

2.6 Metropolitan Settlement Bearna

2.7 Town Context

Bearna is a coastal town situated on the western edge of Galway City, approximately 6.5km west of the City centre (Eyre Square) and 11km east of An Spidéal (Spiddal). Bearna is located within the Galway Metropolitan area. The town is located at the gateway to Gaeltacht na Gaillimhe (County Galway Gaeltacht), which is the single largest Gaeltacht in the country. Bearna has a unique character as a result of its fishing and Gaeltacht heritage and an attractive seaside location in close proximity to Galway City. In recent years, Bearna has experienced significant growth in and surrounding the core area of the town due to its close proximity to Galway City.

2.8 Sustainable Communities

2.8.1 Housing

The settlement of Bearna has experienced significant growth over the last 20 years and continues to be a popular location for new residential developments predominately due to its coastal setting and proximity to Galway City. The house types include a range of terraced, semi detached and detached housing that are both predominately bungalow and two storeys along the R336 and in the housing estates dotted around the town. There are also a number of apartment type developments located within the town centre.

New multiple housing schemes within the plan area should provide for an appropriate variety of residential units to meet the current and future demands of the area and be responsive to their local context, in terms of design, layout and density. Residential developments within Bearna must accord with the policy objective in relation to the allocation of housing units for Irish speaking families.

2.8.2 Town Centre/Retail

Bearna enjoys a reasonably busy town centre. The plan for the next six years includes a Town Centre zoning which identifies lands to the north and south of the Main Street (R336) running through the village. The consolidation of the village centre in Bearna to accommodate future growth helps to combat urban sprawl by providing a more compact form of urban development and the basis for a sustainable urban community. New development, in particular housing, should be delivered on under-utilised, infill and/or brownfield sites, including the redevelopment of existing sites and buildings, to build-up the existing development envelope of the urban area and to ensure that serviced lands close to the centre and public transport options are the primary focus for development in the short to medium term. The consolidation of the Village centre is supported by the policy objectives in this plan and there are lands zoned Town Centre/Infill identified to accommodate residential development as outlined in the NPF and the RSES.

2.8.3 Employment and Economic Development

Retail services are one of the main sources of employment in Bearna and it is imperative that this employment base is maintained and strengthened. Appropriately scaled and complementary retail provision in the right location, including the redevelopment of brownfield and under-utilised sites, in the village centre will safeguard and enhance the vitality and viability of the settlement centre and assist in reducing retail vacancy levels.

Bearna has a limited business and enterprise base due to the close proximity to Galway city and to centres operated and supported by Udaras na Galetachta in na Forbhaca.

In addition, the tourism potential of the settlement remains largely undeveloped, which also presents a significant opportunity to expand and promote the tourism base of the area, particularly given Bearna's coastal location at the gateway to the Galway Gaeltacht, Galway City and South Connemara, and along the Wild Atlantic Way. The

plan supports the location of tourism related development within the village centre area, including water-based tourism. The realisation of a coastal amenity park would be an important recreational and tourism asset in Bearnna to be enjoyed by the residents, local community and visitors alike in the area.

2.8.4 Community Facilities

Community facilities are essential to the well-being and functioning of sustainable communities, contributing to an overall better quality of life. They include facilities for education, childcare, sports and recreation, arts and culture, health and social purposes, burial grounds, places of worship etc. In Bearnna, the significant growth in development and population over the last twenty years has not been matched by the provision of supporting community infrastructure, resulting in increased pressures on the existing community facilities and services in place. Furthermore, the wide spatial distribution of some community facilities serving the locality, for example the Bearnna GAA club, has resulted in a high dependence of travel by private cars, in order to avail of these facilities. It is therefore important that the provision of new community facilities in the plan that meets the current and future requirements of the local community over the plan period and are provided at locations that are easily accessible by foot, cycling or public transport.

The Plan also supports the long-term future provision of a coastal amenity park in the village centre, extending from Mag's Boreen to Lacklea Boreen, to serve the recreation and amenity needs of the Bearnna community and visitors to Bearnna.

2.8.5 Education

The national school, Scoil Sheamais Naofa is located to the northern side of the R336 on the eastern approach to the town. This is co-educational school, however with the growth of Bearnna the school is at capacity with minimum area to further expand and facilities for outdoor play areas. There are lands identified for Community Facilities

within the Bearna Metropolitan Area that could accommodate such uses as educational facilities.

2.8.6 Environment and Heritage

There are a number protected structures within the Bearna plan area, which are listed in the RPS contained in Appendix 6 of the plan, including Bearna Pier, which is also located within an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA). The Pier Road ACA comprises of the majority of buildings, land and structures adjoining Pier Road, including the graveyard and Bearna Pier, which seeks to protect the built heritage and character of this streetscape and its longstanding link to the pier and seashore. There are also a number of archaeological Recorded Monuments within the plan area.

