Galway 2020: Creating the Legacy

Interim report of a Future Search Conference held in June 2018

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

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The Future Search conference brought together a group of key stakeholders to make an action plan for *Galway 2020: Creating the Legacy*

The event was initiated by Galway 2020 to enable participants to agree a common mission, to take responsibility for action and to develop commitment to implementation of the legacy. It took place over three days and involved 84 participants drawn from a wide range of stakeholder groups including people representing local and central government, the creative arts, education, media, sport, business, youth, community, environment, language, hospitality and the Galway 2020 staff and board.

The conference embarked upon a collective journey that developed over five sessions labelled Past, Present, Future, Common Ground, and Action. Each involved gathering information, sharing understandings in small groups, reports to the whole, and large group dialogues. Each session built on the previous one and the product was a number of 'common ground statements' and an action plan.

Common Ground Statements	Example Actions
1. *Young People:* We trust in the vision of young people and we hear their voices.	■ In partnership with youth organisations design and deliver a large scale youth consultation. ■ The consultation will identify the most appropriate and meaningful actions for youth engagement in Galway 2020 up to and including board level. ■ Youth organisations will support Galway 2020 in this.
2. *Empowerment:* We invest in empowering people throughout their lives.	■ New programmes that teach leadership, producing, entrepreneurship, and allow for emergence of new art forms and art works. ■ Creative arts at third level strategy and alliances. ■ Creative Industries Hubs. ■ Eco-systems audit and research.
3. *An Teanga*: Dearbhaíonn muid an ról faoi leith atá ag an nGaeilge mar chuid dhílis d'Fhéiniúlacht Chultúrtha na Gaillimhe. Dearbhaíonn muid go bhfuil tionchar, téagar agus acmhainneacht Ghaeltacht na Gaillimhe ina údar inspioráide i dtaobh fáis agus cruthaitheachta. *The Language*: We affirm that the unique role of the Irish language is an intrinsic part of Galway's cultural identity and we affirm that the strength, depth and potential of its Gaeltacht is an inspiration for growth and creativity .	■ Gaillimh 2020 Leadership group to promote and invest in the Irish Language Arts. *Tá Grúpa Ceannaireachta 'Gaillimh 2020' chun infheistiú sna hEalaíona Gaeilge agus iad a chur chun cinn.* ■ Deliver the same range of artistic endeavours as Gaeilge as are delivered through English. *An réimse céanna d'iarrachtaí ealaíona a sholáthar trí Ghaeilge agus a sholáthraítear trí Bhéarla* ■ Gaillimh 2020 acts as a catalyst for National Irish Language Arts Organisation *Feidhmíonn Gaillimh 2020 mar chatalaíoch d'Eagraíocht Náisiúnta na nEalaíon Gaeilge*

Common Ground Statements	Example Actions
4. *Communication*: We communicate in a collaborative, engaging and open manner. We use all available and evolving means so that everybody owns the legacy.	■ Re-energise the audience by committing to carrying the message to our own internal audiences and networks. ■ Re-engage communities of interest – influencing our companies and other companies in our sectors to ensure full support. ■ Commit to being an ambassador and working with ambassadors from the other pillars of common ground.
5. *Equality*: We commit to equality for *all* because it makes our society better. Galway 2020 is for *all*, by *all*, with *all*: equal voice, equal input, equal opportunity, the choice to participate and equal benefit. We show our commitment to equality through our words, images, events and leadership.	■ Provide groups with a toolkit on access for all to opportunities and cultural events. ■ Recognition days/weeks on race equality. ■ Day in Their Shoes events with asylum seekers.
6. *Leadership and Governance*: Through inspirational leadership, underpinned by good governance, openness and accountability, we will deliver our legacy.	■ Leadership and Governance development strategy to be formulated and agreed including a mentoring programme, leadership/governance courses in GMIT, NUIG and IMI etc. and shared learning among key stakeholders. ■ Establish Legacy Organisation to drive the Legacy agenda.
7. *Urban and Rural*: Galway City and County is a unique place to live, work and belong, progressing together while promoting diversity of place language and identity and ensuring the potential of all areas is harnessed and nourished.	■ Create Managed Cultural Hubs: adaptable, multipurpose spaces suitable for performance, exhibition, activities, meetings, social activities, tourism, heritage, etc. ■ Identify unique cultural characteristic of each municipal district - what makes them unique in terms of place, language, landscape, people, traditions, etc. ■ Revitalise Town/Village Centres by repurposing empty residential and commercial property, create new public spaces and green spaces, and resolving traffic, transport and parking issues.

