and further information provided between May and June. Galway County Council submitted four projects (€200k–€500k) and one Gaeltacht/Islands project in July for Departmental consideration, with decisions expected by November 2025. The SUBMIT online application system was used for the first time for TVRS, with 20 EOIs considered, five applications submitted for the Main Scheme, and up to two for the Project Development Measure.

Summary Overview of the TVRS Programme:

TVRS Programme 2021	Grant Approved	Status
Project Development Measure – GCC Property Woodford Courthouse in association with Woodford Parish Dev. Comm.	€50,000	Ongoing with support from new Capital Delivery Team.
TVRS Programme 2022	Grant Approved	Status
Collectivised Branding & Marketing Campaign	€50,000	Ongoing – New Links with WDC agreed.
Cashla Feasibility Study for Development of Low Carbon Sustainable Centre	€50,000	Ongoing in 2025, Planning Permission advanced
TVRS Programme 2023	Grant Approved	Status
Maree Community Centre Enhancements	€250,000	Commenced in 2024 and due for Completion November 2025

Dunmore Town Hall Enhancements	€250,000	Commenced in 20204 and due for completion November 2025
Gort Streetscape & Shopfront Enhancement Scheme	€250,000	Launched in June 2024, 71 properties are scheduled for completion by November 2025, with a small number (5–8 properties) expected to carry over to spring 2026.
Project Development Measure Town Centre First Suite of Supports	Grant Approved	Status
Ahascragh Community Development Group	€50,000	Launched in September 2024. Planning Permission Secured in 2025. Due for completion Nov 2025.
Eyrecourt Community Field	€50,000	Launched in September 2024. Planning Permission Secured in 2025. Due for completion Nov 2025.
An Fháirce (Clonbur) Community Centre	€50,000	Launched in September 2024. Planning Permission Secured in 2025. Due for completion Nov 2025
TVRS Programme 2025 – Shortlisted Projects Submitted for DRCDG Approval in July 2025.	Grant – Total Amount of Grants Submitted	Status
Main Scheme Portumna Town Hall An Fhairce-Clonbur Áras Pobail Killimor Streetscape Scheme Ahascragh Streetscape Scheme Leitir Móir Páirc - Playground Development Project Development Measure Canon Hall, Athenry Corofin Community Park & Playground	€1,1670,046	Decision on 2025 Programme due by end of November 2025. Project approved to be implemented over 18 months in 2026-2027

PROPOSALS FOR 2026

- Provide administrative and advisory support for all ongoing and approved Town and Village Renewal Scheme (TVRS) projects, including Kick-start Site Visits to outline administrative and monitoring requirements.
- Maintain efficient systems and stakeholder engagement to ensure timely delivery of projects, grant claims, and funding recoupment for all live TVRS projects.
- Identify potential projects across the county through engagement with community groups, committees, elected members, municipal offices, LCDC members, and via the formal Expression of Interest process when a new scheme is announced.
- Explore funding opportunities under the Our Rural Future Strategy to support rural development objectives in line with the County Development Plan and needs of dispersed rural areas.
- Deliver Q1 workshops/webinars in partnership with the PPN on procurement, biodiversity, dark skies, and TVRS requirements to assist groups in preparing Expressions of Interest and delivering approved projects.
- Launch the 2026 programme, manage the Expression of Interest process in Q2, and prepare submissions for 2027–2028 funding by July 2026.
- Host an event and deliver a ‘Story’ Series in Q3 to celebrate ten years of Town and Village Renewal in County Galway.
- Support the implementation of key strategies, including the County Development Plan, Tourism Strategy, Arts Plan, emerging Recreation Strategy, Climate Action, and Regeneration Town Centre First plans, by identifying projects that advance climate mitigation and adaptation, inclusion, vacancy/dereliction improvement, and amenity development.

CLÁR PROGRAMME

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

The CLÁR Small-Scale Infrastructure Scheme for Community Amenities allows groups up to 18 months to complete projects. In 2025, 21 live projects across the county were valued at €1.4 million. Grants cover 90% of costs, with a minimum 10% match from applicants.

Projects supported include: small-scale renovations to community facilities, MUGAs and astro-turf upgrades, playgrounds, skateparks, pump tracks, walking and running tracks, courts for handball, tennis, basketball, and cricket, community gyms and cinemas, sensory and community gardens, heritage access, outdoor toilets and changing facilities, parking, improved access at sports grounds, and solar bins.

In Q1 2025, 2023 projects were completed and the 2024 programme launched, with contracts issued to 15 approved organisations. ‘Kick-start’ site visits by Council staff helped volunteers understand grant requirements, improving engagement and claim quality. Common issues addressed included procurement, supplier approvals, tax clearance, and legal matters on leases.

2025 PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES

The 2024 CLÁR programme, approved in late 2024, continued through 2025 and is due for completion by May 2026. Two projects have been fully completed, with €220,298 paid to community groups and suppliers. Eleven projects are underway, and two are pending, delayed due to an active insurance claim following Storm Éowyn damage.

2025 CLÁR Programme – Decision Pending

The 2025 CLÁR Scheme was launched by DRCDG in March 2025. Galway County Council promoted the scheme locally and ran a public Expression of Interest process in April–May 2025, including media outreach and webinars with the PPN and Elected Members.

The team processed 50 completed Expressions of Interest via the SUBMIT online system; five were outside CLÁR areas and 15 were incomplete. Following review, 16 projects were submitted by 19 June for departmental consideration under Measure 1: Amenities.

The total grant sought under CLÁR 2025 is €1,041,046. DRCDG increased the maximum grant from €50,000 to €65,000, allowing one application up to €100,000. Applications for Measure 2 (Community Transport) and Measure 3 (Islands) are managed directly by DRCDG.

School Name / Community Facility Name / LDC	CLAR 2024 Programme Approved in October 2025 (Ongoing for 2025 and 2026.)	Amount of CLÁR funding Approved
Scoil Mhuire Gan Smal - Ballygar National School	This funding will enable Ballygar National School to replace the 39-year-old tarmac with a new Multi Use Games Area surface. The upgrade will provide all-weather training and play for local sports teams and serve as an inclusive hub for community events, supporting Tidy Towns, Ballygar Carnival, and Ballygar Heritage Group in the heart of the village.	€50,000
Kilchreest National School Board of Management	This project by Kilchreest National School Board of Management will create a 700m walking track next to the school, providing a safe, accessible facility for families, older people, and those with disabilities. The rear hill will be removed to make way for a new astro turf pitch and open views of the surroundings. Picnic benches and age-friendly seating will be installed, with landscaping to enhance existing flora and fauna.	€50,000
Roundstone Community Development Council Ltd (Playground Committee)	Managed by Roundstone Playground Committee, this project will upgrade the village-centre playground in Coastal Connemara, a popular visitor spot. Works include replacing timber fencing with a safe steel fence, repairing kerbing and wetpour, planting hedging as a wind barrier and for biodiversity, and installing new play equipment in line with Risk Assessment requirements.	€50,000

Williamstown Development Company CLG, Supported by Williamstown GAA Club & National School	This project will complete the two-acre field next to Williamstown National School and the local GAA club, purchased in 2019. Works include smooth tarmac and kerbs for walkers, runners, parents with buggies, and wheelchair users, upgraded playing pitch and playground for senior students, a sensory garden, and landscaping with seating and picnic facilities to enhance beauty and biodiversity.	€50,000
Clonberne Community Centre Co Ltd & SNO Club (Special Needs +Others)	This community-led project will enhance the existing inclusive playground by adding equipment for teenagers, adults, and older people. Improvements include sensory seating, planting, a boules area, an age- and disability-inclusive swing, a sensory path with tactile surfacing, and an 'adult' playground to promote participation for adults with intellectual disabilities and nursing home residents.	€50,000
Moylough Parish Sports Field	Led by local volunteers, this project will upgrade the playground at Moylough Parish Sports Field, replacing 21-year-old equipment and ground cover. Works include a new multi-play area, swings, swing basket, butterfly game station, inclusive springer, zip line repairs, coloured wetpour surfacing, improved security fencing, an independent safety inspection, and a wildflower bedding area to enhance biodiversity.	€50,000 - Completed in 2025
Leenane Development Association CLG	This project will enhance the community park developed by Leenane Development Association CLG in 2023 by adding sensory play equipment to support children's cognition, emotional regulation, and social skills. The park, already popular with visitors across Connemara for its Killary Fjord views, will become more engaging for children and enrich the walking trail for the local community and visitors.	€45,000
Dunmore Tidy Towns & Galway County Council	Delivered by Dunmore Tidy Towns and Galway County Council, this project will enhance safety, accessibility, and biodiversity along Dunmore River Walk, a popular community park linking the town centre to key facilities. Works include replacing deteriorating fencing, improving walkways for accessibility, providing bins, and planting native species to enhance the park's appearance.	€50,000
Clontuskert Community Development Group	Managed by Clontuskert Community Development Group, this project will upgrade the 1980s community hub to attract more events. Works include replacing insulation, electrics, plumbing, bathrooms, windows, and entrance gates, installing baby change facilities, larger vehicle gates, secure locks, and storage heaters. The improvements will increase use by local groups such as Heritage, Crochet, IFA, Hurling, and Camogie.	€45,000

Killimordaly Community Centre CLG	Managed by Killimordaly Community Centre CLG, this project will replace and insulate the leaking, asbestos-containing roof, improving heat retention and making the space more welcoming. The upgraded centre will support more public events, activities for young and older people, including Foróige and Community Alert, and increase participation and inclusion across the local community.	€50,000
Killiererin Community Council	This project will carry out essential roof repairs at Barnaderg Community Centre, including slates, lighting, vents, and guttering, ensuring a safe space for community events such as senior gatherings, dance classes for young children, and Foróige youth clubs. Once restored, Killiererin Community Council plan to refurbish the polytunnel, plant flowers, and create a 'bee hotel' to promote biodiversity awareness.	€49,456
Woodford Parish Development	Managed by Woodford Parish Development, this project will upgrade the community playground based on feedback from local schools and users. Tiger mulch will replace wood fibre for safety, sensory equipment and accessible picnic benches will be installed, and maintenance tools provided for volunteers. The improvements will enhance the playground as a key community asset in the village centre.	€50,000
Esker Community Centre	This project, managed by Esker Community Centre, will replace windows and doors, upgrade toilets, and install energy-efficient lighting throughout the building. No works have been carried out since 1990. The centre is central to community life for around 750 people, hosting voluntary, sporting, recreational, farming, and cultural groups.	€48,262
Kilconly Community Recreational Group	This project will add Tennis and Basketball courts to the multi-use outdoor facility managed by Kilconly Community Recreational Group, expanding beyond Soccer, GAA, and walkways. The new courts will support clubs and annual camps, providing opportunities for all ages and abilities, and attracting both local participants and visitors to Fitz's Field.	€44,730
Gort Community Playground	This volunteer-led project will install a net climbing frame in the playground opposite Gort Community School, suitable for ages 5+ and accommodating up to 38 children. It will also replace outdated equipment with new accessible alternatives, providing safe, independent, and engaging play for more participants. The investment will enhance play opportunities and improve facilities for the children of Gort.	€42,307 - Completed in 2025.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026

- Support community groups to identify priorities and access funding, including promotion of the CLÁR programme.
- Assist 2025 Small-Scale Infrastructure Scheme projects to deliver successfully over 2026–2027 with advisory workshops, monitoring, and collaboration with the Capital Delivery Team.
- Facilitate timely delivery of 2024 and 2025 CLÁR projects running concurrently in 2026.
- Communicate any proposed CLÁR boundary changes by DRCDG in advance of the 2026 programme.
- Respond to new 2026 funding calls and identify potential projects through engagement with LCDs, Municipal District offices, and other departments.
- Map and document community assets supported by CLÁR to target and address local needs.

CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- Continued support for the Audio Visual and Film sector, including partnerships with Ardán and others on the UNESCO City of Film programme.
- Continued backing of WRAP II, a larger fund developed with WDC and partners to support sector growth.
- Presented to the SPC for Economic & Enterprise Development and Plenary Council on opportunities in the sector, including UNESCO initiatives, WRAP, location services.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Work with Galway Film Centre and stakeholders to deliver opportunities under the WRAP II fund.
- Support the UNESCO Creative City designation and explore economic and enterprise growth for the creative sector.
- Continue collaboration with stakeholders to strengthen and support the sector.

PROMOTING AND DEVELOPING ARTS ACTIVITY & CULTURE

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

Grants and Funding

- Administered €60,000 in Arts Grants for voluntary groups.
- Artist Support Scheme: 14 awards totalling €30,492 from 66 applications.
- Secured €97,000 Arts Council Partnership Funding.
- Managed Creative Ireland Programme: €213,064 for bursaries, flagship projects, and open call initiatives (€71,055 awarded to 12 projects).

Artist Development

- CPD workshops for emerging playwrights with Irish Theatre Institute.
- Artist residencies at Áras Éanna, Interface, Studio Mór Oranmore, and Inagh Valley.
- Film bursaries in partnership with Ardán (Short Doc and Misleór Documentary).
- Branar Meitheal and Dance Artist in Residence supported professional artist development.
- Artists in Schools: seven residencies plus Irish language strand with Ealaíon na Gaeltachta.

- Tiny Mutiny and Galway Community Circus: supported youth engagement, inclusion, and diversity.

Community and Public Engagement

- Public Art Programme: Craughwell project delivered; Claregalway project planned for 2026.
- Supported Book It Festival, Ballad of a Bandit theatre tour, and county-based festivals including North-East Galway Fit Up Festival.
- Arts in Older Years: care home residencies and Artist Care Exchange projects.
- Music Generation Galway County: supported music education programmes.
- Culture Night 2025: 50 events across five districts; Culture Night Late immersive experience at Kylemore Abbey attended by 900.
- Cruinniú na nÓg 2025: 50+ events, 50% incorporating Irish language; “Disco in a Day” Nighttime Economy event for teens.

Strategic Planning

- Arts Plan 2026–2030: initiated review in November 2025 to build on successes and guide future strategy.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

Funding and Grants

- Administer Arts Grants for voluntary groups and organisations (€65,000 proposed).
- Secure Arts Council Partnership Funding (€110,000; total programme budget €220,000).
- Offer Artist Support Scheme with 3–5 additional awards to support creativity and professional development.
- Film bursary in partnership with Ardán for Short Doc and Misleór Documentary.
- Club, festival, and project support grants including Branar, Tiny Mutiny, Tuam Youth Circus, Book It! Festival, Galway Theatre Festival, and Creative Places Tuam.

Artist Support and Development

- Deliver residencies at Áras Éanna, Interface, and Tyrone Guthrie.
- Increase commissioning opportunities for artists across dance, theatre, visual arts.
- Professional development and CPD collaborations with Galway City & County.
- Arts & Disability Shadowing/Mentorship programme and annual Artist & Disability Project award.
- Artists in Schools and Care Settings programmes to engage young people and older adults.

Festivals and Public Engagement

- European and national arts weeks, Culture Night 2026, and expanded Festival Support Scheme.
- Public Art Programme 2026 including commissions and policy revision; contract Public Art Curator for 2026–28.
- Creative Ireland Programme: Lead bursaries, Cruinniú na nÓg 2026, Irish language engagement, and Shared Island project development.

Strategic Planning and Collaboration

- Develop Arts Plan 2026–2030 to guide future arts strategy.
- Work with Music Generation Galway County to support music education.
- Support sustainable growth in Tuam and other communities through collaborative arts projects.

SPORTS DEVELOPMENT

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

Sourced funding from Sport Ireland, Dormant Accounts, HSE, Local Authorities, National Transport Agency, Healthy Galway, and others to deliver inclusive sport and physical activity programmes across the County.

Key Programmes and Initiatives:

- **Community Sports Development Officer (CSDO):** Bike Week, HER Outdoors Week, HER Moves, Buggy Buddies, Men and Women on the Move, Sanctuary Paddlers.
- **Sports Inclusion Development Officer (SIDO):** Inclusive Triathlon, boccia tournaments, Activator sessions, Good2Go training for older adults and disability groups, equipment loans, grant support, inclusive swimming and sports camps.
- **National Play Day in Tuam:** 300 attendees, 80 Play Packs distributed to disadvantaged children, €3,000 funding secured.
- **Older Adult Programmes:** Activator Walking, Good2Go training, taster sessions, Fitstick trail installations in Tuam, Oughterard, Kilcornan, Lawrencetown through Healthy Galway funding.
- **HSE-funded programmes:** Men, Mothers and Babies, Early Years Providers, disability groups.
- **Bike Week 2024:** €27,271 funding, 25+ programmes, 3,286 participants.
- **Club Development Grants:** €26,000 to 21 clubs for training, inclusive supports, and targeted programmes.
- **European Week of Sport:** 23–30 September, culminating in a family Colour Run with 348 participants.
- **European Social Fund – Social Innovation in Sport Programme:** Established in Galway.
- **Healthy Ireland Outdoor Swimming Infrastructure Fund:** €28,000 for improvements at Portumna Swim Area and beach shelters at Traught, An Spideal, Inis Meáin.
- **Participation Nation Fund:** €50,000 used to install a 3v3 basketball court at Palace Grounds, Tuam, and biodiversity improvements.
- **Club and Organisation Supports:** Safeguarding, First Aid, Disability Awareness, volunteer recruitment and retention, diversity, social media, Women in Sport webinars.
- **Governance:** Steering group and workgroup meetings held throughout 2024.
- **Dormant Accounts Funding:** €91,000 secured for 2025/6 to support Community Sports Hubs (Ballinasloe, Active Islands), HER Moves, and volunteer supports.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Apply for CORE funding from Sport Ireland and other grants, including Dormant Accounts, Bike Week, HER Outdoors Week, European Week of Sport, Healthy Ireland, HSE funding, and European Social Fund opportunities.
- Support the delivery of a Local Sports Plan for Galway County.
- Deliver inclusive programmes targeting women and girls, people with disabilities, disadvantaged groups, and older adults.
- Provide training and workshops including Balance Bike, Learn to Cycle, Sports Hall Athletics, Good 2 Go, Active Disability Ireland courses, Coaching Children, Physical Literacy, Safeguarding, and Sports First Aid.
- Promote coach education courses, especially for minority sports, and support schools in achieving the Active Schools Flag.

- Deliver national campaigns such as European Week of Sport, HER Outdoors Week, and Bike Week activities.
- Provide Club Development Grants through Sport Ireland and Galway County Council.
- Ensure governance compliance and continue representation on alliances, working groups, and advocacy networks.
- Promote the Get Ireland Active database and engage populations with low participation opportunities.

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

TOURISM STRATEGY

The County Galway Tourism Strategy, adopted in November 2023, provides a collaborative framework to guide tourism development over the next eight years. Galway is Ireland's leading cultural and natural heritage destination, promoting sustainable tourism while protecting its heritage and celebrating diversity.

The Strategic Framework that provides the structure for the delivery of the Strategy is built around four strategic areas, each with key actions and recommendations. It is also supported by the identification of six Development Zones that ensure more targeted interventions where they are required to address more local challenges and opportunities.

The priority for Galway County Council Tourism will remain the ongoing delivery of existing and new collaborative projects that offer major opportunities for tourism growth across the County, and several principles will help guide activities and interventions, ensuring future growth is sustainable.

These principles include:

- Continue to prioritise delivery of major collaborative opportunities with strategic partners, including existing and future Visitor/Destination Experience Development Plans, Tourism Masterplans, and the Greenways.
- Support the extension of tourists' length of stay, expenditure and encourage exploration of less visited areas.
- Prioritise the goal of fully sustainable tourism and align with national and local Climate Action Plans.
- Support Gaeltacht culture, language, and communities.
- Prioritise the harnessing of existing natural and built assets, outdoor tourism, and ongoing investments, especially in blue and green infrastructure.
- Establish tourism as a core economic activity across the County and promote the growth of tourism - including in less visited areas - through the development of existing and new tourism experiences and destinations.
- Develop a zone approach that will enable targeting relevant interventions at local level.
- Introduce and support innovation.
- Enhance industry, community, and stakeholder collaboration.
- Improve universal access to tourism experiences.

CSS FESTIVALS AND EVENTS:

Galway County Council continues to support festivals and events. 66 Communities were in receipt of financial support totalling €98,250 in 2025. Breakdown of Economic Development funding as follows:

Funding Description	Grants awarded	Amt Granted	Funding Source
Regional Festivals	8	€18,000	Fáilte Ireland
Community Festivals & Events	36	€35,870	Community Support Scheme
Christmas Lighting	12	€20,750	Community Support Scheme
Other Economic Initiatives	7	€12,630	Community Support Scheme
Festivals	3	€11,000	Tourism Unit
		€98,250	

JUST TRANSITION FUND

In April 2024, Galway County Council appointed an EU Just Transition Activator to help local community groups and SMEs access the JTF Regenerative Tourism and Placemaking Scheme for Ireland's Midlands 2023–2026.

Funding Secured

Seven applications from Ballinasloe Municipal District have been approved, totalling €1,201,600:

- Shannon Bank Park – Wild Swimming Outdoor Pool: €616,000 for a dedicated wild swimming facility.
- Cookery School, Williamstown: €57,600 for planning and design.
- BACD Ballinasloe – Digital Transformation: €30,000 for a new website supporting local businesses.
- Galway's Living Bog, Mountbellew: €28,000 to enhance visitor experience and conservation.
- Old Mill Visitor Centre, Ahascragh: €40,000 for development and engagement.
- Greenhills Farm, Fohenagh: €10,000 for tourism improvements.
- Major New Initiative: €420,000 approved, announcement to follow.

Impact and Next Steps

The JTF has sparked strong interest from local businesses and communities, creating a foundation for sustainable tourism growth.

Phase 2 – Network Development

Next steps include a Network Roadmap for East Galway, building collaboration between businesses, authorities and communities. Training continues for applicants to ensure project delivery and maximise funding impact. The JTF Activator works closely with the Tourism Officer and Fáilte Ireland to align projects with the new Destination Experience Development Plan.

THREE GREENWAY PROJECTS IN CONNEMARA

GALWAY - OUGHTERARD GREENWAY

The Greenway will be approximately 28 km, running from the Cathedral in Galway City to Station Road in Oughterard. Following the third non-statutory public consultation in May–June 2023 on the emerging preferred route corridor, landowner engagement is ongoing to finalise the route. The project is currently in Phase 3: Design and Environmental Evaluation, expected to take around 12 months, after which a Phase 4 planning application will be submitted to An Coimisiún Pleanála in 2025.

CLIFDEN – OUGHTERARD GREENWAY

Funding has been secured to construct a 23 km section of the Greenway between Clifden and Recess. Currently, 14 km is complete and open to the public, 6 km is under construction, and discussions with landowners are ongoing to acquire the remaining sections.

DERRIGIMLAGH – KYLEMORE ABBEY GREENWAY

Funding has been secured to complete a strategic assessment and feasibility report for a potential Greenway between Derrigimlagh and Kylemore Abbey. Phase 1 is now complete, and approval from TII is awaited to progress to Phase 2: Options Selection.

CONNEMARA DESTINATION EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

2.0. A comprehensive programme of community, public, and stakeholder consultations will take place throughout 2025. The updated plan is scheduled for completion and launch in Q3 2026. This process will ensure the plan reflects the needs and aspirations of local communities, businesses, and stakeholders, and will guide the future development of tourism in the Connemara and Islands region.

TOURISM PROMOTION

- In 2025, Galway County Council continued to invest in high-impact tourism marketing across multiple platforms. The Council featured a county-wide spread in the **Connacht Tribune** supplement *Where West*, circulated across the west from Connemara and the Islands to north and south Galway, and from north Mayo to south Clare. Four pages were also included in the 2025 edition of *Go West* magazine. The Council maintains an annual partnership with **Knock Airport magazine**, working with local authority partners in Sligo, Mayo, Roscommon, and Galway City. Coverage highlighted Council-supported festivals and events and showcased the county's visitor experience, including North and East Galway, using high-quality photography.
- *This is Galway* magazine featured dedicated content in the June/July, August/September, and October/November editions, focusing on East and West Galway and highlighting their unique offerings. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with local businesses appreciating the exposure and using the magazine to promote destinations outside Galway city.

- Galway County and City Councils jointly represented the region at the **Milwaukee Irish Festival**, the largest Irish cultural celebration in the United States, promoting Irish-US links over four days. County maps, visitor guides, and Connemara maps were produced for distribution, along with branded pens, tote bags, and T-shirts. Additional literature on County Galway's attractions was also shared, raising the county's profile with international audiences.

GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL & WILD ATLANTIC WAY, GALWAY TOURISM INDUSTRIAL NETWORKING EVENT

Building on the success of the 2024 event, Galway County Council and Fáilte Ireland's Wild Atlantic Way team hosted the 2025 Tourism Industry Networking Event, which attracted over 150 tourism representatives from Galway City, Connemara, and the Islands. The event featured speed-networking appointments to maximise cross-selling and referral opportunities, with Council staff actively participating to support regional tourism growth and collaboration.

TOURISM NETWORKS AND CROSS LOCAL AUTHORITY ENGAGEMENT

- Provide ongoing support for **Connemara.ie** and WIFI4U collaboration with the Broadband Officer.
- Support the **Lough Derg Visitor Experience Plan** and related tourism projects in Portumna.
- Implement actions across all **VEDPs, DEDPs, and regional tourism plans**.
- Collaborate with Roscommon on **Suck Valley Way** promotion and with Mayo and Galway City on the **Corrib/Mask Blueway**.

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

- Clifden Destination Town:** Advance redevelopment and town centre enhancements to boost tourism.
- Regeneration Projects:** Progress Portumna Vision 2030 and other initiatives to maximise tourism potential.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Promote County Galway internationally, including at the Milwaukee Irish Festival.
- Deliver targeted marketing campaigns for the Connemara Greenway, DiscoverGalway.ie, and social media channels.
- Implement actions from the Lough Derg Visitor Experience Development Plan and collaborated on Connemara & Islands and East Galway Destination Experience Development Plans.
- Manage the Community Support Scheme for tourism projects, festivals, and events.
- Partner with Waterways Ireland and Fáilte Ireland on the Shannon Blueway Masterplan and Blueway capital projects.
- Support EU Interreg Slowdown and cross-border tourism initiatives, and promote Galway in key European markets.
- Advance Greenway and Blueway developments and contributed to regional initiatives like the Beara Breifne Way.
- Oversee EU Just Transition Fund projects in Ballinasloe and East Galway.
- Participate in industry networking to foster collaboration among tourism providers.
- Develop Dunguaire Castle as a flagship tourism asset, subject to funding and transfer, and progressed the Battle of Aughrim Visitor Experience project.

- Support Joyce Country Geopark towards UNESCO accreditation and enhanced tourism experiences.

RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- Work continued to ensure the delivery of several projects approved in previous years.

OUTDOOR RECREATION INFRASTRUCTURE SCHEME (ORIS)

The Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) supports rural economies and communities under Project Ireland 2040 by funding the development, repair, enhancement, and promotion of outdoor recreational infrastructure across Ireland.

MEASURE 1 FUNDING RECEIVED FOR THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS –2024/2025

The following projects are progressing and nearing completion.

Project Name	Outline	Amount Approved
Creggs Wildlife Garden accessibility upgrade	Enhancement of wheelchair accessible walkways within Creggs Wildlife Park.	€20,339
Gateway to the Corrib	Installation of signage for a new cycle route in the Claren area of Headford.	€18,000
Hymany Way Upgrade	Upgrade the Beara Breifne/Hymany Way Walking Trail.	€29,710
Lackagh Knockdoemore Walkway 2023 Enhancements	Walkway safety enhancements and Maintenance to existing Knockdoemore Park - Lackagh walkway.	€27,450
An Trá Mhor Inverin Accessibility Upgrade	Accessibility Upgrades to An Trá Mhor to enable accessibility and inclusiveness for older people, younger people and persons with disabilities.	€29,700
Cill Murvey Beach Accessibility Upgrade	Accessibility Upgrades to Cill Murvey to enable accessibility and inclusiveness for older people, younger people and persons with disabilities.	€29,700

M2, M3 PROJECT DEVELOPMENT FUNDING RECEIVED FOR THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS 2024/2025

The following projects are progressing and nearing completion.

Measure	Project Name	Outline	Amount Approved
Project Development	Rinville Forest Park Masterplan	To Develop a Major Tourism Attraction, Building on the Unique Heritage of the park for Galway County and the Western Region.	€49,950
Project Development	Ballinasloe Outdoor Recreation Park	To carry out a feasibility study exploring the options for the development of a public park in Ballinasloe that reflects good practice in line with Proper Planning and Sustainable development.	€49,950
Project Development	Linn Taoide Arainn	Feasibility Study for Provision of tidal pool on Arainn along the seashore that will offer recreational opportunities for the island community as well as visitors to the island and provide a habitat for marine life.	€35,847
M2	Glink Heritage Park	Glink Heritage Park Repair and Upgrade of 2km of Existing Trails to improve accessibility.	€200,000
M2	Castlegrove Woods Tales & Trails	Castlegrove Woods Tales & Trails aims to develop both Castlegrove Woods and Barracks as Nature Trails, Historic Trails and Heritage Display centre.	€47,821
M2	Ionad Pobail an Mháma - Car Park	The construction of a car park which will facilitate the western way and provide proper and secure parking for a range of community and commercial recreation events.	€172,583

MEASURE 1 FUNDING RECEIVED FOR THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS-2025

Project Name	Outline	Amount Approved
Trail surface repairs – Hymany Way	Surface repair to a 2km section of the Hymany Way trail along the old Grand Canal towpath, including laying stone and maintaining existing drains to facilitate water runoff.	€40,000.00

The Following projects were selected by Galway County Council for submission to the Department of Rural, Community Development & the Gaeltacht under the 2025 Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme. Pending Approval from DRCD&G

Measure	Project Name	Outline	Amount Requested
M2	The Walks Project 2024, Loughrea	Completion of the repairs to The Walks wall Promenade. Continuation of the reinstatement of the wall retaining the riverbank, thus improving condition for walkers and the trout spawning/nursery grounds of Loughrea Lake fishery.	€ 200,000.00
M2	The Marconi Station/Trail	The 5km looped trail Marconi Station at Derrigimlagh, Connemara will undergo a series of works including trail upgrades & repairs, disability access improvements & enhanced marketing.	€ 197,550.00
M2	Connemara and Aran Islands Marketing Project	Marketing materials and promotion of Connemara and Aran Islands.	€ 40,000.00
M3	Extension to Rinvilla Park Walkways	This project will add 2.5km of low-level lighting walkways, linking to Rinvilla Park.	€ 324,000.00

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Support the delivery of approved schemes.
- Collaborate with stakeholders to ensure a strategic approach to ORIS.
- Submit applications under the 2025/26 ORIS schemes when launched.
- Develop a County Outdoor Recreation Plan and establish a County Recreation Forum, aligned with the National Outdoor Recreation Strategy.

INTEGRATION

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- The **Integration Team**, established in 2024, supports 1,014 Ukrainians in 29 accommodation centres and 64 modular homes in Ballinasloe, as well as 411 International Protection Applicants in 8 designated centres.
- The **Offer a Home Scheme** continues, with 166 residents in 49 properties; the Integration Team supports pledges and property inspections.
- The **Community Integration Forum** replaced the Ukraine Community Response Forum in 2024, bringing together key agencies to coordinate integration supports. Two subgroups focus on **Intercultural** and **Health & Wellbeing** issues.
- Galway County Council received **€1,180,860** under the Community Recognition Fund in 2024. Sixteen community projects addressing infrastructure needs and benefiting wider communities are being delivered between 2024–2026.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- A new **National Migrant Integration Strategy** will be launched in 2026. Galway County Council will begin developing its own **Migrant Integration Strategy** for the county.
- The **Offer a Home Scheme** is running until March 2026 and is expected to continue until March 2027 following the extension of the Temporary Protection Directive.
- Funding has been provided for an additional **Integration Support Worker**, fully funded by the Department of Justice, Home Affairs & Migration.
- Complete and close all **community recognition funding projects** approved from the 2024 allocation.

LOCAL COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

The Department of Justice has introduced a new Community Safety Policy based on the principle that policing is a shared responsibility involving other government agencies such as health and social services. The policy promotes a whole-of-government approach delivered through Local Community Safety Partnerships (LCSPs), supported by a national governance structure. This ensures communities have a strong voice in prioritising local actions and oversight to ensure they are implemented.

LCSPs bring together all relevant state services and the community at local authority level, building on Joint Policing Committees to create a more holistic forum for discussion, decision-making, and action on local priorities. Each LCSP is supported by a dedicated Community Safety Coordinator (Grade VII – Administrative Officer) and an administrator (Grade IV – Assistant Staff Officer), both funded by the Department of Justice and recruited by the local authority.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

Local Community Safety Partnerships (LCSPs) may have up to 30 members, appointed by the Minister, including:

Statutory members:

- 7 elected local authority members
- 1 local authority employee
- Representatives from An Garda Síochána, HSE, and Tusla

Community and voluntary sector members:

- Local residents, youth, minority, education, business, and social inclusion representatives

LCSP members elect a Chair and Vice-Chair for a three-year term. The Chair leads strategic direction, facilitates meetings, and represents the LCSP publicly; vacancies are filled by election or temporary delegation. The Chief Executive of the relevant local authority convenes the first meeting, calling the election process.

The LCSP's objective is to bring statutory bodies and communities together, focusing on locally identified concerns. Each LCSP develops and implements its own Community Safety Plan, taking a strategic approach to ensure issues are addressed collectively by service providers in partnership with the community.

HUMAN RESOURCES, CITY & COUNTY LIBRARIES AND ENVIRONMENT

HUMAN RESOURCES ACTIVITY

- The Human Resources Department continues to foster a culture of positive employee engagement and professional development through the implementation of HR policies and legislation, improving wellbeing, work-life balance, job satisfaction, retention, and productivity.
- Recruitment is prioritised through Workforce Planning to ensure effective use of staff skills in delivering the strategic goals of Galway County Council's Corporate Plan. To date, 82 posts have been filled in line with the Strategic Workforce Plan 2023 and available budget.
- Recruitment during 2025 was carried out in accordance with DEHLG staffing sanctioning, the Strategic Workforce Plan, and budget provisions. The HR Department continues to engage with Trade Unions and the Water Services Union forum regarding the transition of Water Services staff to Uisce Éireann, to be completed by the end of 2026.

RECRUITMENT AND WORKFORCE PLANNING

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

Recruitment Activity, up to Quarter 3, 2025: To the end of Quarter 3, 2025, the Human Resources Department established 45 recruitment panels, resulting in the following appointments:

Activity	No
Temporary Contracts	64
Permanent Contracts	63
Acting Contracts	34
Promotions	47

The Recruitment team continues to focus on Fire Services recruitment and engagement with Uisce Éireann and Water Services regarding the reassignment of Water Services staff by the end of 2026.

STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The Training and Development Section provides a wide range of programmes to enable staff and management to carry out their duties competently and safely.

- Investment in training supports upskilling and ongoing personal and professional development.
- Health & Safety training formed a key part of the 2025 plan, including Safe Pass, Manual Handling, First Aid recertification, Chainsaw Training, Road Opening Reinstatement, Abrasive Wheels, and Fire Evacuation courses.
- Approximately 2,029 training days were delivered by the HR Training team from January to October 2025.

STAFF WELFARE

Galway County Council's Staff Welfare team continues to support work-life and family-friendly schemes, including Parents' Leave, Maternity benefits, Shorter Working Year, and Carer's Leave. A confidential Employee Assistance Service provides advisory and counselling support. Other

benefits include the Occupational Health Scheme, Blended Working, Staff Education Scheme, and access to the Travel Pass and Cycle to Work schemes.

RETIREMENTS

- Following the Public Services Superannuation (Age of Retirement) Act 2018, the compulsory retirement age for most staff recruited before 1 April 2004 has increased from 65 to 70 years.
- Staff recruited after 1 January 2013 and who are members of the Single Pension Scheme also have a compulsory retirement age of 70.
- Galway County Council service records indicate that eight full-time staff members will reach retirement age in 2026.
- To date, 20 staff members have retired in 2025.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Continue to recruit and deploy staff in line with the Strategic Workforce Plan 2023, Government policy, and service priorities.
- Deliver mandatory Health and Safety training and support staff education and development programmes.
- Develop, implement, and communicate HR policies in line with legislation and best practice.
- Advise and support Line Managers in implementing workplace policies.
- Promote dignity at work, diversity, and equality for all employees.
- Foster good industrial relations and strengthen partnership approaches to problem-solving for the benefit of employees and customers.
- Increase uptake of PMDS across the organisation through training and in line with the Blended Working Policy.
- Implement efficiencies within the HR department through continuous Business Process Improvements.

LIBRARY SERVICES

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

Galway Public Libraries: Empowering Communities Through Inclusive Services

Galway Public Libraries are at the heart of our communities, delivering a wide range of services that reflect the core values of Ireland's national library strategy. We are committed to inclusion, literacy, and lifelong learning for all.

Core Services

Our libraries provide welcoming, accessible spaces offering:

- Extensive lending collections for adults and children, including books, audiobooks, and multimedia resources.
- Public access to computers, high-speed internet, printing, and scanning.
- A nationwide book request and inter-library loan service.
- Quiet study areas for students and lifelong learners.
- Daily newspapers and a wide selection of magazines.

- Versatile community spaces for events, workshops, and meetings, available to schools, community groups, NGOs, arts organisations, and Galway County Council departments.

We also work closely with a broad network of partners to deliver programmes that strengthen literacy, wellbeing, and community connection across the county.

Digital Library – Anytime, Anywhere

Our digital library gives members free, 24/7 access to a wide range of online resources, including:

- **BorrowBox** – eBooks, eAudiobooks, newspapers, and magazines from over 120 countries in 18 languages.
- **Comics Plus** – Unlimited access to thousands of digital comics, graphic novels, and manga.
- **Universal Class** – Over 500 online courses in digital skills, wellness, creative arts, and professional development.
- **Transparent Language Online** – Courses in more than 100 languages, including English for non-native speakers in 25 languages.
- **LOTE for Kids** – Multilingual children’s books in over 30 languages, including Ukrainian.
- **Medici.tv** – The leading classical music streaming platform, offering 150 live events annually and an extensive on-demand library.
- **TTRS (Touch-Type Read and Spell)** – A multisensory programme supporting literacy and spelling development.
- **Nessy** – An engaging learning platform designed for children with dyslexia and other neurodiverse learning needs.

Community Engagement & Social Connection

Galway Public Libraries are vibrant community hubs that foster connection, creativity, and lifelong learning. Their diverse events and programmes play a key role in promoting wellbeing and social cohesion. Regular programmes include:

- **Book clubs** – Encouraging reading for pleasure and critical discussion in a relaxed, social setting.
- **Craft circles** – Providing a creative outlet and space for skill-sharing across generations.
- **Poetry groups** – Celebrating literary expression and offering a platform for local voices.
- **Women’s groups** – Supporting empowerment, peer connection, and shared learning.
- **Active retirement meetups** – Promoting social inclusion, wellbeing, and continued engagement in later life.
- **Parent & toddler sessions** – Offering early literacy activities and peer support for parents and caregivers.
- **Ciorcal Comhrá (Irish language conversation circles)** – Supporting the use and revival of the Irish language in everyday life.

These gatherings are welcoming and inclusive, helping reduce social isolation, foster friendships, and build a sense of belonging, while also promoting intergenerational learning, cultural exchange, and community-led initiatives. We proudly celebrate and support national and local initiatives such as:

- Seachtain na Gaeilge
- Heritage Week
- Positive Ageing Week
- Irish Astronomy Week

- Bealtaine Festival
- Ireland Reads Day
- Cruinniú na nÓg
- Engineers Week
- World Refugee Week
- Biodiversity Week
- Decade of Centenaries
- Creative Ireland events

Children's Literacy & Learning

Galway libraries nurture a love of reading from an early age with inclusive, engaging children's programmes such as school visits, Spring Into Storytime, Summer Reading Challenge, Children's Book Festival, Family Time, Baby Rhyme Time, and Cruinniú na nÓg, all supporting literacy and a lifelong love of books.

'Right to Read' Programme

'Right to Read' is a national programme to promote literacy and reading development for people of all ages and backgrounds. It currently includes four national programmes that are designed to promote children's reading and literacy:

Spring into Storytime

This programme runs in all county libraries during April, offering events for preschool and primary-aged children. Activities included sensory experiences, music workshops, storytelling with STEM tools like Ozobots to teach basic coding, and author visits, with writers such as Meabh McDonnell sharing insights into story creation.

Summer Reading Challenge "Summer Stars"

Summer Stars is the national public library summer reading programme for children, running from June to August. It encourages reading and writing over the school holidays in a non-competitive, inclusive way, while offering creative workshops, arts, performance, drama, storytelling, and environmental and Irish language activities. Over 3,500 children participated across the county, with celebrations attended by the Cathaoirleach and City Mayor.

Children's Book Festival "Bookit!"

The annual Children's Book Festival each October, held across Galway Public Libraries and primary schools with support from the Arts Offices, aims to foster a love of reading and learning while strengthening community bonds.

Author talks and the creative writing:

Children in Dunmore, Tuam and Ballinasloe libraries enjoyed creative writing, book creation and storytelling sessions. Activities included calligraphy, crest and motto designing, superhero creation, and Harry Potter wand crafts. International storyteller Niall De Búrca encouraged children to use theatrics and improvisation in storytelling.

Family Time At Your Library:

The programme emphasises the involvement of the whole family in children's reading. Many events are held on Saturdays and during late evening hours. It adopts a family-focused approach,

offering shared reading experiences, bedtime story sessions, and opportunities for family members to participate in arts and crafts activities.

Little Library Bags

As part of the Right to Read First 5 programme, Galway Public Libraries delivered the Little Library initiative. This provided every child starting school in September with a book bag, two books, information on joining the library, and a wallet to hold their new library card. Parents and guardians are encouraged to enrol their children in the library. The aim of the programme is to foster a lifelong love of reading and to create connections with the local library. In 2024, 1,000 book bags were distributed across the community.

Literacy Skills Development

- The Adult Literacy for Life (A.L.L.) strategy is a ten-year, whole-of-Government initiative aimed at addressing literacy, numeracy and digital skills needs across Ireland. Galway Public Libraries, in partnership with GRETB, play a key role in delivering the strategy by providing drop-in digital skills sessions.
- Four libraries host tutors for morning sessions to support people in developing their digital literacy. Galway City Library ran workshops for older participants, offering one-to-one guidance on using computers, phones, and tablets. Westside Library, through its Digital Skills Ambassador, hosted drop-in sessions to help older people access the library's extensive online resources.

Age Friendly Libraries

- The Age Friendly Library Recognition Programme supports libraries in reviewing facilities and services to meet the needs of older customers. Libraries provide information, cultural activities, digital access, and social support, acting as community hubs and learning centres.
- All Galway library branches have achieved Age Friendly status. Each has an Age Friendly Champion, reading aids, accessible seating, and adjustable bookshelves. Libraries have hosted events including the Healthy Age Friendly Home initiative, Local Heroes exhibitions, Scrabble for Seniors, and jigsaw workshops. Ballybane Library held an information morning for recent retirees, showcasing local activities and community groups.
- Bealtaine Festival celebrates creativity and arts in later life, with inter-generational storytelling sessions led by Niall De Búrca in Ballinasloe, Tuam, Loughrea, and Portumna Libraries.

Postal Service

Galway Libraries offer a postal delivery service in partnership with An Post for visually impaired members, providing free access to the audio book collection with items delivered directly to their homes.

Healthy Ireland at your Library

Healthy Ireland is a national government-led initiative to improve health and wellbeing, focusing on prevention, raising awareness, and helping people stay healthy for longer. Galway Public Libraries continue to deliver the Healthy Ireland At Your Library programme, providing an important community resource with a comprehensive collection of books on health and wellbeing, along with extensive online resources including eBooks, eAudiobooks and eMagazines. The

programme also features a wide-ranging calendar of events, workshops and talks on physical health, mental health and health literacy.

Highlights from 2025 include:

- **Moylough Library** – Community outreach with the Croí team on stroke and cardiac events, including prevention, life after stroke, and living with cardiac disease.
- **Leabharlann Na Ceathrún Rua** – Pilates classes focused on fall prevention strategies.
- **Tuam and Gort Libraries** – Events on bone and pelvic health for men and women.
- **Podiatrist visits** – Showcasing the importance of foot health.
- **Ballinasloe Library** – Talks from Galway Autism Partnership on Autism and parental guidance for supporting children with Autism.
- **Oranmore Library** – Session on supporting students during exam periods.

The programme also partnered with the Social Prescriber for Galway City, delivering wellbeing sessions, crafting workshops, and discussions on mental health, nutrition, and strategies for coping with depression.

Mobile Library Outreach

Community Connects – This initiative brings diverse community members together for discussions and guest speakers. It has become a key social event at Tuam Library, offering activities from flower arranging to history talks. Supported by the Social Prescriber with Galway Rural Development, the programme provides a safe and welcoming space for people to meet, reconnect and engage with their community.

Sensory Services – Westside Library has increased sessions in its sensory room and facilitated LEGO-based play therapy. The installation of two new sensory hubs at Ballinasloe and Tuam Libraries extends these services across the county. The rollout of sensory toys and additional staff training enhances the suite of services available through Galway Public Libraries.

Community Outreach and Engagement

In 2025, Galway Public Libraries expanded their outreach and community engagement, with staff attending open days, information sessions and meetings with groups including Women's Sheds, Direct Provision centres, Active Retirement groups, Men's Sheds and Climate Action groups. Staff also promoted library services and the Europe Direct Centre at the Monivea and Glenamaddy agricultural shows.

The *Make the Link* initiative, organised by Galway Rural Development and GRETB, showcases local education and training opportunities. Library staff used this platform to highlight supports for job seekers, young people, families and the Ukrainian community at fairs in Tuam, Ballinasloe, Clifden and Gort.

Cultural Activities

- Galway's Great Read 2025

Galway's Great Read is an annual programme organised by Galway Public Libraries each November. It promotes Galway's literary heritage, history and culture, fostering appreciation of its diversity and richness. Each year the programme commemorates a literary figure, historical event or genre through readings, poetry, exhibitions, talks and reminiscences of life in Galway.

- **Westside Arts Festival**

2025 marked the 20th year of the Westside Arts Festival, this year titled *Exploring New Horizons*. The festival is a community-led event that brings people together through the arts in a positive and inclusive way. It is now considered strategically important to the delivery of the City Arts Strategy and was founded by the library service with community partners. Over 20 events were hosted, attracting more than 4,000 visitors to Westside Library.

- **Culture night**

Culture Night / Oíche Chultúir is an annual all-island event celebrating culture, creativity and the arts. It promotes Ireland's rich and varied culture and highlights its role in people's lives. Galway Public Libraries hosted a range of events, including crafting, music, poetry sessions and drama workshops.

Strategic Partnerships

Galway Public Libraries are proud to be part of the Creative Communities on a Shared Island project running until 2025. The cross-border initiative, *Birds of a Feather*, brings together women from Belfast, County Clare and County Galway, including participants from Catholic, Protestant, Nationalist, Loyalist and ethnic minority backgrounds. Funded through Clare Creative Ireland, the programme allows artists to engage in shared learning through arts and crafts, history workshops, and cultural awareness activities.

Another key partnership was the pilot EU project *Intertwined Mosaic*, funded and coordinated by Cúram, the SFI Research Centre for Medical Devices at the University of Galway. Transition Year students from Galway Community College collaborated with 12 EU partners under the HORIZON programme, exploring STEAM learning and fostering policy development in science education through applied and focused learning.

Galway Libraries mobile service

Galway Public Libraries launched its first mobile library service on 1 April 1960. The service is now busier than ever, serving 55 stops in towns and villages, including playschools and nursing homes. Following the announcement of capital funding for new vehicles, community engagement and mapping are underway to ensure that the new vehicles provide access to the communities that need it most.

Home Energy Saving Kits

In response to demand, five additional kits were acquired for loan to library members. Online tutorials were also provided, alongside a children's energy-saving experiment workshop.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Work will continue, subject to funding, to maintain and improve library services in Galway in line with the National Public Library 2023–2027 strategy, *The Library is the Place: Information, Recreation, Inspiration*.
- National campaigns such as Healthy Ireland and Right to Read will be rolled out across the library network to ensure a range of services in both urban and rural branches.
- Refurbishment and upgrades of libraries will continue where funding allows, with consideration for energy efficiency and environmental impact.

- Technology use will be enhanced, including self-service options and promotion of online resources. Branch computerisation will continue, subject to staffing and resources. Clifden Library will open as a My Open Library in 2025.
- Maintenance and upgrade of the library vehicle fleet will continue, including planning for new mobile libraries.
- Efforts will continue to increase the book fund and develop events programmes to engage communities.
- Outreach and community engagement will be expanded to raise awareness of services and respond to the needs of new and established communities.
- The Shared Island Project with Clare Libraries, *Birds of a Feather*, will continue in partnership with women's groups in Ballinasloe, Belfast, Inishbofin, and Clare.
- The Europe Direct Centre at Ballinasloe Library will continue to provide information on the EU and access to EU publications.

LEGAL ADVISORY SERVICES

The Law Agent Department of Galway County Council provides legal transactional and advisory services across Property-Based Services, Housing, Code Enforcement, Judicial Review and Litigation, Debt Recovery, and general legal support for all Directorates. Over the years, the Department's role has expanded significantly, reflecting reforms in in-house legal departments and the growing scope of council services. It now plays a key role in Ethics, Freedom of Information, AIE Requests, Data Protection, Subject Access Requests, Ombudsman complaints, Corporate Governance, and Public Procurement.

Increasing complexity in EU legislation has created further challenges, particularly in Housing, Planning, and Environmental Law. The introduction of Protective Costs Orders has led to a rise in Judicial Review challenges in the Superior Courts to the council's Executive and Reserved functions.

Recent government housing initiatives, including Tenant Purchase, Vacant Property Refurbishment Grants, and the Repair & Lease Scheme, have further increased the Department's workload and areas of practice.

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- The Department continued to provide legal and advisory services for all programme areas and Directorates. These services included the acquisition and sale of properties, an area of practice which has continued to increase over the last number of years given the housing crisis that exists, both nationally and locally, and considering the actions taken under the Programme for Government.
- Another significant area of practice for the department has been the conduct of litigation to include District Court enforcement prosecutions, Circuit and High Court, including the defence of Judicial Review applications involving practically all our Directorates within the organisation.
- The completion of land acquisitions, CPOs on inter-urban routes, road widening schemes and Greenway projects were also substantial sources of ongoing work for the Law Agent Department and will continue to be so.

- A new and ever-growing area of practice is that involving the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant Scheme. It is anticipated that this area of work will continue to grow at pace and, as such, this has been identified as a key area of future practice along with our colleagues in the Housing Directorate.
- The Case Management System, which facilitates the use of templates to create workflows for the efficient and cost-effective delivery of legal services, is continually updated with the view to keeping the Law Agent Department up to date and equipped to deal with new schemes and projects, as introduced by Central Government each year. This also assists our staff in keeping abreast with developments and changes in legislative provisions which govern the vast majority of the activities of our organisation.
- Work has continued on the council 'Register of Lands' in co-operation with our partners in other units such as IT, Finance and Housing. Further progress has been made in terms of the proposed new unit for the organisation, the Property Interest Register, and indeed in the continuing day-to-day tasks of the registration of council property and archiving of old files. Funding for the new IS management system is in place and the Law Agent Department has engaged with new/additional service providers in this specialised field, supplemental to previous engagement, with the view to finalising this system acquisition. Staffing for a new Property Interest Register Unit has received approval in principle within the organisation and is awaiting final approval from the Department having been identified by means of the Strategic Workforce Plan. This is also in line with Local Government Auditor requirements in this specific area.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Focus on and continue in our efforts to provide efficient legal advisory services for all programme areas throughout the organisation.
- We continue in our significant efforts to meet our requirements in terms of the new Data Protection Regulations, to include Data Mapping and Risk Control. We have appointed a specific GDPR and FoI representative for the unit from our solicitor staff in this regard in addition to a representative with specific duties in the significant area of Corporate Governance.
- Staff within the Law Agent Department will continue to receive, in conjunction with HR, any appropriate update training throughout the year to best enable and empower team to assist the organisation and its various directorates to achieve the goals set for the upcoming year.
- Workflows for the Case Management System will continue to be created, further enhancing work delivery and capacity. We will also look to maximise the benefits of this important system as the practice of Remote/Blended Working of council staff has become part of the very fabric of a work-life balance for the organisation and its employees. Staff will continue in their efforts to maximise the use of this system in 2026.
- We will ensure that our team members will, through the appropriate training, continue to keep up to date with developments in Local Government Law and to stay up to date with new or amended Statute and overall Office Management and practice procedures.
- The ongoing work on the Register of Lands will be given additional focus and represent a priority area of work with the ultimate aim of bringing the council's record of property ownership fully up to date. The implementation of the new IS Management system and the completion of the setting up of the new Property Interest Register Unit is a key goal

for the Law Agent Office in Q1 of 2026 when it is anticipated that final approval will have issued from the Department.

- Recruitment to back-fill and complete the Law Agent team of employees will be crucial in the early part of 2026 to safeguard and ensure the ongoing and efficient provision of legal and advisory services to the council. Recent temporary appointments in “Acting-Up” positions in 2025 have ensured for a smooth transition with minimum interruption in terms of retirement of long-serving employees. The focus in 2026 will be to ensure that said roles are filled appropriately on a full-time basis to ensure staffing continuity and efficiency in our provision of advisory services to the council.

ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT

WASTE MANAGEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE

The Council recognises that effective waste management infrastructure is essential to promote prevention, reuse, recycling, and recovery, and to sustainably manage residual waste, supporting more sustainable communities for current and future residents.

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

Recycling Infrastructure: The Gort Civic Amenity Site project is progressing, with Uisce Éireann connections being finalised. Tuam Civic Amenity Site is awaiting EPA feedback on its registration, while planning permission for a Waste Transfer Station on Inis Oirr has been granted and funding is being explored. A new 3-year service contract for the Bottle Bank Network commenced in July 2025, and tenders for management of Civic Amenity Sites closed in October 2025.

Historic Landfills: Ecology assessments for East Galway Eco Park have been updated, and preliminary design for Pollboy Amenity Park has been completed, with consultants to be procured for planning. Certification of Authorisation applications for six Category A sites have been submitted; Tullyvoheen Clifden has received its licence, with monitoring and reporting ongoing.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

The Council will renew service contracts for Civic Amenity Sites in 2026, with Gort expected to become operational by Q3. Licensing of Historic Landfills will continue, and progress on East Galway Eco Park and Pollboy Amenity Park developments will depend on resources and planning approvals.

ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING AND ENFORCEMENT MEASURES

The Council's Environment Enforcement Team monitors and enforces environmental standards for air, noise, water, wastewater, and waste, following the annual RMCEI Plan. Full-year activity statistics will be reported to the EPA in February 2026.

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

Air & Noise

- Inspections carried out on air pollution licences, decorative paints facilities, and solvent-registered sites.
- Legal action taken against an unauthorised garage for breaches of the Water Pollution Act and EU Paints Regulations.
- Enforcement of Solid Fuel regulations during the winter, including retail inspections, warning notices, and monitoring of online sales.

Water & Wastewater

- Monitoring of drinking water, bathing water, rivers, and lakes, with follow-up action on non-compliances; EPA audit of sampling procedures completed in May 2025.
- Bathing season sampling conducted at all 28 sites; applications submitted for 8 Blue Flag Beaches and 6 Green Coast Awards, all successful.
- As of October, inspections included 122 discharge licences, 183 domestic wastewater systems, 41 farms, and 29 water pollution complaints. Enforcement actions taken as required, including a court case resulting in a €3,000 fine and compliance order.

Litter & Waste Enforcement

- 66 litter fines issued; 29 paid, 10 referred to legal proceedings, remainder ongoing.
- Inspections carried out for waste facility permits, collection permits, quarry licences, producer responsibility schemes, and the Deposit Return Scheme.
- Multi-agency checkpoints held in Oranmore, Carnmore, and Tuam to tackle illegal waste activity.
- Waste presentation bye-law inspections carried out in targeted housing estates.
- New construction and demolition waste recycling facility approved, the first in Galway.
- Successful prosecutions secured for unauthorised scrap yards, illegal dumping, and stockpiling of household waste, with fines, court orders, and imprisonment applied where necessary.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

The Council will outline its planned and non-routine environmental enforcement activities in the RMCEI Plan 2026, to be submitted to the EPA in February. The Plan will prioritise actions within available staffing resources, following guidance from the Department, EPA, LAWPRO, and WERLA.

DERELICT SITES AND DANGEROUS STRUCTURES

The Council enforces the Derelict Sites Act 1990 (as amended), requiring landowners or occupiers to prevent their land or structures from becoming derelict, helping preserve the amenity of towns and villages.

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- The Council continued to use its powers under the Derelict Sites Act 1990 and the Local Government (Sanitary Services) Act 1964 to address neglected or unsightly buildings and land.
- Enforcement action included 27 notices issued to date in 2025.
- The Environment section supported the Housing Section with the implementation of the CPO Activation Programme.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- The Council will continue to review county sites under the Derelict Sites and Dangerous Structures policies, incorporating any updates to national procedures.

BURIAL GROUNDS

The Council will support the development and extension of burial grounds that meet required standards, while preserving the cultural and historical heritage of existing sites.

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- **Capital Works:** The Leitir Mór burial ground extension was approved and will provide 193 plots and 10 urn plots, operational in 2026. Rinvile Oranmore extension approved, offering 1,734 plots and 68 urn plots; construction drawings in preparation. Annaghdown new burial ground is under reassessment. HSE completed testing for Cill Éinne and Tynagh sites.
- **Minor Works:** Upgrades to pathways, walls, and accessibility completed at Abbeyknockmoy, Cargin, Corrandulla, Craughwell, Kilmacduagh, Ballinahown, and Ballinafad.
- **Storm Éowyn Repairs:** Clearance and repairs undertaken at affected burial grounds, with major wall repairs at Ardbear, Corrandulla, and Turlough.
- **Maintenance Grants:** €132,900 distributed to 143 committees for grass-cutting, tools, and other burial ground maintenance expenses.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

Burial Grounds: The Council will continue to work with communities to address capacity issues, identify suitable sites, advance capital projects to design stage, and plan minor works based on assessed needs. A full review of the Burial Ground Strategy and Bye-Laws is planned for 2026.

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

The Assistant Environmental Awareness Officer promotes environmental responsibility through education, community engagement, and support for litter and waste prevention initiatives.

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

Awareness and Education

- Social media, radio, newspapers, and cinema adverts were used to raise environmental awareness, including campaigns on food waste prevention, anti-littering, and repair & reuse.
- A record 1,524 entries were received for the Anti-Litter Schools Poster Competition, with students from across the county attending the awards ceremony at Áras an Chontae.
- The Gum Litter Task Force campaign promoted positive gum disposal as part of the Summer Roadshow.
- The Department supported national campaigns from WEEE Ireland, Leave No Trace, and Regional Waste Management Planning Offices.
- The Anti-Litter Ambassador Programme expanded to additional schools, community groups, and businesses.

Community Action & Partnerships

- National Spring Clean engaged 174 groups and 2,657 volunteers to remove litter from roadsides, parks, and coastlines.
- National Tree Week saw 400 tree saplings distributed to schools, community groups, and voluntary organisations.
- The Green Schools Programme continued with 35 schools renewing their flag; two schools received a Green School for the first time. Participating schools engaged in initiatives such as battery recycling, GLOBE projects, and Picker Pals.
- Fifteen youth-led projects were supported under the Eco-UNESCO Young Environmentalist Awards.
- The ReLove Fashion Competition encouraged sustainable fashion, with Gort Community School winning the regional award for Best Research.

Litter Prevention Initiatives

- Christmas tree recycling operated at 13 county sites in January 2025.
- WEEE collection was supported at 16 locations across the county.
- Farm plastics collection was promoted at 10 locations.
- Subsidised bulky goods collections removed 33 tonnes of waste at Council sites and additional marts.
- Multi-media campaigns and out-of-hours monitoring by Community Wardens helped combat illegal dumping, particularly at textile banks.
- A pilot Upholstery Project invited communities to re-upholster furniture as an alternative to disposal.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- The Council will continue to promote environmental awareness through campaigns with national agencies, schools, communities, and businesses, while supporting Tidy Towns and community clean-up groups.

- A review of the 2023–2025 Litter Management Plan will be undertaken, with public consultation to inform the new 2026–2028 plan.

ANIMAL CONTROL AND WELFARE

The Council oversees dog control, licensing, and enforcement under the Control of Dogs Act through its wardens and shelter facility. From June 2025, responsibility for dog control transferred to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM), which also took over the Dog Breeding Establishments Act in January 2025. Until legislation changes, local wardens will continue assisting DAFM with inspections, registrations, and the breeding establishments register.

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- **Promotion of Responsible Dog Ownership:**
 - The Council used social media to raise awareness of dog control, licensing, and fouling, and launched targeted newspaper and online campaigns following several livestock worrying incidents.
 - The Council continues to partner with MADRA to promote Millie’s Fund, which provides free spaying vouchers for eligible female dogs. A total of 295 vouchers have been issued to date.
 - In partnership with MADRA, the Council also supports the “Talking Dog” Primary School initiative, which teaches children about safe interactions with dogs and responsible pet ownership. Four schools have been visited so far this year.
- **Dog Control & Enforcement:**
 - Dog licensing campaigns were carried out by the dog warden and community warden services, including door-to-door checks across selected county areas. A total of 6,871 dog licences have been purchased to date, slightly ahead of the same period in 2024.
 - The Dog Warden Service investigated 15 reported incidents of sheep kills and livestock worrying in line with policy, liaising with An Garda Síochána where required.
 - Forty fixed penalty notices were issued to dog owners, with 17 paid in full, nine on payment plans, two progressed to legal proceedings, and the remainder under review.
 - Since 1 February 2025, it has been illegal to own an XL Bully-type dog without a Certificate of Exemption under new regulations introduced in October 2024. The Council received 30 applications by the February deadline.
- **Dog Shelter:**
 - Upgrade works to the Council’s leased dog shelter under the 2024 Dog Control Initiative were completed in early 2025. The project provided seven additional kennels, including two safety kennels for larger breeds such as XL Bullies, and new outdoor enclosures to improve exercise and treatment facilities.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

The Council will continue licensing, enforcement, and the promotion of responsible dog ownership through ongoing campaigns and initiatives. An additional dog warden is expected to be appointed in early 2025 to support monitoring and regulatory work across the county.

FOOD SAFETY

Effective 1 January 2025, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) assumed responsibility for food safety services on behalf of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland. All local authority veterinary inspectors transferred to DAFM following the expiry of the Service Level Agreement on 31 December 2024. Local authorities continue to process payments for temporary veterinary inspectors during the transition period, which is expected to conclude by October 2025, with all associated costs recouped from DAFM.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT, FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES, CLIMATE CHANGE

The primary goal of the Transport Department is to establish, oversee, and maintain a safe and efficient roads and transport network. This is done in collaboration with the Department of Transport and other agencies to develop integrated, sustainable transport policies. Works include pavement repairs, surface dressing, line painting, signage, drainage, and grass and verge trimming.

The Transport budget is funded by grants from the Department of Transport, Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), the National Transport Authority (NTA), and the Council's own resources. Grant notifications for 2026 are expected early in the year; for planning purposes, it is assumed levels will match 2025. Continued central funding is essential for advancing projects.

Following budget adoption and confirmation of central grants, a detailed budget breakdown will be presented to the Council as part of the Roads Programme 2026.

Road grant allocations are distributed among Municipal Districts based on road kilometres and the three-year Road Works Programme.

Road Lengths per MD					
Municipal District	Motorway	National Primary	National Secondary	Regional	Local
Athenry/Oranmore	31.82	2.17	29.86	86.04	571.37
Ballinasloe	16.85	0.00	30.13	222.39	1,343.98
Conamara	0.00	0.00	109.60	236.69	1,132.38
Loughrea	51.26	0.00	60.34	279.19	1,628.59
Tuam	14.15	20.95	61.41	96.04	949.93
Total	114.08	23.12	291.34	899.66	5,626.25

NATIONAL ROADS - INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025

In 2025, funding was provided to support the continued advancement and delivery of the National Road network across the county. These projects are managed by the National Roads Project Office, with all associated costs fully recouped from Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII).

National Road No.	Route Section
N6	Galway City Ring Road
N59	Clifden to Maam Cross
N59	Maigh Cuilinn Bypass
N59	Maam Cross to Oughterard
N63	Liss to Abbey Realignment
N17	Milltown to Gortnagunnad Realignment
N84	Galway to Curraghmore
N59	Oughterard Bridge
Greenways	Galway to Athlone Cycleway Connemara Greenways
Active Travel	AT- N63 Abbeyknockmoy Village AAT-N67 South of Ballindereen

- **N6 Galway City Ring Road (N6-GCRR)** – Under consideration by An Coimisiún Pleanála (ACP) following a High Court remittal. ACP issued a Request for Further Information (RFI) on the development consent and compulsory acquisition schemes, including submissions on the Climate Action Plan and Galway City Development Plan. GCC responded in April 2025; the response was on public display from 27 June to 1 August 2025, receiving 28 submissions. ACP will decide if an oral hearing is required.
- **Maam Cross to Oughterard** – Planning permission granted. Phase 1 (Maam Cross to Bunnakill) complete. Phase 2 (Bunnakill to Claremount) ongoing with discussions with NPWS and IFI regarding a Section 146(b) application. Land acquisition continuing.
- **Galway to Athlone Cycleway** – Preferred route under review due to policy, environmental and engineering constraints; consultants appointed by Westmeath County Council, expected completion by year-end. Public engagement and landowner liaison continued.
- **N59 Maigh Cuilinn Bypass** – Open to traffic since December 2023; remaining land settlements to be finalised.
- **N63 Abbeyknockmoy to Annagh Hill** – Construction complete; land settlements continuing.
- **N63 Liss to Abbey Realignment** – Consultants appointed for Phases 5–7; detailed design ongoing. Advanced fencing, Molinia meadow translocation and archaeological investigations to commence Q4 2025.
- **N84 Galway to Curraghmore** – Phases 0–1 feasibility completed; Phase 2–4 approval to be sought in 2026.
- **N17 Milltown to Gortnagunnad Realignment** – Land acquisition and settlements progressing; detailed design nearing completion. Archaeology surveys and advance works completed; main construction tender to be finalised by year-end.

- **Clifden to Oughterard (Connemara Greenway)** – Construction and land acquisition ongoing between Clifden and Recess. CPO confirmed following oral hearing; Judicial Review application pending. Landowner consultations continuing Recess to Oughterard.
- **Galway to Oughterard (Connemara Greenway)** – Phase 3 design and environmental evaluation ongoing.
- **Derrygimlagh–Kylemore Greenway** – Phase 1 concept and feasibility completed; awaiting TII approval for further progression.
- **Annual resurfacing and maintenance programme** – Undertaken in accordance with TII-maintained budgets.
- **Pavement Overlay works** – Prepared for tender on National Primary and Secondary Roads under 2024 TII allocations.
- **Active Travel Schemes** – N67 South of Ballindereen and N63 Abbeyknockmoy Village progressed through Part 8 planning.

NATIONAL ROADS - PROPOSALS FOR 2026

- **N59 Maigh Cuilinn Bypass** – Remaining land settlements will continue.
- **N6 Galway City Ring Road** – An Coimisiún Pleanála will decide on a possible oral hearing. A decision is expected in 2026. Subject to approval and funding, the project can progress.
- **Galway to Athlone Cycleway** – Consultant framework in place; public engagement and liaison with landowners will continue pending review of the preferred route.
- **N59 Bunnakill to Claremount** – Water sampling completed to protect Fresh Water Pearl Mussel population. Tenders being prepared for advance ground investigation, surveys and archaeology in Q1–Q2 2026. Land acquisition ongoing.
- **N63 Liss to Abbey Realignment** – Advanced fencing, Molinia meadow translocation, and archaeological investigations to be completed in Q1 2026. Main construction tender to be advertised in 2026; works in 2026/2027.
- **N63 Abbeyknockmoy to Annagh Hill** – Land settlements will continue in 2026.
- **N84 Galway to Curraghmore** – Funding requested from TII to progress Phases 2–4 in 2026.
- **N17 Milltown to Gortnagunnad Realignment** – Land acquisition and settlements continue. Advance works contracts to be completed early 2026 for utility diversions. Tender process expected early 2026; construction to start Q3 2026.
- **N59 Oughterard Footbridge** – Application submitted July 2025; decision expected 13 January 2026. Detailed design and land settlements ongoing.
- **Clifden to Oughterard (Connemara Greenway)** – Complete construction and land acquisition on Clifden–Recess; continue negotiations on Recess–Oughterard.
- **Galway to Oughterard (Connemara Greenway)** – Complete Phase 3 design and environmental evaluation; commence Phase 4 statutory processes.
- **Derrygimlagh–Kylemore Greenway** – Commence Phase 2 options selection if approved.
- **Annual resurfacing and maintenance programme** – Includes ordinary, winter and bridge maintenance, and traffic route lighting within TII funding limits.
- **Pavement Overlay works** – Continue on National Primary and Secondary Road Network in line with 2026 TII allocations.
- **Active Travel (AT) Schemes** – Progress N67 South of Ballinderreen and N63 Abbeyknockmoy Village through land acquisition and commence construction.

REGIONAL AND LOCAL ROADS MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENT WORKS

The 2025 total grant allocation for Regional and Local Roads was **€43,650,160** and this grant allocation was classified under the following headings:

Grant Category	2025 Allocation
Restoration Improvement Grant	€22,651,500
Restoration Maintenance Grant	€2,844,000
Supplementary Restoration Maintenance	€2,488,500
Discretionary Maintenance Grant	€5,756,500
Specific Improvement Grants – Bridge Rehabilitation Programme	€773,500
Low-Cost Safety Improvement Grants	€523,500
Specific Improvement Grants	€2,105,000
Strategic Regional and Local Roads	€1,200,000
Speed Limits – Review Signs	€915,000
Training	€128,000
Drainage Works	€1,258,000
Community Involvement Scheme	€964,160
Former National Roads	€770,000
*PSCI: Survey Support	€ 52,000
Climate Adaptation & Resilience	€1,220,500
OVERALL TOTAL	€43,650,160

**Pavement Survey Condition Index*

RESTORATION IMPROVEMENT (RI) - INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025

The Department of Transport allocated €22,651,500 in 2025 for road reconstruction works on Non-National roads. This funding facilitated improvement works at various locations across the county, as outlined below:

<i>Restoration Improvement 2025</i>		
Municipal District	No. of locations	Allocation
Athenry/Oranmore	21	€2,274,664
Ballinasloe	26	€5,419,709
Conamara	41	€4,737,036
Loughrea	45	€6,600,994
Tuam	26	€3,619,097
Total	159	€22,651,500

2025 was the first year of the 2025–2027 Multi-Annual Restoration Improvement (RI) roads programme, developed with elected members and approved by the Municipal District Councils in Q1 2025.

In Q3 2025, Galway County Council received an additional DoT allocation of €669,000 under the RI programme, distributed to Municipal Districts for extra roadworks.

A similar RI grant allocation is expected for 2026. The programme of restoration and maintenance works will be finalised once DoT funding is confirmed and detailed in the Annual Roads Programme 2026.

RESTORATION MAINTENANCE (RM) – ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

The Department of Transport allocated €5,332,500 for Restoration Maintenance (surface dressing) in 2025. This funding facilitated surface dressing works at various locations across the county, as outlined below:

<i>Restoration Maintenance 2025</i>		
Municipal District	No. of Locations	Allocation
Athenry/Oranmore	15	€535,490
Ballinasloe	39	€1,275,880
Conamara	28	€1,115,169
Loughrea	27	€1,553,972
Tuam	20	€851,989
Total	129	€ 5,332,500

Galway County Council is expected to receive a similar RM grant allocation for 2026. A programme of restoration and maintenance works will be finalised once DoT funding is confirmed and will be detailed in the Annual Roads Programme 2026.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT SCHEMES

- Under the 2025 Regional & Local Road allocation, the Department of Transport approved €964,160, enabling the progression of 25 projects from the 2024 priority list and a legacy list from the 2021 CIS call. Work on these schemes is ongoing, with completion expected by the funding deadline of 30 November 2025.
- A new scheme for 2026/2027 was announced in August 2025, with nearly 120 applications received. The 2026 programme of works will be finalised once funding notification is received in early 2026.

FORMER NATIONAL ROADS

A total of €770,000 was received in 2025 for works on the R446 (former N6 – two sections). A DoT circular issued in Q4 2025 introduced a new funding scheme allowing local authorities to apply in 2026 for strategic regional roads meeting criteria similar to former National Roads. A programme of works for 2026 will be finalised once notification of funding is received in early 2026.