Common Ground Statements	Example Actions
8. *Infrastructure*: We the people believe in participative structures involving all stakeholders. We develop, deliver and sustain world class infrastructure for Galway City and County.	■ Children's Centre (Lenaboy). ■ Multi-Purpose Cultural Centre. ■ City Library. ■ Transport - Galway City Ring Road. ■ Legacy Foundation: establish an organisation to sustain cultural activity in Galway City and County.
9. *Wellbeing*: We value people and support an environment that enables a positive and total approach to wellbeing.	■ Annual Pop-Up Stands Sports-day covering all sporting activities: two similar events, one for the county and one for the city. A joint project between Galway Sports Partnership and Galway 2020. ■ Youth Focused Well-Being Conference. A conference designed by young people for young people to embed the concept and delivery of Galway 2020's legacy. ■ Cultural Buddy: people who want to attend a cultural or a social event (but not on their own) can connect with someone else who wants to attend the event delivered through the councils' local arts offices.
10. *Our Place in Nature*: We actively reconnect people with the rest of nature.	■ Golden Mile Network. ■ Greenways & Boreen networks. ■ Organic gardening & local food production. ■ Green gym & Health through nature. ■ Waterways. ■ Mass public transport.
11. *Creativity*: We believe Galway unlocks creative freedom with opportunities space and support to make, share and celebrate all aspects of our culture.	■ Commission artistic interpretation of these common ground statements. ■ Use computer games to reintroduce and share culture. ■ Calendar of creativity master classes. ■ Establish Creative Capital Fund.
12. *Sustainability*: With the unique nature of Galway at the heart, we drive cultural, social, environmental and economic sustainability in and with our communities.	■ An outreach programme to build community capacity to engage in culture and the arts. ■ Environment proof all Galway 2020 and associated events and require agreement to charter as condition of funding. ■ Develop creative hubs/spaces in Galway City and County.

Key messages

The 12 common ground statements agreed by the conference emerged after two days of dialogue and deliberation. The following gives a flavour of the background to each of the statements.

Young People: As a group that is still growing and being nurtured by family and community, young people were seen as uniquely deserving of inclusion in both shaping and benefiting from the legacy. The current generation of children and young people faces a range of challenges that the legacy needs to take notice of: mental health issues were particularly prominent, rents have risen beyond the reach of many and employment patterns are changing. There is great potential for creativity to play a positive role in supporting the wellbeing of young people

Empowerment: This theme originated in the discussion about investing in young people in education and the kind of supports they need to be able to benefit fully from the Galway 2020 legacy. After further discussion it was concluded that while young people do need such support, so do many other groups in society and we should therefore actively invest in empowering people throughout their lives.

An Teanga/Irish Language: The Irish language has the potential to play a multi-dimensional role in the legacy. It is an inextricable part of the identity of Galway City and County and there is very strong aspiration that it should move much more centre-stage – from being a discrete part of education, media and the arts to being on a much more equal footing with the English language in these spheres. This is not to exclude the many other languages that are spoken here but rather to be part of a warm embrace for the great diversity of languages we enjoy.

Communication: The legacy will only be delivered if there is engagement across the whole of civil society, local and central government and for this to happen requires open, transparent and collaborative communications. Effective communication can have a potentially transformative effect on how the legacy impacts on people's lives.