TERTIARY ROAD REPAIRS (DG)

Investment in local tertiary road repairs continued in 2025, with a specific allocation from the Discretionary Grant. A total of €900,000 was provided, enabling restoration and improvement works on 30 local tertiary roads in County Galway. It is intended to continue allocating a portion of the Discretionary Grant to tertiary road improvements. A programme of restoration and maintenance works will be finalised once notification of 2026 funding is received.

BRIDGES REHABILITATION AND REPAIRS

- In 2025, funding of €773,500 was allocated under the Bridge Rehabilitation Programme for nine bridges (four design and five works), with all works and designs ongoing and scheduled for completion by the end of November. A further 18 bridges were repaired with €395,000 from the Discretionary Grant.
- In line with circular RW17/2025, local authorities were invited to submit applications for bridge works not exceeding 130 per cent of the 2025 allocation. Based on available resources, Galway County Council submitted a proposal for 14 bridges (five design, nine works) totalling €1,001,000 for 2026.
- It is intended to continue providing €395,000 from the Discretionary Grant for bridge repairs in 2026, subject to Department funding. Grant applications require preliminary work to establish feasibility and constraints, ensuring a sustainable pipeline of priority projects.

SPECIFIC IMPROVEMENT GRANTS (SIG)

- The Department funding grant supports strategic projects estimated to cost between €200,000 and €5m, targeting regional growth and infrastructure improvements for economic and social development. A total specific improvement grant of €2,105,000 was received in 2025 for projects including R332 Kilbannon, R374 Causeways & Bridges, R339 Belville, and L52214 Cuan na Loinge.
- Galway County Council will seek funding to continue these schemes in 2026 and will submit proposals to the DoT in Q4 2025, including potential new projects such as Creagh Junction, Ballinasloe.

STRATEGIC REGIONAL AND LOCAL ROAD GRANTS

- In 2025, the DoT provided €1,200,000 for the Ballygarraun section of the Athenry Northern Ring Road. Advance site works were completed in 2024, and following procurement, main contract works commenced mid-2025 with Tower Civil Engineering. The project is progressing well.
- The Department has confirmed its ongoing commitment, and a 2026 allocation of approximately €2,500,000 is expected to complete this section by Q3 2026. Design work continues on the eastern section towards Monivea Road.

ACTIVE TRAVEL

- Galway County Council received €2,713,000 in 2025 from the NTA. Much of this funding supported design work on major urban Active Travel projects in Athenry, Tuam, Ballinasloe, Loughrea and Oranmore. The Safe Routes to School programme progressed at locations including Moycullen, Oranmore, Oughterard and Athenry.
- The funding also supported the Bus Stop Enhancement Programme and a range of transport plans and studies, including the Kinava Community Transport Study, the first of its kind nationally. The template developed by Galway County Council will be used by the NTA nationwide.
- A submission for 2026 funding will be prepared in Q4 2025. All Active Travel Team members are fully funded through this NTA programme.

LOCAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES (LIS)

- In 2025, the Department of Rural & Community Development approved an allocation of €1,023,479, with an additional €250,000 ringfenced for the islands. This funding allowed 28 projects to be completed.
- Galway County Council received a second allocation of €843,137 in 2025, enabling a further 23 projects to be completed across all MDs.

NON-NATIONAL ROADS - OWN RESOURCES

- The shortfall in the budget for local road maintenance over time has significantly reduced the level of works the Council can carry out. Inflationary pressures and rising energy costs have increased prices, particularly affecting drainage, verge trimming, and the renewal of signs and markings. Local road maintenance is funded from the Council's own resources and the Discretionary Grant.
- In 2025, €9,116,584 was provided from the Council's own resources, including €1,900,000 for public lighting.
- The distribution of the 2026 Local Roads Budget will be presented to Council for approval under the Roads Programme 2026. The Council's discretion in allocating funding will be limited by the Department of Transport's Memorandum on Grants for Regional and Local Roads.
- Included in Budget 2026 is a provision of €200,000 for hedge cutting around the country, it is envisioned that this provision will be enhanced further under the Roads Programme 2026.

CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION & RESILIENCE

During 2025, a national allocation was made available to local authorities under the Department's regional and local road maintenance and renewal grant programmes for the Climate Adaptation and Resilience scheme. Eligible projects include:

1. Preventative measures such as drainage works to mitigate flooding
2. Bridge works to accommodate increased hydraulic loads from flash floods
3. Protection measures for roads vulnerable to severe weather, including embankment stabilisation
4. Road level adjustments and edge protection to mitigate flooding
5. Replacement or repair of seawalls or retaining walls

A grant of €1,220,500 was provided in 2025 for 18 qualifying projects across all MDs. A submission for 2026 funding is being prepared, seeking a similar or increased allocation.

PUBLIC LIGHTING

- A sum of €1,900,000 from the Council's own funds was provided in the 2025 budget to cover the public lighting programme in County Galway, including maintenance, energy and upgrade costs. The TII contributed €113,665 for the operation and maintenance of lighting on the National Road Network.
- Galway County Council has progressed the programme to retrofit over 95 per cent of its public lighting with energy-efficient LED units, in line with National Energy Efficiency targets. The 2025 budget allowed for an accelerated replacement programme through the maintenance contract.
- It is intended to complete the retrofitting through this contract. The 2026 budget provision of €1,800,000 will cover maintenance, energy costs and allow the continuation of the LED retrofit programme, assuming no significant changes to energy prices.

ROAD SAFETY ENGINEERING IMPROVEMENT

LOW-COST SAFETY MEASURES

An allocation of €523,500 was received in 2025 from the DoT, primarily targeting Locations of Interest identified nationally based on collision data. Municipal Districts also submit local priority locations for safety improvements, based on anecdotal evidence, as collision data is not currently accessible to Local Authorities. A 2026 submission was made to the Department in October 2025, listing prioritized projects across all MDs. A programme of works will be compiled once notification of the 2026 funding is received.

OTHER ENGINEERING IMPROVEMENTS

ROAD SAFETY PROMOTION AND EDUCATION

This budget covers costs including the Junior School Wardens Scheme, publicity campaigns such as Road Safety Week, Cycle Training for National Schools, and the provision of high-visibility materials. These initiatives promote road safety, with a focus on vulnerable road users.

Galway County Council's Road Safety Together Committee includes representatives from the County Council, Galway City Council, the Road Safety Authority, An Garda Síochána, Transport Infrastructure Ireland, and An Taisce. The Committee meets four times a year to consider measures to improve safety for pedestrians, cyclists, motorists, and community members with mobility issues.

CAR PARKING

A budget provision under the heading of B09 inclusive of service support costs, covers the operation and maintenance of six on-street and six off-street parking facilities across the County, along with parking enforcement costs.

Following the installation of new solar-powered Pay and Display machines in Tuam, Loughrea, Athenry, Gort, Ballinasloe, Clifden and Cleggan, a four-year maintenance contract has been put in place. The 2026 budget includes provision for this cost.

SUPPORT TO ROADS CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The administration (indirect) costs of supporting the Roads Capital Programme are met from the revenue budget. This includes staff costs for programme support and a proportion of service support costs.

AGENCY AND RECOUPABLE SERVICES

The Council charges an agreed overhead rate for all work undertaken by its staff. Income from this covers the costs of holiday pay, sick pay and insurance.

All applications for licences to open the public road are submitted through the national MRL system, managed by the Road Management Office. The Council's Roads Department processes licences for County Galway, attaching conditions and fees. Income from road opening licences and works carried out for other bodies is recorded under this budget heading.

UNFINISHED HOUSING ESTATES

The Taking in Charge section actively engages with residents, developers and bondholders to ensure residential estates are completed to the required standard for taking in charge and/or bond release.

To date, two estates have been completed for bond release, four have been Taken in Charge, and a further five are due for consideration by Elected Members by year-end. The Council is currently engaged with over 60 developments at various stages of the Taking in Charge process. Works may be carried out by developers for bond release or by the Taking in Charge Section using bond monies.

Funding comes from bonds assigned to developments, Uisce Éireann Site Resolution funding, and Council allocations for older unfinished estates. The section liaises with bondholders, developers and other parties to ensure estates are completed to the required standard for the benefit of residents. Progress depends on available funding, engagement with third parties, and the complexity of works, including any required wayleave agreements.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

The Taking in Charge section will continue to assess and process applications. Within available resources, every effort will be made to ensure developments comply with planning permissions and meet the required standards for taking in charge. Where non-compliance is identified, the relevant departments will be notified to take appropriate action.

AGENCY AND RECOUPABLE SERVICES

COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT SCHEME

During 2025, five Community Employment (CE) Schemes continued to operate, carrying out village maintenance, landscaping, grass cutting and stone wall building. The schemes covered Clifden/Roundstone, Maigh Cuilinn/Oughterard, Gort and Environs, Laurencetown/Abbey, and Tuam and Environs. The five CE Schemes will continue in 2026, providing the same services to villages and towns.

MAINTENANCE OF LAND DRAINAGE AREAS

ARTERIAL DRAINAGE

The Council discharged its statutory responsibility for maintaining certain drainage works through the Infrastructure and Operations Unit and the Municipal District Offices. It has charge of twelve drainage districts, with two extending into Roscommon and Clare. The budget for this work was €174,000 in 2025, with the same provision proposed for 2026.

FLOOD MITIGATION WORKS AND STUDIES

Galway County Council continued to work with the OPW in 2025 to identify and progress works aimed at reducing the risk of future flooding. Designs and works are ongoing under the 2025 minor works scheme, and a programme for 2026 has been developed based on already approved schemes. Further applications will be submitted to the OPW as additional needs are identified.

The Council will continue to liaise with the OPW regarding future minor works schemes to secure funding. A provision of €450,000 has been made for these works, which are 90 per cent recoupable from the OPW.

Grant applications require that some work has been completed to establish project feasibility and constraints. Having a budget available for this preparatory work ensures a sustainable pipeline of priority schemes.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF PIERS AND HARBOURS

OPERATIONS OF PIERS AND HARBOURS

In 2025, Galway County Council allocated €550,000 from its own resources for the ongoing marine maintenance and upgrade programme covering around 100 landing places under its responsibility. Works include pier upgrades, safety repairs to access steps and rails, and removal of algae from slipways.

This allocation provided matched funding for two external grants: the Local Authority Marine Infrastructure Scheme administered by DAFM and the Island Minor Capital Works grants from DRCDG. Under DAFM, works totalled €437,000, with Galway County Council contributing €109,250. DRCDG funded €175,150 of pier and harbour works at 90 per cent, with a 10 per cent contribution of €17,515 from the Council. Total 2025 provision, including grants, amounted to €1,031,650.

There are about 60 visitor moorings at locations including Cill Rónán, Killary Harbour, Clifden Bay, Srutháin, Roundstone, Cill Chiarán and Maumeen. Chains and shackles are replaced every two years. Significant maintenance was carried out in 2025, fully utilising the €20,000 budget, with a similar provision of €20,000 made for 2026.

A budget of €200,000 was provided in 2025 for the maintenance of Kilronan Harbour, covering ongoing works and legal fees for the warehouse on the pier. This allocation will again be required in 2026 for recurring maintenance and remaining legal and warehouse works.

Budget provision for piers and harbours has increased in recent years and must continue to support an adequate maintenance and improvement programme. These structures are vital to sustaining local communities, many are protected or in environmentally sensitive areas, and works below the high-water mark require foreshore consents. Significant preparatory work and costs are often needed before construction can begin. Council funding is essential to ensure optimal use of external grants for pier and harbour refurbishment.

WATER SERVICES

MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF WATER AND WASTEWATER SCHEMES

For Budget 2026, income and expenditure in this area remain static. Uisce Éireann (UÉ) has been responsible for municipal Water Services since the Master Cooperation Agreement came into effect. Council staff are now managed by UÉ but remain Council employees until the end of 2026 or until they choose to transfer. Galway County Council's priority is to work with UÉ to ensure continued delivery of Water Services during this transition.

The Council remains responsible for projects to construct or upgrade Group Water and Sewerage Schemes and for grants for domestic bored wells. It is also progressing schemes under Measure A8 for Craughwell and Clarinbridge.

RURAL WATER PROGRAMME

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- In Q2, Galway County Council secured advanced approval for €26.09 million funding for wastewater networks and treatment in Craughwell and Clarinbridge under measure A8 of the Multi-Annual Rural Water Programme 2024–2026. The local authority contribution will be €3.8 million. These projects will take several years to complete, with ongoing budgetary provisions required over the lifetime of the projects.
- In Q3, the Council received the final Multi-Annual Rural Water Programme from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH), comprising 70 projects with a total approved budget of €6.8 million.
- In Q4, the Ballinabanaba Group Water Scheme signed a €698,000 contract to upgrade 6.6 km of water mains to current Uisce Éireann standards. The works are expected to take four months, with completion anticipated by March 2026.
- Four public group water schemes, namely Knockdoe Claregalway, Cahermorris Glenrevagh, Errisbeg, and Kiniska, were taken in charge by Uisce Éireann in 2025.
- Staff resourcing in Rural Water continues to be a challenge, affecting the delivery of the MARWP, elimination of Boil Water Notices, and addressing the Department's Remedial Action List (RAL). The Council continued to support schemes' day-to-day operations through the approved subsidy programme, with substantial funds disbursed.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

In 2026, the primary objective is to implement the approved Multi-Annual Rural Water Programme. Key priorities include recruiting the necessary staff to support programme delivery and focusing on significantly reducing the number of schemes on Boil Water Notices and the Department's Remedial Action List (RAL).

MAJOR EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT (MEM)

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

In 2025, Galway County Council (GCC) advanced several Major Emergency Management (MEM) initiatives across the region:

- **Major Emergency Development Committee (MEDC):** Chaired by Mr. Uinsinn Finn, the committee oversaw MEM activities for the county.
- **Plan Reviews and Systems:** The Major Emergency and Severe Weather/Flood Response plans were reviewed, and the Severe Weather Event Management System (SWEMS) was active during severe weather incidents.
- **Regional Coordination:** The MEM West Regional Steering Group, led by the HSE, coordinated emergency management across eight principal response agencies (PRAs) in Galway, Mayo, and Roscommon. The MEM West Regional Working Group, also HSE-chaired, continued collaboration among local emergency services in the west.
- **Local Coordination Centre (LCC):** GCC headquarters serves as the LCC for Galway's PRAs, including GCC, HSE West, and Galway Garda Division, with upgraded video conferencing and electronic information systems. A back-up generator was installed to ensure operational continuity during power outages.

- **City/County MEM Integration:** A City/County MEM Integration Group, chaired by Galway City Council, coordinated emergency planning for large crowd events and site-specific emergencies across the city and county.
- **Training and Conferences:** Ongoing training included Information Management, Media Liaison, Media Interview Training, and Coordination. GCC personnel also attended MEM seminars and the national MEM conference in November.
- **Emergency Exercises:** A review and exercise of the COMAH External Emergency Plan at the Circle K site in Galway City Harbour, including tabletop and practical exercises with PRAs. A combined Connemara Airport and Island Response Plan exercise tested emergency coordination for onshore and offshore incidents.

Future Plans: Galway County Council (GCC) is developing an emergency plan for Tynagh Power Station.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- In 2026, Galway County Council (GCC) and Galway City Council will continue Major Emergency Management (MEM) training for regional and local personnel. Training will cover Information Management, Media Liaison, and On-Site Coordination, and will include both tabletop and practical exercises.
- The Major Emergency Development Committee (MEDC), chaired by Mr. Uinsinn Finn, will meet bi-monthly to improve severe weather response systems, integrate TETRA radio communications, and coordinate with a sister committee in Galway City Council to strengthen city resilience.
- Galway County Council will act as Chair of the MEM Regional Steering and Working Groups for 2026 and 2027.
- Galway Fire and Rescue is finalising a combined emergency plan for both councils, with updates to the County appendices ongoing. Regional coordination will focus on the Regional Coordination, Media, and Evacuation Plans. Testing of the new County Hall stand-by generator will also be carried out.
- Site-specific emergency planning will include completion of the Tynagh Power Station review, with a mid-year exercise, and continuation of the inter-county Severe Weather Event Management System trial.

COMMUNITY FIRE SAFETY AND EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- Galway Fire and Rescue Service (GFRS) continues to lead nationally on the National Unified Risk Operating Platform (NUROP). The platform enables real-time sharing of risk information to improve decision-making across all sections of GFRS, including mapping domestic and commercial risks. GFRS personnel also lead a national working group to refine the system, with elements currently on trial in several other fire authorities.
- Self-contained long-life smoke alarms continue to be issued to households in Galway City and County, installed by community groups and GFRS personnel. In partnership with CHIME, alarms are provided for the hard of hearing. The project is supported by the Community and Enterprise Units of Galway City and County Councils as part of the NDFEM programme. GFRS also runs a home fire safety visit programme, with emphasis on rural areas and social housing.

- Fire safety awareness campaigns were delivered in 2025 for National Fire Safety Week, wildfire safety, Halloween safety, with a further campaign planned for Christmas. Several officers participated in radio interviews.
- The Vulnerable Persons Programme continued in 2025, including the Home Fire Safety Check Booklet, originally launched in 2019. An online home fire safety checklist is now available on the Galway County Council website and via fire service personnel emails, with over 1,000 checks completed to date.
- The 'Stop Fire' and 'Check Your Detector' fire safety campaign continued in 2025, with messages displayed on all first-response fire appliances.
- Work progressed on a new GFRS website to promote fire safety awareness.
- The Islands Community Fire Safety initiative, launched in 2021, continued in 2025 to ensure all homes on the larger islands have at least two smoke alarms. The inter-agency island incident response plan was also updated and practiced.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Galway Fire and Rescue Service (GFRS) will continue to lead the development of the National Unified Risk Operating Platform (NUROP) in 2026. The system enables real-time sharing of risk information across all sections of GFRS, including mapping domestic and non-domestic risks, and will be trialled inter-county in five other Fire Authorities.
- Self-contained smoke alarms will continue to be issued in 2026 using allocations from 2025, with additional units purchased mid-year. These alarms support the Islands Community Fire Safety Initiative, the targeted Home Fire Safety Visit Programme, and now include alarms for the hard of hearing.
- National Fire Safety Week will be marked locally with station openings, seminars, and demonstrations. Media campaigns on fire safety will also continue, covering wildfire safety, Halloween, Christmas, and National Fire Safety Week, with increased officer participation in radio and TV interviews expected.
- The Vulnerable Persons Programme will continue across all stations, linked with pre-incident planning and home fire safety visits, and coordinated with other agencies.
- Fire safety campaigns 'Stop Fire' and 'Check Your Detector' will continue, with plans to display messages on fire station appliance bay doors subject to funding.
- The Schools Fire Safety Programme will continue, with local officers visiting 4th class students in primary schools, mapped on the NUROP system. A new 'Be Fire Safe' programme for secondary schools is planned for roll-out in 2026.

FIRE OPERATIONS – KEEPING COMMUNITIES SAFE (KCS) A FRAMEWORK FOR FIRE SAFETY IN IRELAND

- Galway Fire Service operates under the same financial constraints and scrutiny as all local authority services. Additional investment beyond programmed funding will be challenging given limited public and local government finances. The aim, as outlined in *Keeping Communities Safe*, is to manage resources efficiently to protect public safety and minimise loss and disruption.
- Recruitment and retention in the retained fire service has historically been difficult. Following industrial action in 2023, a Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) agreement increased the full-strength establishment from 120 to 164 retained personnel and introduced a week-on/week-off response option. Recruitment continues into 2026. The changes, while aiding recruitment, result in additional costs of approximately €3.5m for

wages, training, and other associated expenses, initially supported by the NDFEM and DoHLGH but ultimately to be borne by local authorities.

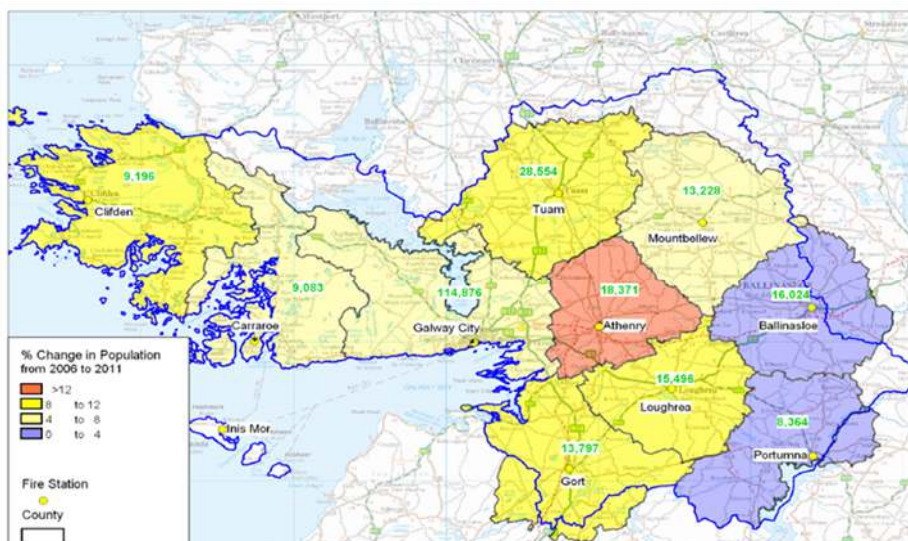
- Implementing the *Keeping Communities Safe* provisions requires ongoing commitment from the Fire Service, city and county management, and elected representatives. An External Validation Group (EVG) visit, part of the NDFEM review process, is scheduled for January 2026 with a broader engagement format.
- Galway Fire and Rescue Service's Operational Intelligence project using the ArcGIS platform has been recognised as valuable for planning and targeting future fire service activities.
- Fire Service Management is preparing a new Draft Section 26 Plan for submission to elected members and the Directorate of Physical Infrastructure, Transportation and Emergency Services. Presentation to the Council Executive Management Team is expected in Q1 2026, and to the SPC Physical Development, Transportation and Emergency Services and Plenary Council in Q2 2026. Work is ongoing on new statutory and community fire safety plans.

FIRE OPERATIONS – KEEPING COMMUNITIES SAFE (KCS)

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- Galway City and County operate 11 fire stations located at Athenry, Ballinasloe, Clifden, Galway City, Gort, Loughrea, Mountbellew, Portumna, Tuam, Inis Mór, and An Cheathrú Rua. All stations are staffed by retained personnel except Galway City, which has a mix of full-time and retained personnel.
- Galway Fire & Rescue Service employs approximately 170 fire-fighting personnel across City and County, supported by 11 senior fire officers including the Chief Fire Officer, seven administrative staff, a Brigade Mechanic, a Civil Defence Officer, and an Assistant Civil Defence Officer based at Galway City Fire Station.
- Based on 2024 statistics, Galway Fire & Rescue Service responded to 1,747 emergency callouts, 1,065 by County Fire Brigades and 682 by Galway City Fire Brigade, a decrease of 99 from 2023. Callout trends from 2014 show a peak in 2014, a flat period from 2014 to 2017, a spike in 2018, and the lowest number in 2021. Callouts for 2025 are expected to be similar to 2023 and 2024 levels. Callouts per station are detailed in Figure 3.

FIGURE 1 CURRENT FIRE STATION AREAS



- In 2024, the average cost per head of population for providing the Fire Service in Galway City and County was €63.15. Average response times for first attendance vehicles were 2.06 minutes in City full-time stations and 5.78 minutes in County retained stations.
- Attendance times at the scene for fires and other incidents are detailed in Table 1. There was one fire fatality in 2024 and one fire fatality to date in 2025.
- The Council ensured all Fire and Emergency Services personnel continued to receive training at local level. Senior and Junior Fire Officer training with the National Directorate for Fire & Emergency Management (NDFEM) progressed, carried out in line with the 2025 Training Plan and Annual Training Programme.

FIGURE 2: CALL-OUT HISTORY 2014 – 2024

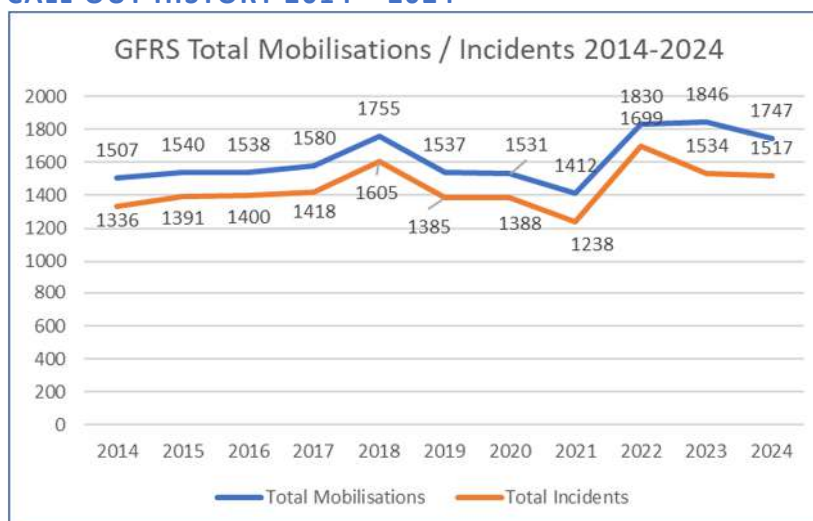


FIGURE 3: BREAKDOWN OF CALL-OUTS BY STATION IN 2024

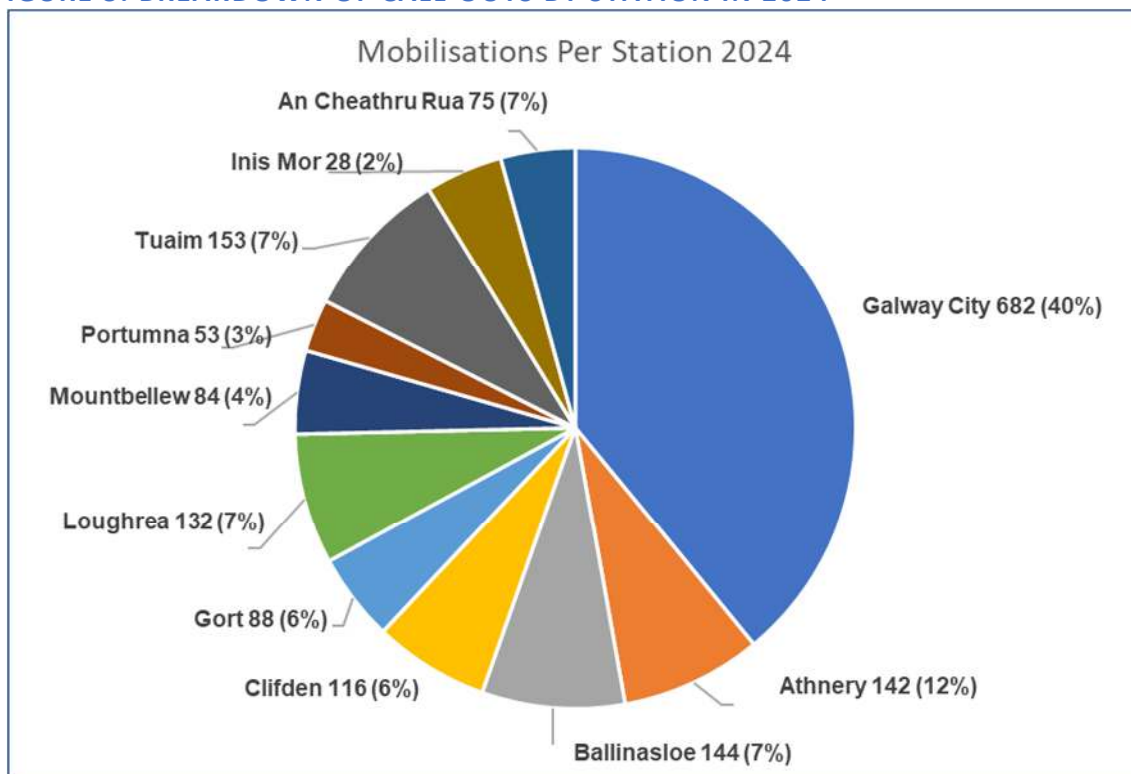


TABLE 1: PERCENTAGE ATTENDANCE TIMES GALWAY CITY AND COUNTY 2024

% Attendance Time	Fires %	Other Incidents %
Less than 10 minutes	40.37	42.62
10 to 20 minutes	40.74	40.59
Greater than 20 minutes	18.89	16.8

- The Fire Service will continue to prepare pre-incident plans for significant City and County risks in 2026, fulfilling its statutory duties under the Fire Services Act 1981 and 2003. This work is closely linked to the Vulnerable Persons and Community Fire Safety Programme, which has been ongoing since 2019.
- The Fire Service Health & Safety Steering Group will continue to meet monthly to manage and drive the Health & Safety Management Plan across the Fire Service and Civil Defence. The objective remains to maintain ISO 45001 accreditation, first achieved in October 2018 following OHSAS 18001 accreditation in December 2017. Monthly Operational Safety Group meetings will also continue.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026: OPERATIONAL

- Galway County Council will continue to provide training for all Fire and Emergency Services personnel in 2026 at local level, including Fire Officer and Instructor training with the National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management (NDFEM). Training will follow the Annual Training Plan and be guided by National Standard Operating Guidelines (SOGs), with a new set of SOGs rolled out during the year to underpin risk assessments and the Safety Management System.
- Migration of training standards to the QQI framework will continue in conjunction with the NDFEM.
- Retirements and resignations within the full-time and retained Fire Service have stabilised in 2024/2025, aided by the introduction of a minimum mandatory retirement age of 62 for full-time personnel and 58 for retained personnel. The national WRC agreement is expected to support recruitment in 2026, with on-call arrangements made more attractive. Retained recruit induction will continue under the new QQI standards.
- Pre-incident planning remains a focus for 2026, particularly for high and medium-rise buildings and structures with legacy issues, in alignment with the Vulnerable Persons Programme implemented across stations.
- Continued improvements in infrastructure aim to enhance mobilisation and attendance times.
- Safety remains a priority, maintained through monthly Safety Steering and Operational Safety Group meetings. Galway Fire and Rescue Service will undergo six-monthly audits to maintain ISO 45001 accreditation.

WEST REGIONAL COMMUNICATIONS CENTRE (WRCC)

- The Fire Authorities of Connacht and Donegal participate in the Central call-out and communications project via the Western Regional Communications Centre (WRCC) in Castlebar, which is operated by Mayo County Council as Contracting Authority. All partner local authorities share the cost of this service, which has risen significantly over the past two years due to an obsolete Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system and backdated pay arrears for control centre staff. A procurement process has led to the award of a contract for a new CAD system, which will include redundancy and call transfer capabilities between Regional Control Centres to manage spate calls or temporary overloads.
- The three Regional Communications Centres are currently under review and restructuring by the National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management (NDFEM) as part of the CTRI project, forming hubs within the new National Mobilisation and Communication System (NMACS).
- WRCC transitioned from a regional to a national model on 11 May 2025. A new national funding model is planned, which could positively affect local authority budgets from 2026, though the timing of its introduction remains uncertain.

REGIONAL CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT (CISM) PROJECT

- Galway County Council acts as the Contracting Authority for the provision of Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) services across the six Fire Authorities in Connacht and Donegal.
- Provision for this service has been included in the 2026 budgets, with Galway County Council continuing in its role as Contracting Authority.
- A new contract covering 2025–2028 for the West region has been awarded to Lena By Inspire.

FIRE SAFETY / FIRE PREVENTION

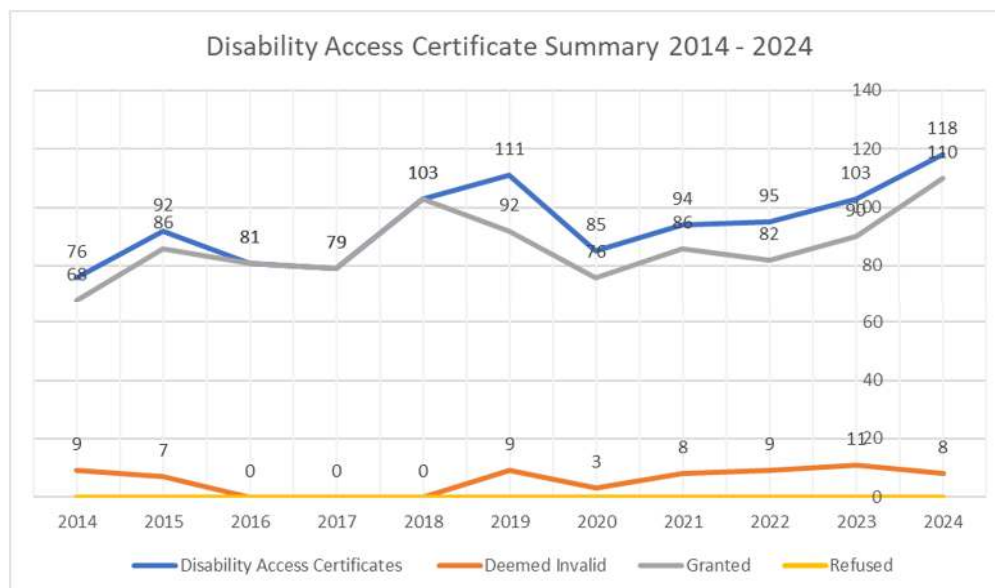
INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025 (BASED ON 2024 DATA):

- In 2024, the Fire Prevention Section carried out 247 inspections of premises under the Fire Services Act 1981 & 2003, Licensing Acts, Planning Acts, and the Dangerous Substances Act, a slight increase from 228 inspections in 2023. Inspections were also conducted in relation to Fire Safety Certificates (FSCs) under the Building Control Act 1990 (as amended).
- The section processed 319 Fire Safety Certificate (FSC) applications of all types in 2024 under the Building Control Regulations. This represents an increase of 34 applications (15%) compared with 2023, the highest number of FSC applications since 2008. To date in 2025, 182 FSC applications have been received and processed.
- In 2024, 118 Disability Access Certificate (DAC) applications were processed. To the end of October 2025, 76 DAC applications have been received and processed, roughly in line with 2024 levels.

FIGURE 4 FIRE SAFETY CERTIFICATE (FSC) ACTIVITY 2014- 2024



FIGURE 5 DISABILITY ACCESS CERTIFICATE ACTIVITY 2014-2024



PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- The Fire Prevention Section will continue to process all Fire Safety Certificate (FSC) applications for Galway City and County Councils, as well as Disability Access Certificate (DAC) applications on behalf of the County Council.
- Licence applications and planning referrals will continue to be processed as received.
- The section will maintain its programme of inspections for retail petroleum stores across the city and county, including processing Dangerous Substances Act (DSA) licences. Proposed new regulations in this area are expected to significantly increase workload, requiring additional resources.
- Fire safety inspections will continue with particular focus on nursing homes, care facilities, hostels, hotels, medium/high-rise buildings, and buildings with legacy issues.
- Inspections in response to complaints will continue a prioritized basis, with enforcement action taken as necessary.
- The remedial Apartment Defects Scheme, launched in December 2023, provides government funding to address fire safety defects in apartments built between 1991 and 2013. Applications are made to the Housing Agency and, once complete, are forwarded to the Fire Authority for assessment. This scheme is expected to substantially increase workload for fire authorities in larger urban areas. Following analysis of eligible buildings, Galway Fire and Rescue Service secured approval in 2024 to recruit two additional senior fire officers and one clerical officer to manage the increased demand. Currently, three national pathfinder projects are ongoing to streamline application and assessment processes. While applications for Galway have been received by the Housing Agency, they have not yet been released to Galway Fire and Rescue Service for processing.

GALWAY CIVIL DEFENCE

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- Galway Civil Defence operates from five training centres: Galway City, Oranmore, Loughrea, Ballinasloe, and Clonberne, with all units fully operational throughout 2025.
- Recruitment of new volunteers continues across all units, with all new members required to meet the Minimum Training Standard.
- The service assisted in multiple missing person searches across the county and supported Clare and Mayo Civil Defence units at the request of An Garda Síochána, primarily using drones and boat sonar systems.
- Two volunteers qualified as Food Safety and You Instructors to FSAI standards.
- All Civil Defence Cardiac First Responder, First Aid Responder, and Emergency First Responder Instructors were recertified under the Civil Defence College Training Programme, valid until 2026.
- EMT volunteers completed the Pre Hospital Emergency Care Council 2021 Clinical Practice Guidelines updates, with one new volunteer starting EMT training at Roscrea, due to finish Q2 2026.
- Three Swift Water and Flood Responder Instructors recertified in 2025.
- The Volunteer Equipment Management System (VEMS) replaced the Civil Defence Register in July 2023; it is actively maintained by the CDO and ACDO, with ongoing training.
- Training programmes in Cardiac First Response, First Aid Responder, Emergency First Response, Manual Handling, and People Moving continue, including recertification of due volunteers.
- Induction training for 24 new members was delivered at unit centres during 2025.
- Galway Civil Defence supported HSE operations during Storm Darragh, using 4x4 vehicles to transport clinical staff, and assisted during Storm Éowyn by delivering generators and transporting individuals to safe accommodation.
- Funding of €54,691 from the Department of Defence (Dormant Account Fund) was allocated to upgrade the boat fleet, replacing the RIB based in Ballinasloe.
- Boat crews have commenced Personal Survival Training Techniques in line with new Boat Standard Operating Guidelines, with training continuing into 2026.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- In 2026, training will focus on developing Search Management capability and Flood Water Responder skills, including initial and recertification training under the Civil Defence College Training Programme.
- Severe Weather driver training and recertification will take place in Q1 2026, delivered by a new training provider selected by the Civil Defence Branch.
- Galway Civil Defence, one of seven local authorities piloting the Sarman Enterprise Search Management Suite, began training in mid-2025, with new add-ons to be tested throughout 2026.
- All members will partake in recertification training across all disciplines in line with the Civil Defence College programme.
- Clinical responders will continue to develop their skills throughout the year.

- Ongoing liaison with Principal Response Agencies will promote Civil Defence as a support organisation.
- Additional Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) and Peer-to-Peer Support training will be availed from the Civil Defence Branch training programme.
- All members will continue to meet the Minimum Training Standards as per Civil Defence Policy.
- The Volunteer Emergency Management System (VEMS) will be continuously updated in line with Department of Defence guidelines.

ENERGY AND CLIMATE

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- Supported and coordinated actions via a cross-organisation governance structure which includes a Climate Action Steering Group, Climate Action Team, and Energy Team.
- Actively engaged in numerous projects with external stakeholders including:
 - EU 30 Islands for 2030 Programme
 - EU LEAP (Local Energy Agencies in the Peripheral Regions) Project
 - National CONNECTED Northwest Region Decarbonisation Zone project
 - National Sand Dunes Campaign
 - Local Over 60's Climate Action Courses
- Administered the first round of the Community Climate Action Fund, through which Galway County Council was allocated €726,000 to support 32 community climate action projects, with works to be completed by January 2026. Developed and launched the second round of funding and established a €60,000 Decarbonisation Zone Fund.
- Provided support to communities and individuals to implement climate action via training, workshops, webinars, presentations, and event stands, including the Youth Climate Assembly, Retrofitting Rig Week, Green Clubs Information Night, National Adaptation Committee visit, and Climate Action Week.
- Supported five communities in developing their Energy Masterplans as part of the SEAI Sustainable Energy Communities Programme.
- Continued development of the Energy Management System with a view to ISO50001 certification. Conducted non-domestic BER assessments on several Council buildings to progress SEAI Pathfinder Building Retrofit Programme initiatives. Installed an automated Energy Data Management System across eight Council buildings.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Continue to develop and maintain partnerships with enterprise, community, voluntary, third-level institutions, and the research community to deliver initiatives that reduce climate impact. Continue engagement in projects such as 30 Islands for 2030, CONNECTED, and the LEAP project.
- Support the Climate Action Steering Group and Climate Action Team in implementing the Galway County Climate Action Plan, including running internal and external engagement and education campaigns.
- Manage the Energy Team and progress targets of a 50% improvement in energy efficiency and a 51% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 through Pathfinder Projects and other energy reduction measures. Work towards ISO50001 certification for the Energy Management System.

- Support Sustainable Energy Communities across the county to develop and implement their Energy Master Plans. Administer and support projects under the second round of the Community Climate Action and Decarbonisation Zone Funds.

PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE (LEO)

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- Provided an effective First Stop Shop for businesses across Galway County and City.
- Delivered enterprise supports including short training courses, management development programmes, mentoring, and business advisory clinics.
- Provided financial supports to eligible businesses through Feasibility, Priming, and Business Expansion Grants to assist with startup and growth.
- Delivered Energy Efficiency Grants to help businesses invest in sustainable technologies and reduce environmental impact.
- Delivered Market Explorer Grants to assist businesses in exploring overseas markets and increasing export sales.
- Ran Green for Business programmes to support businesses in adopting sustainable practices.
- Delivered Lean for Business programmes to help businesses improve productivity and competitiveness.
- Ran Digital for Business programmes to assist businesses in adopting digital tools and processes.
- Supported business owners in applying for Microfinance Ireland loans.
- Raised awareness of LEO services locally and nationally and strengthened business connections with service providers.
- Developed stakeholder relationships through participation in external enterprise events and collaborative initiatives.
- Provided capability-building supports and services that added value for businesses.
- Supported employment creation in the county through investment in eligible businesses.
- Contributed to regional economic development with a focus on job creation.
- Fostered a culture of entrepreneurship through engagement with sectoral networks, schools, and third-level institutions.
- Collaborated with local and national partners, including Creative Enterprise West, Ardan, The Portershed, Platform 94, Design Crafts Council of Ireland, Western Development Commission, Údarás na Gaeltachta, Bord Iascaigh Mhara, and Network Galway, to design and deliver enterprise initiatives.
- Participated in national events such as Local Enterprise Week, National Enterprise Awards, Student Enterprise Programme, National Women's Enterprise Day, Showcase, and the National Ploughing Championships.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Provide information through First Stop Shop and outreach events.
- Offer business advice, mentoring, and networking opportunities.
- Deliver management development and sectoral development programmes.
- Organise business training workshops and business advisory clinics.
- Administer financial supports including Feasibility, Priming, Business Expansion, Market Explorer, Grow Digital, Energy Efficiency, and Grad Start grants.

- Provide research and development funding through RD&I and IP Start Grants for high-potential sectors.
- Deliver Green for Business, Lean for Business, and Digital for Business programmes.
- Implement export development programmes for clients with export potential and international growth ambition.
- Facilitate client participation in national events such as Local Enterprise Week, National Enterprise Awards, Student Enterprise Programme, National Women's Enterprise Day, Showcase, and National Ploughing Championships.
- Support the BIA Innovator Hub by collaborating on programmes for Food & Drink startups and SMEs.
- Partner with CREW and ATU to deliver Creative Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Development programmes for digital creative entrepreneurs.
- Build and develop stakeholder relationships through collaborative events and initiatives.

PLANNING FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- 1,769 planning applications received as of 14 October 2025.
- National e-Planning system now operational; 1,493 e-applications and 873 e-submissions/consultation reports received to date. Eight Part VIII applications, four Section 179A local authority applications, and 49 submissions/consultation reports recorded.
- Four LRD pre-planning consultations held; one LRD opinion issued under Section 32D.
- One SID pre-planning consultation held.
- Seventeen pre-planning consultations for major developments completed from 18 requests.
- 124 Exempted Development (Section 5) applications processed; three Red III applications received.
- Finalised and adopted the Gort Local Area Plan 2025–2031 in Q2 2025.
- Variation 1 of the County Development Plan scheduled for publication by late November 2025; environmental consultants appointed and HNDA (Housing Need Demand Assessment) under review.
- Residential Zoned Land Tax maps: Annual Draft Map published 1 February 2025; Final Map published 31 January 2025.
- URDF project: planning permission granted March 2025 for passing rail loop and additional platform at Oranmore Train Station; enabling works completed Q2 2025; contract for design of local/nodal centre, eco park/public open space, and Density Typology Study signed February 2025; final design documents to be signed off by Q4 2025; pedestrian underpass completed October 2025.
- Finalisation of Joint Retail Strategy (JRS) expected Q4 2025.
- Call for tender issued for Joint Economic Strategy; consultants to be appointed Q4 2025.
- Draft Development Contribution Scheme in preparation; expected Q4 2025.
- Forward Planning Team progressing urban framework plan for Caheroyn, Athenry with consultants; completion expected Q1 2026.
- Monitoring works underway for Vacancy Survey of Town Centre and Mixed Use Zoned Lands; metropolitan settlements of Baile Chlair, Bearna, and Oranmore surveyed. Further monitoring of residential planning permissions and settlement capacity ongoing.
- Planning inputs provided to various county steering groups.

- Ongoing partnership with Roads Directorate for Transport Studies.
- Socio-economic profile of Galway County prepared and launched April 2025 to inform policy decision-making on future employment and enterprise opportunities.
- Collaboration with University of Galway MA Planning students, second-level students, and geography teachers from Presentation College, Athenry, including retail planning exercises and 12-week student placements.
- Participation in the Galway Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy with NTA, TII, and Galway City Council.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Work with LGMA to implement changes to ePlanning and iPlan 5 in 2026.
- Monitor planning application data in line with NPF and RSES requirements.
- Finalise and publish the Draft Development Contribution Scheme.
- Prepare Final Maps (31 January 2026) and Annual Draft Maps (1 February 2026) for publication, handle public submissions, and liaise with the Department, Irish Water, TII, An Coimisiún Pleanála, and Revenue Commissioners.
- Review policy objectives for strategies committed in the Galway County Development Plan 2022–2028.
- Finalise and publish Variation 1 of the CDP in Q1/Q2 2026.
- Commence review of CDP 2028–2034 in Q3 2026.
- Progress the URDF project.
- Liaise with Roads Directorate and transport consultants on Transport Strategies, including modelling, Local Transport Plans, and Walking/Cycling Strategy.
- Provide planning inputs to relevant Steering Groups across the County.
- Participate in Town Team and RRDF initiatives.
- Prepare Public Realm strategies for identified Local Area Plan towns, resources permitting.
- Participate in the Planning Spatial Data Capture Pilot initiative with the Department of Planning, Housing and Local Government.
- Engage in statutory licensing events legislation where appropriate.
- Project manage consultants for the design of the local centre, carpark, and open space provisions in the Draft County Development Plan and URDF project for Garraun.
- Progress and finalise the Joint Retail Strategy with Galway City Council.
- Project manage consultants on the Topology Study for Briarhill and Garraun, Oranmore.
- Implement parameters of the new Planning and Development Act, including possible variations.
- Continue participation in the Galway Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy with NTA, TII, and Galway City Council.
- Collaborate with University of Galway MA Planning & Development students, second-level students, and geography teachers from Presentation College, Athenry, to link statutory spatial planning with youth engagement in shaping their local environment.

REGENERATION

TOWN CENTRE FIRST (TCF)

The Galway County Town Regeneration Officer was appointed in June 2023, with an acting TRO appointed in 2025. Gort was chosen as the pilot Town Centre First (TCF) plan for County Galway, and the plan for Athenry has now been completed. A formal Town Team, including local community groups, residents, and business owners, was established to support the delivery of the TCF plan through community engagement. THRIVE funding has been secured to complete a TCF plan for Ballinasloe by the end of 2025. The programme will continue to be rolled out to other identified towns in the coming years.

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- Announce further funding for TCF projects.
- Tender and appoint consultants to deliver the Oranmore and Headford TCF plans.
- Conduct public engagement and consultation for the TCF plans.
- Collaborate with Údarás na Gaeltachta and their consultants to deliver a TCF plan for An Cheathrú Rua.
- Support Town Teams in Athenry, Ballinasloe, and Gort to prepare funding applications and deliver capital projects aligned with the TCF plans.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Prepare tenders for the next round of Town Centre First (TCF) plans.
- Progress preparation and completion of Oranmore and Headford TCF plans.
- Collaborate with Údarás na Gaeltachta, Town Teams, and local communities to deliver a TCF plan for An Cheathrú Rua.
- Support newly formed Town Teams with their town development proposals.
- Assist Town Teams in preparing funding applications for projects in Gort, Athenry, Ballinasloe, Oranmore, and Headford TCF plans.
- Support the initial delivery of capital projects once funding is secured.

ATHENRY RRDF

The Regeneration team secured Cat 1 RRDF funding of €6,075,518 for a new public realm scheme at Market Square and Cross Street and the redevelopment of Somers House, Burkes Lane, into a Community and Enterprise Hub, with match funding of €675,058.