Equality: The concepts of equality, inclusiveness and diversity were clearly a priority in the minds of participants in the conference from an early stage and were registered in the first set of group discussions. Inequality manifests itself in myriad ways within and between communities, age, race, gender, sexuality, income and wealth. The common ground statement is a powerful one that commits to principles, processes and actions.

Leadership and Governance: As the challenge of delivering an effective legacy developed during the conference, the issue of how to manage and deliver such volume and complexity was raised. The need for robust, flexible well-resourced governance structures was identified. Such structures would be weak and ineffective without leadership. The kind of leadership conceived by participants, however, was not primarily the man or woman at the top or the strong individual. Rather the concept of leadership favoured is potentially everywhere and in everyone – when a person steps forward to help others achieve a common purpose or a greater good, they are a leader and they are valued for it.

Urban and Rural: Participants acknowledged from the start that there can often be tensions between the city and its hinterland, whether the surrounding countryside or the larger towns. The conference was determined to ensure that the Galway 2020 legacy is for both Galway City and County and that it serves to help revitalise those areas that have been neglected in the past. Rather than seeing the issue in terms of tension between City and County, the conference saw the potential for collaboration and mutual benefit in the context of a balanced approach.

Infrastructure: Transport was a recurring theme for the conference and seen as crucial both for visitors and to enable access to culture, the arts and life in general for local people. The challenges of accommodation and the tension between tourism and local demand resulting in hardship for many were an important talking point. Infrastructure for the arts was crucial with the tension between the desire for a tangible legacy in the form of a world class concert hall and theatre, for example, and the available resources, remaining unresolved.

Wellbeing: The conference explored how the Galway 2020 legacy can make an actual difference to the quality of people's lives. In particular the role of culture, the arts and creativity was recognised as critical to personal wellbeing. It is not so much that creativity is good for health, but that without the opportunities to create and involve ourselves in culture and the arts, our lives are diminished. Thus the concept of wellbeing goes beyond that of the individual to the community and society as a whole. The legacy has the capacity to contribute significantly to societal wellbeing.

Our place in Nature: The importance of green and blue infrastructure such as greenways, outdoor classrooms, green spaces and waterways came up frequently and emerged as a major theme. The conversation opened up into wider issues of biodiversity and climate change, the importance of local responses and the potential of the legacy to address these issues. The wording of the common ground statement to 'reconnect people with the rest of nature' was carefully chosen, emphasising the human species as part of nature and not separate from it.

Creativity: The centrality of artists and artistic endeavour to Galway 2020 and its legacy was a recurring theme for the conference – '*we musn't forget that we are here because of artists*' recorded one group. It is important to support existing artists and also ensure that the legacy is for emerging artists. But creativity was not seen as the preserve of practising artists but is for everyone. To quote from one group's 'Manifesto', *We, the people, believe that every individual has creativity and that creativity must be enabled, facilitated and expressed*.

Sustainability: This is something of a meta-theme with clear connections to other common ground statements such as those on infrastructure and our place in nature, for example. The conference felt there was a need to consider the sustainability of the legacy holistically in terms of its cultural, social, environmental and economic dimensions and to consider the connections between them.

Next steps

It was one of the unique features of this conference that some of the next steps towards the emerging vision and action plan were being taken even before the event had concluded. Conversations were had, proposals shared and offers were made in support of the Galway 2020 legacy. A number of specific next steps were outlined by Galway 2020's Chief Executive in the closing moments of the conference.

1. The conference will reconvene in a year to review progress, again in June 2020 and then in June 2021 by which time the legacy plan will be fit for purpose.
2. Galway 2020 will hold a Youth Future Search conference to gain the input of young people into the legacy.
3. An interim report of this conference will be presented at the upcoming review meeting with the European Commission.
4. The next board meeting of Galway 2020 will consider the conference conclusions and plan further steps to consolidate the actions.
5. A new position, Head of Legacy, will be created in the Galway 2020 team. This person's responsibility will be to shape the findings of this conference into strategic and delivery plans and to lead the delivery of the legacy in partnership with the action planning groups and champions.