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- Appointed the Consultant Team to deliver the Public Realm Enhancement Project at Market Square, Cross Street, Davis Street, North Gate Street, and Burkes Lane.
- Appointed the Consultant Team to deliver the adaptive reuse of Somers House, Burkes Lane.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Publish tenders for the construction phase of the Public Realm Enhancement project at Market Square, Cross Street, Davis Street, North Gate Street, and Burkes Lane, and commence construction.
- Publish the tender for the construction phase of the Somers House redevelopment and commence works.

CLIFDEN RRDF

The CAT 2 RRDF funding approved for Clifden is €792,030, with €264,010 in match funding. The project includes revitalising the Clifden Public Realm, redesigning Clifden Harbour Park, and carrying out public realm improvements along Beach Road Quay.

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- Submit Part 10 planning application to An Coimisiún Pleanála.
- Respond to Part 10 observations.
- Respond to requests for additional information from An Coimisiún Pleanála.
- Address additional fee requests from the Consultant Team.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Prepare funding application for Public Realm Capital works once planning permission is secured.
- Acquire the 'Kirk' building in collaboration with Connemara Chamber and prepare documentation for a local business hub.
- Develop proposal for a dedicated off-street town centre car park, including RV parking.
- Submit Part 8 Planning application for the additional car park.

CLIFDEN DESTINATION TOWNS

The Regeneration team is managing the Destination Towns project, funded by Fáilte Ireland at €500,000 with 25% match funding, bringing the total budget to €666,000.

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- Complete and deliver schemes, including "greenway readiness" at Ardbear Bridge.
- Complete and deliver pavilion at Coach Park.
- Complete and deliver gateway signage.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Final completion of all projects.
- Complete and draw down full funding for the Destination Towns project.

GORT

Galway County Council Regeneration team has been successful Funding of €798,584 (with a match funding requirement of €199,646).

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- Part 10 planning application submitted to An Coimisiún Pleanála.
- Address observations and RFIs relating to the Part 10 application.
- Acquire lands for public car park to support the public realm project, with agreed sales prices of €180,000 and €220,000.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Assist in the delivery of successful planning decision of the Part 10 Planning Application.
- Application for CAT1 RRDF application for delivery of Public Realm Scheme.

LOUGHREA RRDF

The Loughrea project was originally approved under CAT 1 RRDF for €1,628,879 with match funding of €542,960. Revised costs are €4,241,897 RRDF funding with €1,413,966 match funding. The project aims to revitalise Loughrea and restore the historic Town Hall for active use.

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- Main Contract signed with Finna Construction in February 2025.
- Oversee the delivery of the capital works project.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Oversee the delivery of the capital works.
- Programmed completion dated of Q3 2026.

PORTUMNA RRDF

The Portumna project has RRDF funding of €1,192,855 with a match funding requirement of €397,618. It covers renovation of the Old Courthouse, public realm works, a sculpture/public art park and trail, wayfinding and interpretation, and regeneration of historic town centre sites. RPS consultants have been appointed to provide Design Team Consultancy Services.

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- Conduct detailed public engagement for the Public Realm Project.
- Finalise detailed design and prepare Part 8 Planning Application.
- Complete Regeneration Team's design proposal for the Abbey Street site.
- Procure consultants to design the swimming area.
- Oversee the Consultant Team delivering the Town Trail Strategy.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Submit Part 8 Planning Application for the Public Realm Project and apply for CAT 1 RRDF funding.
- Acquire lands for a public car park to support the Public Realm Project.
- Deliver the Town Trail Strategy and apply for funding to implement it.
- Prepare Part 8 Planning Application for the Abbey Street property to redevelop it as a Centre for Excellence in the Visual Arts and address its derelict status.
- Submit a funding application to deliver the Abbey Street Centre of Excellence for the Visual Arts.

PORTUMNA COURTHOUSE RRDF

The Portumna Courthouse project is now open to the community and managed by the Galway County Council Business Development Officer. Funding approved under RRDF CAT 1 was €2,950,749 with €327,861 match funding. The funding will remain available for the next three years to support the drawdown of the Business Development Officer's salary.

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- 3-year position of Business Development and Operations Manager filled.
- Official Opening of the facility to the community.
- Cafe opened and being run by independent operator

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Business Development and Operations Manager to set up online booking system
- Building handover from Regeneration team to GCC Facilities

TUAM

The Tuam Regeneration Masterplan, completed in 2021 with RRDF funding, has secured additional funding under the THRIVE scheme. Tuam Town Hall received €3,679,200 under CAT 1 with €409,484 match funding. The Tuam Station Quarter Masterplan was approved for €199,310 in 100% funding, while Tuam Station House Regeneration was granted €6,600,000 through THRIVE Strand 2 Call 2 with full funding.

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- Consultant Team appointed for Tuam Town Hall.
- Tuam Station THRIVE application success.
- Completion of the Station Quarter Masterplan.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Submit RRDF CAT 1 application for Shambles covered outdoor market.
- Appoint contractors and commence construction on Tuam Town Hall with an 18-month build programme.
- Prepare consultant team tender documentation for Tuam Station House.
- Collaborate with Irish Rail to deliver aspects of the Tuam Station Quarter Masterplan, including works to Tuam Station House, platform, and surrounding area.

BALLINASLOE

100% funding was secured for the delivery of the Town Centre First Plan for Ballinasloe with a budget of €131,501.

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- Undertake and complete the TCF plan.
- Launch the TCF with the community.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Identification of future investment projects for the town.
- Undertake works in respect of initiation of capital works projects.

The Galway County Town Regeneration Officer was appointed in June 2023, with an acting TRO appointed in 2025. The next stage in the Town Centre First process is to identify funding streams to deliver projects prioritised by the Ballinasloe community.

GENERAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES AND STRATEGY

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- Contributed to the development of national and regional review documents and policies.
- Continued implementation of the *Our Rural Future* policy.
- Input into regional tourism policy, the National Outdoor Recreation Strategy, the Lough Derg VEDP, and the West Region Enterprise Plan.
- Collaborated with Enterprise Ireland to support job creation, indigenous firms, and potential FDI investment in the food sector.
- Partnered with the IDA to promote County Galway as a location for foreign direct investment.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Lead the implementation of the six-year Local Economic and Community Plan in line with national guidelines, in collaboration with the Economic Development & Enterprise SPC.
- Continue strategic town regeneration initiatives.
- Contribute to the development of the former Galway Airport site at Carnmore.
- Work with Enterprise Ireland and IDA to support economic development and job creation.
- Submit proposals and engage with designated locations under the Just Transition Funding programme as it develops in 2025.

FOOD SECTOR

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES 2025:

- Maintained an **active role on the Board** and sub-committees of the **BIA Innovator Campus** project.
- Delivered **projects and presentations** at local, regional, and national levels; the Campus is recognised as critical infrastructure supporting the food and related sectors.

- Participated in **successful EU funding applications** in partnership with the BIA Innovator Campus.
- Collaborated with the **Regional Enterprise Plan Coordinator** to advance food and related sectors under the **West Region Enterprise Plan (WREP)**, ensuring the BIA Innovator Campus drives growth across the west region.
- Secured **Enterprise Ireland funding** via BIA to further scope **Ag-Tech sector opportunities** in Galway and the wider west.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Collaborate with the **BIA Innovator Campus** to ensure it meets the needs of the Council, community, and stakeholders to support economic and enterprise activity.
- Finalise **onboarding of tenants** for own-door units and work with partners to build on the existing programme of works.
- Progress the **Food & Agri-Tourism Strategy**, focusing on identified priorities and objectives.
- Work with other local authorities to **drive regional growth** in the sector and achieve the goals of the **West Region Enterprise Plan (WREP)**.

WEST REGION ENTERPRISE PLAN (WREP) & ATLANTIC ECONOMIC CORRIDOR

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES:

- Establish the West Region Enterprise Plan Office within Galway County Council as the lead agency for Galway County, Galway City, Roscommon & Mayo.
- Develop the WREP Plan and work towards a new Chair and Steering Committee.
- Worked on collaborations under the WREP.
- Worked with the WDC and Atlantic Economic Corridor (AEC) network on regional projects, including the development of hubs along the AEC.
- Participated in AEC Strategy and AEC Hub Strategy processes.

PROPOSALS:

- Progress the new WREP Plan.
- Support the WREP Board and new Chair arrangements.
- Implement any revised arrangements for the **AEC** following the Department's review.
- Support the development of **Creative Clusters** in the region.
- Collaborate with the **WDC** and other AEC counties to promote the West as an attractive place to live and work.
- Assist projects focused on **town centre regeneration**, including hubs and tackling vacancy/dereliction.
- Work with the **Broadband Officer** to identify and realise community opportunities.
- Partner with the WDC, AEC network, and other local authorities on **regional initiatives**, including the West Region Enterprise Plan.
- Support the **Food Sector** and link hubs, with a focus on the **BIA Innovator Campus** as a driver of regional growth and innovation.

DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORTS FOR WORKING HUBS

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- Served as an information and advisory contact to help community-based hubs in the county access the national www.connectedhubs.ie funding scheme.
- In May 2024, attended the opening of the **Ballinasloe PULSE Hub**, completed with funding support from the Town and Village Renewal Programme.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Provide ongoing advisory support for www.connectedhubs.ie and assist with the establishment of additional remote work centres in the county, in collaboration with **Údarás na Gaeltachta**, which leads the G-tec Hub Network in the Gaeltacht.
- Identify funding opportunities for community and voluntary enterprises and multi-purpose hubs, supporting feasibility studies and marketing efforts, in coordination with the Regeneration Team and the Community, Voluntary, and Enterprise Network sector.

BUILDING CONTROL

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- 618 commencement notices have been validated to 13th October 2025.
- 93 completion certificates have been validated to 13th October 2025.
- 82 new building inspections have been carried out by the Building Control Officer to check compliance with the Building Regulations to 13th October 2025.
- 697 new buildings commenced to 13th October 2025.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- The Building Control Officer will continue to enforce statutory building regulations and carry out at least the minimum required inspections of new developments.

ENFORCEMENT MEASURES

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- 181 warning notices or letters served up to 14 October 2025.
- 121 enforcement notices issued to 14 October 2025.
- 63 files referred for legal action by 14 October 2025.
- 293 complaints of unauthorised development received to 14 October 2025.
- Approximately 167 enforcement files resolved or closed as of 14 October 2025.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Continue resourcing the Enforcement Team to implement Planning Regulations and follow up on complaints regarding unauthorised developments.
- Prioritise enforcement action on unfinished housing estates as required.
- Improve customer service through enhanced use of available technology.

HERITAGE

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- **Athenry Walled Towns Day:** Held on 17 August, showcasing the built, natural and cultural heritage of medieval Athenry.
- **Athenry Town Walls Conservation Works:** Completed with funding from the Heritage Council and Galway County Council.
- **Heritage Grant Scheme:** Grants assessed, conditions assigned, and payments being processed with guidance provided to applicants.
- **Creative Ireland – “Forged in Fire” Project:** Delivered in Ballinasloe in partnership with local heritage groups.
- **Decade of Commemoration:** Included Aleen Cust Symposium, reprints of bi-lingual children’s Garda workbook, and Garda Centenary Book.
- **ICAN Community Heritage Website:** Developed further in partnership with the Museum of Country Life Castlebar; grants processed for iCAN groups.
- **Féile na gCloch Festival:** Held on Inis Oírr (11–14 September) with participants from Ireland, EU, Canada, USA, Korea, Australia, Austria, and Japan.
- **Digital Mapping of Graveyards:** Continued with GIS Department, drones, Survey 123, and community uploads.
- **Loughrea Signage Interpretation Plan:** Developed with Loughrea Area Office and Heritage Council funding.
- **Community Events, Conferences, Workshops:** Delivered throughout 2025 supporting heritage awareness and engagement.
- **Abbeygormican Conservation Project:** Won Silver Award at Irish Construction Excellence Awards for restoration of Augustinian friary.
- **Support to Community Groups:** Guidance provided on heritage publications, StoryMaps, digital graveyard mapping, conservation plans, archaeological advice, heritage trails, oral history recordings, Heritage Week events, and training.
- **StoryMaps Project:** Worked with University of Galway students to create StoryMaps for Moylough, Clarinbridge, Maigh Cuillin, Loughrea, and Monivea; won eGovernment Open Data National Award.
- **Townland Research:** Documented townlands with University of Galway students and uploaded to Galway Community Heritage website.
- **Oral Heritage Training:** Provided training on video recording and podcasting initiatives.
- **Committee Participation:** Placenames Committee and National Intangible Cultural Heritage Advisory Committee.
- **Community Monument Fund:** Funding accepted for conservation plans and works; ongoing completion by November 2025.
- **Holy Wells Audit Phase 6:** Conducted in South Connemara; produced bilingual outdoor exhibition at Leitir Mealláin.
- **Golden Mile Calendar:** Produced for County Galway.
- **Heritage and Biodiversity Plan 2024–2030:** Designed, printed, and launched in partnership with Biodiversity Office and Heritage Forum.
- **Heritage and Biodiversity Forum Meetings:** Held quarterly with partner offices and forum members.
- **Lost Schools Project:** Collaboration with INSIGHT, University of Galway, Galway Education Centre, and schools.

- **National Heritage Week 2025:** Supported and delivered events across the county, including 137 in-person and 6 digital events registered on www.heritageweek.ie, plus an additional 20 unregistered events.
- **Community Archaeologist Programme:** Provides advice and guidance to community groups on archaeological heritage, produces online resources, and supports applications for Community Monuments Fund, Heritage Council, and other grant funding. Also see <https://field-monuments.galwaycommunityheritage.org/>
- **Oral Heritage Recordings Audit Phase 3:** Consolidate and master previous works from 2023 and 2024. Audit oral recordings of stories, family histories, and memories to preserve them for future generations before reels and cassettes are lost.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Apply for funding for the Community Archaeology Project and provide advice to individuals, schools, and community groups on their archaeological resources.
- Continue the digital graveyards mapping project with local groups, LEADER companies, and the GIS Department, providing maps, memorial inscriptions, burial plot locations, and photographs where possible.
- Finalise and print the bi-lingual geology workbook for second-level students with Geological Survey of Ireland and Heritage Council.
- Work with communities, schools, and individuals to raise awareness of archaeological heritage and provide guidance on heritage-based projects. Apply for Community Monument Funding.
- Develop additional StoryMaps and document further townlands with local community groups.
- Collaborate with INSIGHT, University of Galway, Galway Education Centre, and schools on the 'Lost Schools' Project.
- Continue the *Reading the Landscape* course with community groups, uploading fieldwork content to the new community heritage website.
- Apply for Walled Towns funding to hold Athenry Walled Town Day in August 2025.
- Seek funding for Athenry Town Walls capital works programme.
- Continue with Loughrea Signage Plan and apply to the Irish Walled Town Network and other sources for funding.
- Update the Decade of Commemoration bi-lingual website and publication series as funding allows.
- Provide guidance to community groups on Community Monument Funding.
- Hold four Galway County Heritage and Biodiversity Forum meetings with Biodiversity Office, Architectural Conservation Office, and Galway Community Archaeologist.
- Continue development of the ICAN Community Heritage website in partnership with the Museum of County Life Castlebar and administer the ICAN community support grant scheme.
- Deliver a Creative Ireland funded heritage and cultural initiative.
- Support community events, conferences, and workshops including Féile na gCloch, Heritage Week events, training, and local heritage seminars.
- Continue the Holy Well and Oral Heritage audits in County Galway.
- Participate in committees and initiatives such as the Placenames Committee and Creative Ireland.
- Administer the Heritage Grant Scheme as part of Community Grants.

- Produce a Galway County Heritage Calendar.
- Continue Townland research, Parish/local area heritage audits, and development of town heritage booklets.
- Undertake the Féile na gCloch festival in Inis Óírr.
- Develop and deliver heritage training.
- Support and run events for Heritage Week.

BIODIVERSITY

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- Biodiversity Week May 2025: Ran and supported events across the county, including Dusk Chorus at Carrownaggual Bog, *Garraíodóireacht ar son na Bithéagsúlachta* on Inis Mór, Gardening for Wildlife Webinar, BioBlitz at Rinville, and Siúilóid Chladaigh Chois Fharraige at Trá Mhór Indreabhán.
- Local Biodiversity Action Fund Projects: Hare's Corner, Alpine Newt eradication, invasive species treatment and survey, Lough Corrib Islands survey, Working with Nature biodiversity awareness, Mayfly survey, Connemara biodiversity awareness and engagement, West Connacht Islands invasive species project, Galway peatland biodiversity surveys.
- Delivered a seminar on artificial lighting for Galway County Council and other Connacht local authority staff.
- Designed, printed, and launched the *Galway County Heritage and Biodiversity Plan 2024–2030* with Heritage Office and Galway County Heritage and Biodiversity Forum.
- Held quarterly meetings of the Galway County Heritage and Biodiversity Forum in partnership with the Biodiversity Office, Architectural Conservation Office, Galway Community Archaeology, and Forum members.
- Facilitated Appropriate Assessment training for planners.
- Delivered the *Wild Trad Tunes* Creative Ireland project celebrating the intersection of natural heritage and traditional music.
- Partnered with Music Connects and ConTempo Quartet to deliver ecology-themed concerts across the county.
- Provided advice on biodiversity management including tree planting, invasive species control, pollinator planting, and grassland management to staff and community groups.
- Ran and supported events for National Heritage Week, Climate Action Week, and World Wetlands Day.
- Engaged with media and social media to raise awareness of biodiversity across the county.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Continue roll-out of biodiversity projects with support from the Heritage Council and National Parks & Wildlife Service, including Alpine Newt eradication, invasive species surveys and treatment, Working with Nature, Mayfly Survey, Barn Owl Conservation, Swift Survey, and Lesser Horseshoe Bat Conservation.
- Implement actions outlined in Galway County Council's Climate Action Plan.
- Support community groups, Tidy Towns groups, educational institutions, and local development companies.
- Deliver commitments under the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan.

- Develop and host the Galway County Biodiversity Conference in April 2026.
- Launch the *Butterflies of Galway* booklet.
- Progress biodiversity initiatives through the Galway County Heritage and Biodiversity Forum.
- Organise Biodiversity Week and Heritage Week events.
- Develop and deliver regional training seminar on hedgerow management for roadside biodiversity.
- Undertake a Creative Ireland-funded biodiversity initiative.
- Facilitate staff training on *Building for Biodiversity: Tools and Collaboration for Local Authorities*.

CONSERVATION

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- Administered the Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS), Historic Structures Fund (HSF), and Community Monuments Fund from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
- Supported the Rural Towns and Village street enhancement scheme in Gort.
- Delivered traditional skills training for Galway County Council technical staff on mortar repair and thatch work for apprentices at Seanteach Phetie, Inis Oírr.
- Supported the Architecture at the Edge festival 2025, "The Unseen Architecture."
- Provided advice to the Council on architectural conservation, liaising with Roads, Corporate Services, Environment, Local Area Engineers, and Housing on issues including masonry bridges, historic assets, graveyards, public realm, and energy efficiency in traditional buildings.
- Evaluated and advised on structures, groups of structures, and areas of architectural heritage significance, including financial assistance and good practice guidance for owners and occupiers.
- Assessed Record of Protected Structures (RPS) for works requiring planning permission and provided pre-planning advice.
- Advised owners/occupiers on energy efficiency measures in traditionally built structures.
- Reviewed planning applications affecting Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) and Protected Structures.
- Monitored repair and maintenance of RPS structures and recommended enforcement actions where necessary.
- Consulted with state agencies, voluntary and international organisations on architectural conservation, including AACO, ICOMOS, and the Irish Georgian Society.
- Engaged with local communities on Tidy Towns and community heritage initiatives.
- Contributed to the Historic Assets group to maintain Protected Structures in local authority care.
- Collaborated with the Regeneration Team on repurposing and refurbishing local authority properties.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Continue to carry out the statutory duties of Architectural Conservation Officer as set out in Circular 5/99 or as amended.

- Review Record of Protected Structures by proposing additions to the RPS and research and propose Architectural Conservation Areas and liaise with owners and occupiers.
- Maintain and update Architectural Inventory System.
- Promote awareness of architectural heritage and its conservation, including climate resilience, using funding from Creative Ireland, Irish Architectural Foundation, Arts Council, and other available sources.
- Promote the initiatives and funding made available by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.
- Support and Participate in *Architecture at the Edge* festival of architecture. On-site events and hybrid events online to be explored in County Galway.
- Continue to promote traditional skills use and training initiatives in association with the Building Limes Forum Ireland, Construction Industry Federation and GRET.B.
- Promote and manage conservation projects for boundary walls and bridges within historic public spaces.
- Continue to contribute to the Historic Assets working group and work with local communities to incorporate the historic built environment into the community life of towns and villages.
- Prepare costed project plans to access capital funding for historic towns, Architectural Conservation Areas, and local authority-owned historic assets in coordination with the Regeneration Team.
- Avail of and promote any funding initiatives available, including Built Heritage Investment Scheme Fund, Historic Structures Fund, Rural Towns and Village funding, Historic Towns Initiative, Community Monuments Fund & Creative Ireland.
- Provide advice to the local authority on architectural conservation matters; Liaise with Roads re conservation of masonry stone arch bridges; Liaise with corporate services re historic assets in LA ownership; Liaise with Environment re graveyards; Liaise with local area engineers re public realm and issues arising. Liaise with Housing re energy efficiency in traditionally built houses.
- Promote opportunities to raise awareness of the architectural heritage and its appropriate conservation and reuse through Creative Ireland, Irish Architectural Foundation, Arts Council and other funding opportunities as available.

FINANCE, MOTOR TAX, ICT AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

VALUE FOR MONEY, SHARED SERVICES AND PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

Galway County Council uses the procurement platform www.supplygov.ie, provided by the Local Government Operational Procurement Centre (LGOPC), to procure goods, works, and services from suppliers, contractors, and service providers. The platform streamlines procurement through two modules: Supplementary Requests for Tenders (sRFTs) and Requests for Quotations (RFQs). To date in 2025, the Council has generated 171 sRFTs and 23 RFQs.

The national government electronic tendering platform, www.etenders.gov.ie, administered by the Office of Government Procurement, is used to advertise public sector procurement opportunities and award notices.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Continue developing the use of www.supplygov.ie and www.etenders.gov.ie to increase use of LGOPC and OGP frameworks and DPS across the organisation.
- Train staff on GCC procurement rules and assist with eTenders contract awards.
- Provide ongoing guidance and support on eTenders usage.
- Promote GPP criteria in RFTs and contracts.
- Monitor eTenders and Supplygov to ensure EU-compliant competition processes.
- Analyse 2025 spend to identify savings via LGOPC and OGP frameworks.
- Communicate new contracts and arrangements to staff to ensure compliance and value for money.
- Encourage SME participation by updating Council website with framework and DPS details.
- Maintain and develop a contract register using eTenders features.

DISCHARGE OF PAYMENTS

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- Deliver best practice in accounts payable and payroll, continuously improving processes to ensure efficiency, accuracy, and transparency in financial reporting.
- Implement Directives from the Revenue Commissioners and Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage for various payment types and statutory and non-statutory financial returns.
- Implement electronic initiatives such as e-TAX Clearance.
- Provide real-time reporting for Payroll, e-Professional Services Withholding Tax, Relevant Contract Tax, VAT 3, Non-Resident Landlord Withholding Tax, and other requirements.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Modernise the Financial Management System to a Cloud-compatible version.
- Review taxation expertise within the Finance unit.
- Modernise payments infrastructure by reducing cheque usage.
- Scope and implement Supplier Relationship Management technology to simplify processes and improve efficiency.
- Achieve additional efficiencies in the Budget drafting system (Budgeting, Forecasting, Reporting) and engage fully with the software provider for increased functionality.
- Improve travel and subsistence processes through software upgrades.
- Investigate enhanced or alternative automated methods for aspects of the Budget cycle, including full implementation of CCAS Budgetary Modules such as Budgeting for Pensions.

REVENUE COLLECTION

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- Administered the Power Up Grant on behalf of the Department of Enterprise in 2024 and early 2025, totalling €4.5 million; Reclassification grants of €967,000 were paid in September and October 2025.
- Upgraded the ASCENDAS system for managing rates, rents, and development levies, improving debt collection features.
- Continued use of the MARPS process for housing loans.
- Implemented the Mortgage to Rent Scheme for suitable tenants in conjunction with the Housing Section.
- Applied the Tenancy Warning system for tenants in rent arrears under the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2014.
- Continued rollout of electronic payment methods including Billpay, Household Budget, EFT, and online payments.
- Implemented the Waiver Scheme for Rates.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Monitor and update the Revenue collection function to reflect best practice.
- Continue reviewing debt collection procedures.
- Implement any extension of the Waiver Scheme for commercial rates in line with Government directives.
- Continue offering the Bill Pay option to Rents, Loans, RAS, and Rates customers to support household budgeting.
- Provide staff training on debt collection procedures.

MOTOR TAX AND DRIVER LICENSING SYSTEMS

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- By the end of September 2025, Galway County Council motor tax offices completed 34,220 transactions, collecting over €7.3 million. Approximately 84.95% of transactions for the Galway area were carried out online.
- Motor tax offices issue tax discs for private and commercial vehicles, tractors, hackneys, taxis, and large public service vehicles. They also process trade plates, trailer licences, replacement documents, and handle Garda and other local authority queries, including S103s and CT53s.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Continue retrieving and digitising motor tax records in long-term storage to create an accessible index of vintage vehicle registration records.
- Motor Tax Offices in An Cheathru Rua, Ballinasloe, and Galway will formally implement motor tax policies and procedures, continuing to provide support and advice to the public, including users of the online motor tax service.

RISK CONTROL

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- Liaised with IPB in relation to all aspects of insurance claims being dealt with by Galway County Council.
- Corresponded with our legal team and other Council Departments in collating documents for use in the investigation of all claims.
- Provided assistance to Council Departments regarding insurance matters.
- Corresponded with members of the public regarding claims submitted to Galway County Council.
- Provided insurance details to IPB in relation to all departments regarding renewal information and policy cover ensuring insurance policy payments premia are made to IPB.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Continue liaising with IPB on all insurance claims handled by Galway County Council.
- Coordinate with the legal team and other Council departments to collate documents for claim investigations.
- Provide assistance to Council departments on insurance matters.
- Correspond with members of the public regarding claims submitted to Galway County Council.
- Supply IPB with insurance details from all departments for policy renewals, coverage information, and ensure payment of insurance premiums.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS

INDICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN 2025:

- Launched completed redesigned and reauthored Gaillimh.ie/Galway.ie website with accessibility and device portability.
- Completed and implemented Irish Language translation management module to transmit required content to Translation Service provider with returned text authoring mirrored content saving time and improved accuracy.
- Financial and Payroll Systems Business Intelligence (BI) dashboard development completed in use.
- Municipal Offices Athenry, Gort, Clifden and An Cheathra Rua connections completed to multi gigabit Government Cloud Network (GCN).
- Core Network at County Hall, Municipal District and other large offices replacement with additional security and visibility measures. In addition, improved backup and restoration processes timeframe.
- Cyber Security training platform deployed with staff and member training and security exercises deployed.
- Support for new staff additions with ICT services and equipment provision.
- Windows 11 Laptop and Desktop completed out.
- Commencement of engage National Financial Systems modernisation program.
- AI program of engagement and training for staff and members.

PROPOSALS FOR 2026:

- Customer Relations Management (CRM) System Corporate Services.
- Support on the development of specific purpose Websites for Tourism, Sport and Heritage leveraging built out web infrastructure.
- National Local Authority Accounts Management Program Support.
- Digital Storage and Compute Replacement with Office of Government Procurement (OGP) Framework.
- Cloud Systems hosted Business Continuity Development.
- Support of activities to support and increase Cyber Insurance cover and effectiveness.
- Laptop and Desktop Replacement program.
- Geographic Information Systems Cloud Residency Move.
- Inspection and Mobile Management Applications for Ring Buoy and Beach Lifeguards Activities.
- Implement and Support action items for Local Government ICT and Digital Strategy 2030.
- Implementation of additional staff to support and implement Local Government Digital and IS Strategy 2030.

3 YEAR CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2026 – 2028

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING

ATHENRY RRDF

RRDF CAT 1 funding of €6,075,518, with match funding of €675,058, has been approved for Athenry. The Cross Street and Market Square enhancement project and Somer House redevelopment are at detailed design stage. Town First Plan in development.

CLIFDEN RRDF

RRDF CAT 2 funding of €792,030, with match funding of €264,010, has been approved for Clifden. The project includes enhancements to the Clifden Public Realm, redesign of Clifden Harbour Park, and public realm improvements along Beach Road Quay. The design team has completed the planning application for submission to An Coimisiún Pleanála.

GORT

The pilot Town Centre First plan for Gort was launched in December 2023.

Galway County Council's Regeneration team secured €798,584 funding, with €199,646 match funding, for the Public Realm Enhancement Project. Privately owned lands have been acquired for a public car park, with agreed sales prices of €180,000 and €220,000. The public realm project is with An Coimisiún Pleanála. RRDF funding has been secured to purchase the convent building. Renovations will commence design work etc in early 2026.

KINVARA

RRDF CAT 2 funding of €122,790, with match funding of €40,930, was approved for Kinvara. The project reached preliminary design stage and has been transferred to Infrastructure and Operations as part of a larger NRPO scheme for TII.

A Project Completion Report has been issued under the Public Spending Code, and the remaining funding returned to the DRCD. Total expenditure was €73,063, comprising €54,797 (75%) RRDF funding and €18,266 match funding.

LOUGHREA RRDF

RRDF CAT 1 funding of €4,241,897, with match funding of €1,413,966, has been approved for Loughrea. The project will help revitalise the town, particularly Loughrea Town Hall, by bringing this historic building back into use. The construction contractor started on site in mid 2025. Capital works will be completed in 2026.

PORTUMNA RRDF

RRDF CAT 2 funding of €1,192,855, with match funding of €397,618, has been approved for Portumna. Portumna Courthouse was opened in 2025 with public realm improvements, town trail design, wayfinding and interpretation, and regeneration of historic town centre sites to follow.

TUAM

Funding approved under RRDF for Tuam was €175,000, with match funding of €60,000, covering the Town Centre Regeneration Masterplan and delivery of key projects. The project is complete, with a Project Completion Report issued under the Public Spending Code. Total expenditure was €222,643, comprising €164,756 (74%) RRDF funding and €57,887 (26%) match funding.

RRDF CAT 1 funding of €3,679,200, with €409,484 match funding, has been granted for the redevelopment of Tuam Town Hall. The project involves internal renovations and OCOC Architects are working on the detailed design.

Over 6m of THRIVE funding was obtained from the NWRA and part 8 planning obtained. Detailed design work will commence in early 2026, with contractors then to be appointed. A detailed construction plan will also be developed.

GARRAUN (ORANMORE TRAIN STATION) URDF

This multi-million euro project is funded under URDF Call 2 (2021), with match funding from the NTA, Department of Transport and Galway County Council. Galway County Council is the sponsoring authority, with the funding application made in partnership with Iarnród Éireann.

The Rail infrastructure capital works have commenced with P&D Lydon appointed and the underpass was fitted in Oct. 2025. Works will be completed in early 2026.

The project has three main elements, centered on the existing train station at Oranmore in County Galway's metropolitan area. Funding was awarded for:

- Railway Infrastructure Upgrades to include a 1KM passing railway loop at the existing Oranmore Train Station; including additional platform and associated infrastructure
- Design of the local centre and lands south of the train station to include a detailed design of the local centre, associated car park (existing), (architectural/structural engineering detail) and landscaping plan (for public use);
- A study on the Design Development of Typologies to implement the Urban Framework Plan

Funding for this project was awarded in 2021. Planning permission has been granted for the railway passing loop, second platform and pedestrian underpass, with the underpass recently installed. Construction of the passing loop and second platform is expected to begin early next year.

Detailed design work on the local centre, density typology study and ecopark is nearly complete. The lands surrounding the station are planned to accommodate up to 1,100 residential units, along with employment, commercial, educational and community spaces. The upgrade of Oranmore Station and increased service frequency will be critical to the success of this plan. The Community Facilities lands east of the station have been purchased by the Department of Education, with a planning application for the school site expected to be lodged early next year.

FORMER GALWAY AIRPORT SITE

Galway County Council and Galway City Council acquired the former Galway Airport site for economic development. The County Development Plan envisions the site as an Innovation, Business and Technology Campus to attract long-term investment to Galway and the Western Region and support the Galway Metropolitan Area.

In mid 2025 an Expression of Interest was published, and a number of offers were received and reviewed. A 2017 memo from the Dept of Public Expenditure required the Local Authorities to place the properties on the State Asset Register and declare them available for consideration by other state agencies. Discussions with several Agencies has been ongoing in Oct/Nov 2025. It is envisaged that the potential agencies/private sector interests discussions will be completed in mid 2026, with joint discussions between both local authorities to follow on the best method of progressing the campus development.

HOUSING

A new National Housing Plan is due for publication in the coming months. It will build on existing measures and align with the finalised National Development Plan, setting updated targets and delivery mechanisms to address housing needs nationwide.

In the meantime, implementation of the Housing for All strategy continues. Housing for All aims to increase housing supply to an average of 33,000 units per year over the next decade, providing a mix of social, affordable and private housing for sale and rent. The plan is structured around four pathways to create a more sustainable housing system. Support home ownership and increase affordability.

- Eradicate homelessness, increase social housing delivery and support social inclusion.
- Increase new housing supply.
- Address vacancy and make efficient use of existing stock.

The delivery of the largest social and affordable housing programme under Housing for All remains Galway County Council's priority, with a focus on new builds to provide social homes. High-quality housing in appropriate locations will ensure long-term sustainability for current and future generations.

The Housing Delivery Action Plan (HDAP), approved on 1 July 2022, sets out how and when the Council plans to deliver sustainable housing under the Housing for All programme.

The Council is committed to using all available capital funding streams to maximise social and affordable housing delivery, including construction, turnkey developments, Part V and Buy and Renew Schemes. Support for Approved Housing Bodies through the Capital Assistance Scheme and Capital Assistance Leasing Funding also continues.

Description	2026	2027	2028 (Estimated)
Main Construction, Turnkeys and Approved Housing Bodies			
(Including Traveller Accommodation Programme)	€175m	€175m	€175m
Acquisition Programme			
(including Part V's)	€15m	€15m	€15m
Capital Assistance Scheme	€2m	€2m	€2m

The Council is actively acquiring additional land to expand its land bank and ensure future housing construction. All projects are subject to funding from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, statutory approvals, and co-funding where required.

The Council will continue to engage with the Department on proposals under Housing for All, with a 2026 target of delivering 396 social houses through Council and Approved Housing Bodies. The construction programme in 2026 will focus on new build delivery, with expenditure reflecting this shift away from leasing and acquisitions. Part V acquisitions will continue, with 20% of developments allocated to social housing (minimum 10%) and the remainder to social or affordable housing.

The Housing Unit is advancing several capital schemes through design and planning, capable of delivering units from 2026. Proposed developments include projects on existing and new landbanks in Portumna, Tuam and Loughrea, with land costs fully recoupable from the Department. Additional turnkey acquisitions may be pursued as suitable opportunities arise.

SCHEMES PROPOSED (2026)

Location	Type	# Social Housing Units
Cosmona	Build	56
Dunlo Hill	Build	16
Claregalway (Droim na Gaoithe)	Build	22
Garbally Drive	Build	2
Gort Mhaolir, Athenry	Build	43
Main Street, Moylough	Build	4
Cullairbaun, Athenry	Build	16
Westport Road, Clifden	Turn-key	18
Ceathru an Iarla, Caherwalter (Danesfort), Loughrea	Turn-key	24
Tobar na Luachra, Truskey East, Barna	Turn-key	24
Main Street, Ahascragh	Turn-key	9
Bilberry Lane, Loughrea	Turn-key	26
Kilcummin Field, Oughterard	Turn-key	20
Moylough, (behind Somers bar)	Turn-key	20
Mountbellew	Turn-key	35
Harbour Road, Ballinasloe	Turn-key	6
An Mhinleog, Dunmore	Turn-key	0
Cong Road, Headford	Turn-key	6
Tullagh Hill, Loughrea	Turn-key	22
Killimor	Turn-key	2
Pairc na Coille, Raheen, Athenry	Turn-key	13
Danesfort, Loughrea	Turn-key	14
Total		398

Additional turnkey projects are expected in 2026 following calls for expressions of interest. The scale of the direct build programme will depend on available land, with the Housing Unit aiming to maintain and increase construction delivery in 2026 and beyond.

The Housing for All Plan targets for build delivery over 2025 and 2027 are as follows:

2025: 385 units **2026:** 393 units **2027:** To be confirmed, will be included in new National Housing Plan, to be published shortly.

Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) will play a key role in Galway County Council meeting its housing targets. Under the Housing for All Plan, AHBs are expected to deliver 40% of units annually up to 2026, though delivery in Galway has so far been below this target.

The Council will continue improvement works on all Traveller accommodation. Redevelopment of Tuam Halting Site is proposed within the lifetime of the current Traveller Accommodation Programme 2025 – 2029. Funding proposals will be submitted to the Traveller Accommodation Unit in 2026 and future years for major refurbishment of existing Traveller Specific Group Schemes and the development of new schemes under the Traveller Accommodation Programme 2025–2029.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING:

The pipeline of Affordable Housing is currently as follows:

Status	Scheme Name	No. of Affordable Purchase	Delivery Due
Approved	Garrai Na Gaoithe, Baile Chláir (Phase 1)	17	Delivered in Q2 2025
Approved	Garrai Na Gaoithe, Baile Chláir (Phase 2)	16	Q4 2025
Approved	Garrai Na Gaoithe, Baile Chláir (Phase 3)	28	Q1 2026
Project in development	Droim na Gaoithe, Baile Chláir	66	Q4 2026
Project in development	Raheen, Athenry	28	Q1 2027
Project in development	Pairc na hAbhainn, Athenry	16	Q1 2027
	Totals	171	

The Council will continue to examine Part V developments in the 20% category to explore the potential of delivering 10% as Affordable Housing. Three Part V Affordable will be available in Kinvara in Q1 2026. There is potential for delivery of 8 Part V Affordable in Claregalway in late 2026.

Galway County Council are investigating other possibilities for affordable housing in other towns around County Galway. Some of these are on Council lands and others are Part V. A survey was conducted in September and over 830 responses have been received. The information from the survey will help determine the level of demand for Affordable Housing across County Galway. A more targeted follow up survey, focusing on respondents who expressed an interest in living in the Loughrea MD, received 225 responses. It demonstrated a clear interest in Affordable Housing in a suburb of Loughrea town. It is planned to run further targeted surveys to gauge the demand in other areas.

HOUSE PURCHASE LOANS:

House Purchase Loans will continue to be offered to eligible buyers, with income limits increased to €70,000 for single applicants and €85,000 for joint applicants. Funding is provided through Council borrowing, with debt serviced from repayments by loanees.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT IN LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING STOCK:

A significant capital investment programme is required for existing local authority housing to achieve minimum standards, co-fund energy efficiency works, manage voids and deliver a planned maintenance programme.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY RETROFIT PROGRAMME:

Works under the Energy Efficiency Retrofit Programme (EERP) are planned for Galway County Council housing stock. By the end of the four years ended 2025, 368 properties will be retrofitted.

In 2026, Galway County Council proposes to retrofit 110 properties, with a mix of house types in line with programme guidelines. Remaining housing stock will benefit from the programme in future years as grant and match funding allow.

Description	2026	2027	2028
Energy Efficiency, Voids Retrofitting and Planned Maintenance Programme	€4.5m	€4.5m	€5m

PLANNED MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME:

It is proposed to advance a significant Planned Maintenance Programme for existing housing stock, subject to loan approval by Plenary and the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, to achieve compliance with statutory requirements, including minimum standards. A €10 million loan has been approved by Plenary Council, with the majority of drawdown planned for 2026–2027.

VOIDS PROGRAMME:

The Voids Programme will continue, bringing vacant properties up to the required minimum rental standards before reletting. Once-off funding is provided annually by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage for a limited number of voids, with the balance funded through the Housing Maintenance Budget via the revenue account and, with Department approval, through Internal Capital Receipts (ICRs).

PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE, FIRE & EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Capital projects relating, to Roads, Piers and Harbours, Flood Mitigation schemes, Plant Acquisition and Active Travel (Greenways) are detailed below. Completion of these projects is subject to departmental approval, available funding and compliance with all relevant legislative and regulatory requirements.

NATIONAL ROADS

Alongside major inter-urban routes, a full programme of pavement and minor improvements, safety measures and bridge upgrades will continue on the National Primary and Secondary Road Network. This programme relies on annual allocations from Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and is presented to the Council each year as part of the Annual Roads Programme.

Project:	Status:
N6 Galway City Ring Road	The application was resubmitted to An Coimisiún Pleanála, with an update provided in April 2025. The Coimisiún invited submissions on the updates and may hold an oral hearing in 2025. Subject to approval and available funding, the project can progress to land and property acquisition, detailed design and enabling works, with contractor procurement for the main construction phase in subsequent years. Scheme budget: €600 million Funding source: TII 100%
N59 Maigh Cuilinn Bypass	Complete defects and close out remaining land agreements. Scheme Budget: €71m Funding Source: TII 100%
N63 Liss to Abbey Realignment Scheme	Complete detailed design in 2025. Advance Fencing and Archaeology to commence in Q4 2025. Main construction tender to be advertised in 2026 and construction in 2026 & 2027. Scheme Budget: €38m Funding Source: TII 100%
N59 Bunnakill to Claremount	Advance contracts for ground investigation works, topographic surveys and archaeology investigations Q1 and Q2 2026. Land Settlements ongoing. Scheme Budget: €40m Funding Source: TII 100%
N17 Milltown to Gortnagunnad Realignment	Progress land acquisition and settle with landowners. Complete detailed design and prepare tender documents for the main construction contract. Undertake advance works and divert necessary utilities by early 2026. Progress the tender process and appoint a contractor in Q3 2026. Deliver Phases 6–7 between 2026 and 2028. Scheme Budget: €25m Funding Source: TII 100%
N59 Clifden to Maam Cross	An application for funding to progress the scheme through Phases 0 to 4 of TII Project Management Guidelines has been made. Scheme Budget: €80m Funding Source: TII 100%
N84 Galway to Curraghmore	Phase 1 Feasibility Report has been submitted to TII for comment/approval. Approval to progress the project through Phases 2 to 4 to be sought in 2026. Scheme Budget: €40 - €200m Funding Source: TII 100%

Galway County National Secondaries Relief Road Study	Phase 0 is completed, and approval is to be sought from TII to progress the project through Phases 1 & 2 (Concept & Feasibility and Options Selection). Scheme Budget: €30m Funding Source: TII 100%
N83 Baile Chláir Traffic Calming	The design of the network drainage, cycleway and traffic calming measures have been completed in-house and tender documents are currently being reviewed. It is anticipated to go to tender in Q4 2025 and construction to commence in Q2 2026. Scheme Budget: €5m, Funding Source: TII 100%
N59 Oughterard Footbridge	Consent decision is due from An Coimisiún Pleanála in January 2026. Detailed design, ground investigations, archaeological, and invasive utility investigations Q1 and Q2 2026. Contractor tender action, evaluation and award Q3 2026. Landowner negotiations ongoing. Scheme Budget: €5m Funding Source: TII 100%
Pavement Schemes	A 3 year pavement renewal programme is to be agreed with TII in 2025. Estimated Programme Budget - €3m/year Funding Source: TII 100%
Active Travel Schemes	Progress the Active Travel programme by completing the land acquisitions and detailed design stages and commence construction. N67 South of Ballinderreen AT Scheme Budget: €1.5m N63 Abbeyknockmoy Village AT Scheme Budget: €1m Funding Source: TII 100%
Connemara Greenway-Clifden to Oughterard Greenway and Galway to Oughterard Greenway	Clifden to Oughterard Greenway (Connemara Greenway) Complete construction from Clifden to Recess and progress Recess to Oughterard. Galway to Oughterard Greenway - Design and environmental evaluation to be completed, followed by an application for consent to An Coimisiún Pleanála in 2026. Scheme Budget: €45m Funding Source: TII 100%
NCN Galway to Athlone Cycleway	NCN Galway to Athlone cycleway - The scheme is to be progressed in 2 sections, Galway to Portumna and Portumna to Athlone. Subject to the outcome of the Westmeath County Council review and TII direction, GCC propose to go to tender in early 2026 to appoint a Technical Consultant for further advancement of the scheme between 2026 and 2028. Scheme Budget: Galway to Portumna - €150m Portumna to Athlone - €100m Funding Source: TII 100%

NON-NATIONAL ROADS (REGIONAL AND LOCAL ROADS)

A programme of capital works on regional and local roads is planned, subject to funding availability and, where required, the necessary internal resources to deliver the projects.

Project:	Status:
Athenry Northern Ring Road (Strategic Regional and Local Road Grant)	Construction phase on western section during 2025 and 2026. Detailed design continuing on the eastern section to Monivea road. Scheme Budget for Western Section: €3.95m. Funding Source: 100% funding from DoT
Specific Improvement Grant Kilbannon	Procurement completed Q2 2025. Construction started in Q3 2025. Scheme Budget: €4.95M Funding Source: 100% funding from DoT
Specific Improvement Grant Belleville	Design prepared. Discussions with landowners ongoing, in advance of progressing to statutory planning, potentially Q1 2026. Scheme Budget: €1.5M Funding Source: 100% funding from DoT
Specific Improvement Grant Creagh Junction, Ballinasloe	Repeat application updated to redesign junction layout to improve road user safety. Potential design and construction start in 2026. Scheme Budget: €400,000 Funding Source: 100% funding from DoT
Specific Improvement Grant Cuan na Loinge	Environmental assessments completed by consultants and project statutory planning process Q3 2025. Decision expected by Q1 2026 Scheme Budget: €840,000 Funding Source: 100% funding from DoT
Oughterard Car Park and Bus Park	Enhancement of existing Council carpark at Oughterard to facilitate buses, additional pedestrian facilities. Scheme Budget: €250,000 Funding Source: 100% funding from GCC Own Resources (allocated)
Ballinasloe Townspark Relief Road	Additional funding and resources required to support delivery. Scheme Budget: €TBC Funding Source: Some GCC own resources but significant additional funding will be required.
R336 Bearnna-Scrib via Ros a Mhíl	It is a policy objective of Galway County Council to support the preparation of a feasibility study in relation to the R336 within the lifetime of the County Development Plan. Scheme Budget: €TBC Funding Source: Funding required.

Islands Minor Capital Works Programme

The Department of Rural and Community Development has provided Galway County Council with annual funding of around €600,000 in recent years, covering road resurfacing, minor pier works, footpaths and other island infrastructure.

Scheme budget: €0.7 million annually, with 90% funded by DRCD and 10% matched by Galway County Council. **Funding source:** DRCD 90%, Galway County Council 10%.

ACTIVE TRAVEL

In 2025 Galway County Council secured €2.7 million under the NTA Active Travel programme for works across the county, including local transport plans, community transport studies, urban design projects, bus stop enhancements and safe routes to school schemes.

Active Travel design consultants will continue to be engaged for scheme projects throughout 2025. Any projects not completed by year-end will require NTA approval to continue into 2026. A major focus in 2026 is progressing urban design projects in Tuam, Athenry, Loughrea, Ballinasloe and Oranmore, and finalising Local Transport Plans and Community Transport Studies.

The Active Travel Programme is rolling, but national funding is limited. Priority will be given to progressing existing projects to construction in 2026. All projects require NTA approval and must comply with the NTA's Project Appraisal Guidelines.

PLANT ACQUISITION / RENEWAL AND WINTER MAINTENANCE PROGRAMMES

Project:	Status:
Review of Fleet and Machinery Yard Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant investment is required to replace the aging fleet. A Galway County Council machinery yard review has been completed, and a phased vehicle replacement has commenced in line with its recommendations. TII funding was secured for two permanently mounted salt spreaders with brine capability, delivered in 2025, with costs fully recouped from TII. Three additional 26-tonne tipper trucks were also acquired in 2025 to replace end-of-life vehicles. These trucks, funded from internal receipts, will form part of the Winter Service Fleet, featuring pre-wet spreading capability and servicing the Municipal Districts. Further acquisitions are planned to modernise the fleet, with operational and maintenance savings offsetting part of the capital investment. Projected spend for 2026–2028 is €2.5 million, mainly financed from Galway County Council resources, with approximately €1 million expected from TII and the Department of Transport.

FLOOD RELIEF/MITIGATION SCHEMES

The Council will continue to work with the Office of Public Works (OPW), through the Joint Working Group, Steering Group and other stakeholders, to advance flood relief and mitigation schemes in compliance with all legislative and regulatory requirements and within available resources.

Project:	Status:
South Galway (Gort Lowlands) Flood Relief Scheme	Development of the EIAR and Natura Impact Statement (NIS) has been progressed during 2025, with assessments and reports due to be finalised in the early part of 2026. The scheme is scheduled to seek statutory permissions to proceed during 2026.
Ballinasloe Flood Relief Scheme	The EIAR and Natura Impact Statement (NIS) were progressed during 2025, with assessments and reports expected to be finalised in early 2026. The scheme is scheduled to seek statutory permissions to proceed during 2026.
Clifden Flood Relief Scheme	Stage 1 of the consultant's brief, including the development of the EIAR and Natura Impact Statement (NIS), was completed in 2025. Pending OPW approval, the scheme will move into Stage 2 in 2026, which includes seeking statutory approval for the recommended works.

PUBLIC LIGHTING

The LED retrofitting programme will continue over the next three years, alongside a comprehensive asset inventory survey carried out under a regional contract. The unbundling of the public lighting network from the electricity distribution network will also progress within this period. Projected capital expenditure for 2026–2028 is approximately €5 million, with €1 million from Climate Action Funding and the balance from Galway County Council resources.

STRATEGIC PIERS AND HARBOURS PROGRAMME

Funding for works on strategic piers on the islands is being provided by the Department of Rural and Community Development and The Gaeltacht.

Project:	Status:
Inis Oírr Pier Improvements – construct breakwater and pier extension, carry out dredging and provide additional berthage	<p>The land acquisition and CPO process is complete, and all lands required for the project have been secured.</p> <p>A contractor was appointed in 2025, with work commencing in September and scheduled to run for two years.</p> <p>The approved project budget is €35 million, fully funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development and The Gaeltacht (DRCDG).</p>
Inis Meáin Improvements	<p>Funding has been approved by DRCDG for a feasibility assessment to explore options for upgrading landing facilities on Inis Meáin, ensuring suitable provision for passenger and cargo services over the long term.</p> <p>A consultant has been appointed, and the final report will be delivered in Q1 2026. Its recommendations will support a funding application to progress the project through design, planning and construction. Projected spend over the next three years is approximately €1 million, fully funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development.</p>

FISHERIES HARBOUR AND COASTAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAMME

Project:	Status:
Various Piers and Harbours	<p>Galway County Council is identifying and prioritising upgrades for landing places under its control. Subject to approval from the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine, these projects will proceed through planning, design and construction.</p>

NATIONAL BROADBAND PLAN

The National Broadband Plan aims to provide high-speed broadband to all homes, schools and businesses in Ireland, including rural areas, through private investment and public funding. In County Galway, National Broadband Ireland (NBI) is delivering fibre to around 41,000 premises, with a total investment of €153 million. As of October 2025, 28,399 premises (69%) have fibre infrastructure, 10,362 are connected, and construction has started on 10,424 more. Full rollout is expected by December 2026.

Commercial Investment delivering FTTH services.

Commercial operators are investing in fibre-to-the-home across County Galway, with 100,668 premises expected to be covered. Companies including Open Eir, SIRO, Virgin Media and ENet are expanding high-speed networks, now available in towns such as Tuam, Athenry, Gort, Clifden, Oranmore, Barna, Loughrea and Ballinasloe. Open Eir has invested €31.5 million, and ComReg reports fixed-line broadband access has risen from 19% of premises in Q1 2019 to 84% by Q2 2025.

Gigabit Infrastructure Act (GIA)

The Gigabit Infrastructure Act is an EU regulation designed to reduce costs and barriers for gigabit broadband and 5G rollout. It replaces the 2014 Broadband Cost Reduction Directive and supports the EU's Digital Decade 2030 targets of universal gigabit and 5G coverage.

The GIA introduces several important changes aimed at:

- Enhancing transparency in infrastructure deployment,
- Simplifying procedures for new physical communications infrastructure,
- Facilitating access to existing infrastructure.

These measures aim to speed up the rollout of very high-capacity networks, supporting digital infrastructure and enabling technologies such as IoT, machine-to-machine communication, cloud computing and big data.

The regulation places new responsibilities on all publicly funded bodies. The main provisions of the GIA will come into effect on **12 November 2025**, with full implementation required by **May 2026**.

Broadband Connection Points (BCPs)

- BCPs are part of Ireland's Our Rural Future strategy, improving digital connectivity in rural areas. Galway County has 21 BCPs, including four on offshore islands, rolled out by the Department of Rural and Community Development, National Broadband Ireland and Vodafone under the National Broadband Plan.
- Galway County Council supports the network by providing free Wi-Fi, digital access spaces and facilities for remote working. The BCPs, combined with enhanced broadband, offer a platform for community initiatives and work with partners such as the Healthy Galway County Office, Galway Sports Partnership and the HSE.
- In 2026 the focus will be on expanding virtual programmes, hosting events and training, and promoting digital skills, particularly for older people and the farming community, to ensure inclusive access to connectivity benefits.

Public Wi-Fi – WiFi4EU Initiative

- The WiFi4EU initiative, launched by the European Commission, aims to provide free Wi-Fi in public spaces across Europe, including parks, town squares, public buildings, libraries, healthcare centres and museums.
- In County Galway, the Department of Rural and Community Development co-funded the installation of Wi-Fi access points under this scheme. Galway County Council has installed 40 access points and will cover operational costs until 2025, with the initiative expected to continue into 2026.

The service's landing page directs users to a Galway County Council-supported tourism website, promoting local attractions and visitor information.

GALWAY FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE (GFRS)

GFRS is the Principal Emergency Service (PES) for Galway City and County Councils. The following outlines the indicative capital programme for GFRS for 2024–2026. All projects are subject to funding from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) and require specific approval.

FIRE APPLIANCES

- Galway Fire & Rescue Service (GFRS) have sought funding from the National Directorate for Fire & Emergency Management for a Heavy Rescue Tender with Crane; this application is currently under consideration by NDFEM but is unlikely to receive funding in 2025. The case will be followed up again in 2026.
- In 2025 GFRS received 2 new firefighting appliances (fire engines) from the NDFEM Capital Appliance Programme. These appliances have been deployed to Galway City and Ballinasloe. The older city appliance has been redeployed to Clifden, and the existing Ballinasloe appliance has now become their 2nd appliance.
- Galway Fire & Rescue Service has been designated as a regional hub for both new capabilities of high-capacity pumping and urban search & rescue. As part of these programmes, in 2025 GFRS has received funding for up to 7 new vehicles and associated equipment at a provisional estimated cost of €1.2m. The procurement process is well underway.

FIRE STATIONS

New fire station projects are included in the DHLGH National Capital Programme 2021–2025. The NDFEM has submitted its budget request for the 2026–2030 Capital Programme to the Department.

LOUGHREA FIRE STATION

- A suitable site has been identified, and a revised Part 8 planning application for the proposed Loughrea Fire Station has been approved. In October 2025, approval was granted to go to tender for a main contractor.

BALLINASLOE FIRE STATION

- A revised capital appraisal for the refurbishment of Ballinasloe Fire Station at its existing location was submitted to the DHPLG. Given the level of capital support recently

received from NDFEM, approval is considered unlikely in the short term. GFRS is currently exploring the possibility of a commercial mortgage for the project.

GALWAY CITY FIRE STATION AND HEADQUARTERS

- The preferred site has been identified with Galway City Council, and an initial independent planning and flood risk assessment has been completed. Following a briefing of the NDFEM by the Chief Fire Officer, with the Chief Executives of both the City and County Councils in attendance, the capital appraisal was completed and submitted to the National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management. In October 2025, approval was received from the National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management to proceed to tender to procure the services of a design team.

BRIGADE MECHANICS WORKSHOP ATHENRY

- GFRS maintains a fleet of approximately 60 vehicles. A design team has been appointed, and designs are substantially complete, with a Part 8 planning application expected to be submitted to the Planning Authority before the end of 2025.

PORTUMNA FIRE STATION

- A capital appraisal for the refurbishment of Portumna Fire Station will be submitted to the NDFEM in early 2025. The project cost is estimated to be around €0.8 million.

ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT

GORT CIVIC AMENITY SITE

The updated costs for completion of the project, including construction works, connection costs and consultant fees, are estimated at €750,000. The Gort CAS project has planning and EPA licence approval.

KILCONNELL LANDFILL

Following the Further Information request for planning permission, ecological surveys and some design revisions have been completed for the Eco Park project. A further €10,000 will be required to finalise the Construction Environment Management Plan and appropriate assessment screening updates. Subject to planning approval, approximately €35,000 will be needed to progress to tendering Stage iii. As of 2023, a preliminary cost estimate of €2.43 million was identified to complete Phase 1 of the project, including walking trails and ancillary services.

POLLBOY LANDFILL

The Preliminary Design Report for an amenity development has been completed. Progressing the project to a planning submission will require approximately €80,000 to cover stage (ii) design services, site investigations, screenings and ecological surveys.

BURIAL GROUNDS

Capital expenditure projections on Burial Grounds are as follows:

<i>Burial Ground</i>	<i>Projected Costs:</i>	<i>Stage:</i>
Rinville	€500,000	Construction design underway
Annaghdown	€350,000	Re-assessment prior to resubmission of Part 8
Kilconieron	€150,000	Site identified, submit for planning 2026
Cill Éinne	€150,000	Site identified, submit for planning 2026
Tynagh	€100,000	Site identified, submit for planning 2026
Claregalway	€400,000	Site selection stage
Inverin	€250,000	Site selection stage
Mount Pleasant	€400,000	Site selection stage

RURAL, COMMUNITY & TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND INTEGRATION

HEALTHY IRELAND OPEN WATER SWIMMING INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

Galway Sports Partnership was allocated €25,000 under the Healthy Ireland Open Water Swimming Infrastructure Fund in 2025 for delivery in 2026. This funding will support a new staircase ladder at Longpoint, Loughrea, and outdoor freshwater showers at Traught, Kinvara, Trá Mhór and Trá an Doilín in Conamara. Galway Sports Partnership will continue to pursue funding opportunities between 2026 and 2028 to enable further capital improvements and investment in sports infrastructure.

TOWN AND VILLAGE RENEWAL PROGRAMME

The estimated capital spend for 2026–2027, subject to Departmental approval, is €1,670,046 for five projects shortlisted for DRC DG consideration under this programme. In 2026, a further programme will be developed for a scheme of up to €1.5 million for delivery in 2027–2028.

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION FUND

Galway County Council has been allocated €1,180,860 under the 2024 Community Recognition Fund for communities with a high number of International Protection Applicants in their population. The fund will support capital projects that address infrastructural deficits and benefit the wider community. A total of 16 projects were approved for funding, with projects being progressed in co-operation with the relevant community groups.

Project	Location	Amount Approved
Development of a Cultural and Community Engagement Hub	Clifden	€50,500
Refurbish Playground	Kiltormer	€85,516
Development of Sensory Garden and Dog Park at Palace Grounds Community Park	Tuam	€74,680
Playground Upgrade	Ballinasloe	€50,000
Playground Upgrade	Ballinasloe	€50,000
Ionad Pobail an Mháma Multi use Games Area (MUGA)	Mam	€85,651

Inclusive Play and Accessibility Area at Corribdale Community Park	Oughterard	€50,000
Carnmore Hurling Club Walkway Enhancements and Energy Efficiency Upgrade	Carnmore	€52,930
Kinvara Community Centre Audiovisual upgrade	Kinvara	€53,402
Ballinasloe Social Services / Ballinasloe Family and Community Resource Centre	Ballinasloe	€100,000
Galway County Council	Ballinasloe	€125,000
Coiste Páirc an Chathánaigh	An Ceathrú Rua	€70,000
Ionad Óige Bhearna/Na Forbacha	Barna	€120,000
Galway County Council	An Spidéal	€80,000
Gort Community Council Ltd	Gort	€81,181
St. Mary's GAA Club	Athenry	€52,000
TOTAL		€1,180,860

TOURISM

DUNGUAIRE CASTLE ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT

Galway County Council intends to acquire Dunguaire Castle as a flagship tourism asset for the county. To realise this, financial support of €5 million from central government will be required.

- **Remedial Works:** Essential structural repairs and conservation works will be undertaken to ensure the long-term preservation of the castle.
- **Visitor Experience:** A new, immersive visitor experience will be created within the castle, highlighting its history, cultural significance, and connection to the local community.
- **Sustainable Operations:** The project will develop a sustainable operating model, ensuring the castle's ongoing viability as a tourism destination.
- **Digital & Marketing Strategy:** A new digital and marketing strategy will be implemented to maximize the castle's reach, attract diverse audiences, and support local economic development.

This investment will secure Dunguaire Castle's future as a premier heritage attraction, enhance the visitor experience in South Galway, and support the county's tourism and economic objectives.

BATTLE OF AUGHRIM VISITOR EXPERIENCE – EU JUST TRANSITION FUND PROJECT

Galway County Council has secured €102,000 in funding from the EU Just Transition Fund (JTF), with an additional €27,000 in match funding from the Council, to advance the Battle of Aghrim Visitor Centre project. The initiative will deliver a feasibility study and detailed designs for a state-of-the-art visitor experience at the historic site. The project aims to position the Battle of Aghrim Centre as a leading heritage attraction, using its historical significance to drive tourism and local economic development. Fáilte Ireland's new tourism project funding scheme is expected to open in 2026, and the project is likely to be eligible to apply for capital funding to

develop the full visitor experience, with an estimated total cost of €1,200,000.

EAST GALWAY DESTINATION AND EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The East Galway Destination and Experience Development Plan (DEDP) is a Fáilte Ireland-led initiative developed and implemented in partnership with Galway County Council. Currently in its early stages, the DEDP will provide a framework for tourism growth and experience development across East Galway. Between 2026 and 2028, the plan is expected to identify potential capital projects, which Galway County Council will lead in developing and delivering. While specific funding requirements are yet to be determined, significant projects are anticipated to emerge, supporting the long-term enhancement of the region's tourism offering.

CONNEMARA AND ISLANDS DESTINATION AND EXPERIENCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Galway County Council is actively involved in the Connemara and Islands Destination and Experience Development Plan (DEDP), a strategic initiative led by the Wild Atlantic Way team in Fáilte Ireland. While the initial phase of the plan has concluded, Version 2.0 is currently under development to build on successes and address emerging opportunities in the region. As this new version takes shape, capital projects may be identified for delivery by Galway County Council to support the continued growth and enhancement of tourism experiences across Connemara and the islands.

JOYCE COUNTRY GEOPARK – UNESCO ACCREDITATION AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

The Joyce Country Geopark is set to receive UNESCO accreditation in spring 2026, marking a significant milestone for the region and Galway County. As the project enters this phase, the tourism team will take a greater role in developing marketing strategies and enhancing the visitor experience. To fully realise the tourism potential of UNESCO status and establish the Geopark as a key economic driver for the county, additional investment will be needed. An additional annual tourism development fund of €25,000 is projected to support targeted marketing and create high-quality visitor experiences that attract both domestic and international tourists.

DISCOVERGALWAY.IE WEBSITE REDEVELOPMENT & SOCIAL MEDIA LAUNCH

Galway County Council proposes a comprehensive redevelopment of the legacy DiscoverGalway.ie website, transforming it into a modern, accessible, and fully bilingual (English/Irish) destination platform. This will be complemented by an integrated social media presence on Facebook, Instagram and TikTok to inspire, disperse and convert tourism demand across County Galway. The project supports the *County Galway Tourism Strategy 2023–2031* by improving digital storytelling, visitor engagement and conversion opportunities for local businesses and events. The new platform will also help Galway capitalise on major tourism opportunities, including the 2027 Ryder Cup, by attracting and converting high-value visitors before and after the event.

Key Features:

- Modern, mobile-first website with interactive maps, itinerary builder, events calendar, and accessibility features
- Full bilingual content model (EN/GA) supporting Gaeltacht language and culture
- Integrated analytics, GDPR compliance, and advanced SEO
- Social media launch with branded content, video, and community engagement
- Dedicated “Golf in Galway” hub to leverage Ryder Cup interest

GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL AND THE SHANNON TOURISM MASTERPLAN

Galway County Council is working with Waterways Ireland on the Shannon Tourism Masterplan, focusing on developing the Blueways trail along the Galway section of the Shannon. The Tourism Team has contributed €15,000 towards discovery point enhancements and will continue to support the trail’s development to deliver high-quality, sustainable visitor experiences.

Based on the Masterplan, several capital projects are identified for County Galway that could be prioritised as future developments:

- **Portumna Blueway Hub:** Development of Portumna as a key Blueway hub, including enhanced visitor facilities, improved access to the water, upgraded moorings and interpretation/signage.
- **Lough Derg Blueway Discovery Points:** Upgrades to discovery points along the Lough Derg shoreline in Galway, including improved amenities, wayfinding and activity infrastructure.
- **Portumna Bridge and Marina Enhancements:** Improvements to the Portumna Bridge area and marina, including better pedestrian and cyclist connectivity, upgraded berthing and enhanced public realm.
- **Trail Connectivity and Signage:** Investment in waymarked trails, signage and digital interpretation to connect Blueway assets and support multi-activity use (walking, cycling, paddling) along the Galway section of the Shannon and Lough Derg.

These projects align with the strategic objectives of the Shannon Tourism Masterplan and will help position County Galway as a leading destination for water-based and outdoor recreation tourism. Galway County Council will continue to work with Waterways Ireland and other partners to secure funding and deliver these projects as part of the county’s tourism strategy.

SUPPORT FOR COUNCIL COMMUNITY ASSETS

The Unit will work with local stakeholders and leaseholders to secure governance and funding for the Old Scouts Hall in Tuam to create an upgraded community space. An €8,000 investment in 2025 funded a structural survey and energy audit, with a further €15,000 allocated for consultation and a detailed Bill of Quantities in early 2026. Design and costings for upgrades to Woodford and Headford courthouses will also be advanced in 2026 following community consultation as part of a pipeline of capital projects for village renewal and other funding opportunities.

CLÁR PROGRAMME – SMALL-SCALE CAPITAL INFRASTRUCTURE SCHEME

Capital grant aid of €1,041,046 has been submitted for final Departmental approval for 16 projects under the CLÁR 2025 Scheme.

In 2026–2027 Galway County Council will oversee, in partnership with Portumna Chamber of Commerce and disability representative organisations, a €100,000 investment in a Changing Unit for adults, supporting Portumna’s development as a disability-friendly town for residents and visitors.

RECREATION AND AMENITY

The Council will continue to support investment in recreation and amenity facilities across County Galway, leveraging grant funding and development contributions where available. The programme prioritises:

- **Playground Upgrades & New Facilities:** Ongoing maintenance and enhancement of Council-owned playgrounds, and application for further funding under the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY).
- **Leisure Centre Upgrades:** Significant investment in Ballinasloe and Tuam Leisure Centres is required over the next 3–5 years, as facilities approach 20 years in operation, to ensure compliance with modern standards and energy efficiency.
- **Rinville Park Works:** Continued works including tree management, replanting, and enhancement of heritage and recreational infrastructure.
- **EcoPark:** Progressing biodiversity and amenity improvements at Moneymore/Oranhill, supporting outdoor passive recreation and environmental education.
- **Parks, Open Spaces & Pitch Enhancements:** Upgrades to parks, open spaces, and sports pitches to promote community wellbeing and active lifestyles.

Estimated capital spend for 2026–2028 is projected at €2.4 million.

OUTDOOR RECREATION INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

The following projects are progressing and nearing completion.

Project Name	Outline	Amount Approved
Creggs Wildlife Garden accessibility upgrade	Enhancement of wheelchair accessible walkways within Creggs Wildlife Park.	€20,339
Gateway to the Corrib	Installation of signage for a new cycle route in the Claren area of Headford.	€18,000
Hymany Way Upgrade	Upgrade the Beara Breifne/Hymany Way Walking Trail.	€29,710
Lackagh Knockdoemore Walkway Enhancements	Walkway safety enhancements and Maintenance to existing Knockdoemore Park - Lackagh walkway.	€27,450
An Trá Mhor Inverin Accessibility Upgrade	Accessibility Upgrades to An Trá Mhor to enable accessibility and inclusiveness for older people, younger people and persons with disabilities.	€29,700
Cill Murvey Beach Accessibility Upgrade	Accessibility Upgrades to Cill Murvey to enable accessibility and inclusiveness for older people, younger people and persons with disabilities.	€29,700

M2, M3 PROJECT DEVELOPMENT FUNDING RECEIVED FOR THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS

The following projects are progressing and nearing completion.

Measure	Project Name	Outline	Amount Approved
Project Development	Rinville Forest Park Masterplan	To Develop a Major Tourism Attraction, Building on the Unique Heritage of the park for Galway County and the Western Region.	€49,950
Project Development	Ballinasloe Outdoor Recreation Park	To carry out a feasibility study exploring the options for the development of a public park in Ballinasloe that reflects good practice in line with Proper Planning and Sustainable development.	€49,950

Project Development	Linn Taoide Arainn	Feasibility Study for Provision of tidal pool on Arainn along the seashore that will offer recreational opportunities for the island community as well as visitors to the island and provide a habitat for marine life.	€35,847
M2	Glinsk Heritage Park	Glinsk Heritage Park Repair and Upgrade of 2km of Existing Trails to improve accessibility.	€200,000
M2	Castlegrove Woods Tales & Trails	Castlegrove Woods Tales & Trails aims to develop both Castlegrove Woods and Barracks as Nature Trails, Historic Trails and Heritage Display centre.	€47,821
M2	Ionad Pobail an Mháma - Car Park	The construction of a car park which will facilitate the western way and provide proper and secure parking for a range of community and commercial recreation events.	€172,583

MEASURE 1 FUNDING RECEIVED FOR THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS

Project Name	Outline	Amount Approved
Trail surface repairs – Hymany Way	Surface repair to a 2km section of the Hymany Way trail along the old Grand Canal towpath, including laying stone and maintaining existing drains to facilitate water runoff.	€40,000

The Following projects were selected by Galway County Council for submission to the Department of Rural, Community Development & the Gaeltacht under the 2025 Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme. Pending Approval from DRCD&G

Measure	Project Name	Outline	Amount Requested
M2	The Walks Project, Loughrea	Completion of the repairs to The Walks wall Promenade. Continuation of the reinstatement of the wall retaining the riverbank, thus improving condition for walkers and the trout spawning/nursery grounds of Loughrea Lake fishery.	€ 200,000
M2	The Marconi Station/Trail	The 5km looped trail Marconi Station at Derrigimlagh, Connemara will undergo a series of works including trail	€ 197,550

		upgrades & repairs, disability access improvements & enhanced marketing.	
M2	Connemara and Aran Islands Marketing Project	Marketing materials and promotion of Connemara and Aran Islands.	€ 40,000
M3	Extension to Rinvilla Park Walkways	This project will add 2.5km of low-level lighting walkways, linking to Rinvilla Park.	€ 324,000

Total Estimated Cost/Expenditure for Projects amounts to €1,512,600. This amount will subsequently be recouped from the Department of Rural, Community Development and Gaeltacht Department as each project is completed.

CORPORATE SERVICES, FACILITIES MANAGEMENT AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY INVESTMENTS

Galway County Council must achieve a 51% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and a 50% improvement in energy efficiency by 2030. To support this, capital investment in our building portfolio will be required under the 2026–2028 Capital Programme. Four buildings, including Westside Library, Ballinasloe Library and Office, Ballinasloe MD, and Tuam MD and Library, have been proposed for Design Stage under the Building Retrofit Pathfinder Programme, with SEAI providing 50% funding. High-level cost estimates are outlined below, with detailed costs to follow after Design Stage.

Project / Building Name	Total Estimated Project Cost (incl VAT + Contingency)	Total Funding by GCC (50%)
Westside Library	€567,803	€283,902
Tuam Area Office	€779,947	€389,973
Ballinasloe Library & Offices	€787,651	€393,825
Ballinasloe Area Office	€520,837	€260,419

Capital investment from the 2026–2028 programme will be required for essential health and safety, maintenance, energy efficiency and conservation works, including projects at Tuam and Ballinasloe Leisure Centres.

COUNCIL OFFICE ACCOMMODATION

The Facilities Section appointed Tom McNamara & Partners to appraise Council office accommodation, which has been completed. Following September plenary approval, a design team will be appointed to advance design and planning for a proposed extension and deep retrofit of County Hall.

LIBRARIES

Mobile library services will be expanded and upgraded with two new vehicles funded by a DRCD grant. A human-led design approach will guide a strategic review of library services and the development of a library development plan.