There are no designated ecological sites of national or European importance within the plan area. However, there are a number of such ecological sites adjoining the plan area to the east, extending from Barna Woods to Silver Strand, including the European Sites of Galway Bay cSAC (000268) and Inner Galway Bay SPA (004031).

The cultural heritage in Bearna has developed from its historical origins as a small fishing village to its present-day status as a modern urban settlement. While Bearna has experienced significant development in the Village centre in recent years, it is important that future development does not negatively impact on the Pier Road ACA and further erode its historical core. The preservation and sensitive development of the ACA is supported by the objectives in this plan and the existing policy objectives set out in the Chapter 12 Architecture, Archaeology and Cultural Heritage. An important feature of the cultural heritage in Bearna is its Gaeltacht status within the Connemara Gaeltacht. Therefore, it is important to ensure that new development respects the historical and cultural heritage of Bearna and protects and enhances its Gaeltacht status and linguistic heritage, in accordance with the provisions of the plan. It is imperative that the Irish language in Bearna is safeguarded and promoted in the settlement through appropriate planning conditions, including the naming of estates, signage, and the allocation

of a proportion housing units in new housing developments for Irish speakers.

2.9 Services and Infrastructure

2.9.1 Wastewater Disposal

Bearna is serviced by a public wastewater treatment plant located in Mutton Island. The plan supports the provision of a new standalone tertiary wastewater treatment plant to serve existing and future developments in Bearna. The plan will support the provision for maintenance and enhancements to existing infrastructure to safeguard the future development of the village.

2.9.2 Water Services

Bearna is serviced by the public mains water supply. The plan will support the provision for maintenance and enhancements to this supply to safeguard the future development of the village.

2.9.3 Transportation and Movement

The Plan promotes and supports efficiency of traffic circulation and management around the village and facilitates the appropriate provision of parking, convenient to the village centre. The preparation of a traffic management plan for Bearna would be beneficial to improve traffic congestion and reduction in speeding that is being experienced at present, particularly in the vicinity of the national school and along Pier Road, and to improve carparking management within the village.

The Plan supports the completion of the Inner Relief Road to form a new village street with high quality mixed-use development, which would further enhance the vitality and success of Bearna village. The new street would further enhance the quality of environment in the centre of the village and improve traffic safety, circulation and management in Bearna.

The Plan also recognises and supports the importance of sustainable transport, including the effective integration of land use and transportation, encouraging a modal shift from private transport to cycling and public transport. To encourage such a modal shift requires improvements to the existing public footpath network in the village over the plan period to ensure the safe movement of pedestrians. Furthermore, it is essential that all new developments focus on connectivity and link with the existing footpath network, so that connectivity is realised and utilised within the village and that a ‘leap-frogging’ form of development is not permitted.

2.10 Climate Change and Flooding

As outlined in Chapter 14 Climate Change, Energy and Renewable Resource climate change continues to have a direct effect on peoples live, society and economy. The plan seeks the creation of well-planned communities, where travel distances to education, work and services are reduced, enhancement of walking and cycling facilities and where appropriate local renewable and low carbon energy sources are integrated. A stage 2 Flood Risk Assessment has been carried out on the Bearna settlement plan which has identified areas at risk of flooding, including fluvial, coastal, pluvial and groundwater flooding. A flood risk map is contained in Section 4 of this metropolitan plan.

Policy Objectives Bearna (Bearna Metropolitan Settlement Plan- BMSP)

BMSP 1 Sustainable Residential Communities

Promote the development of appropriate and serviced lands to provide for high-quality, well laid out and well landscaped sustainable residential communities with an appropriate mix of housing types and densities, together with complementary land uses such as community facilities, local services and public transport facilities, to serve the residential population of Bearna Metropolitan settlement plan.

BMSP 2 Sustainable Town Centre

Promote the development of Bearna, as an intensive, high-quality, well landscaped and accessible environment, with an appropriate mix of uses, including residential, commercial,

service, tourism, enterprise, public and community uses as appropriate, that provide a range of retail services, facilities and amenities to the local community and visitors. The town centre and associated main street shall remain the primary focus for retail and service activity within these plan areas.

BMSP 3 Community Facilities and Services

To encourage and support the expansion and development of existing facilities and services to meet the needs of the local community.

BMSP 4 Business and Enterprise

(a) To facilitate the expansion of business and enterprise uses in the plan area of Bearna where appropriate and in accordance with the proper planning and development of the area.

(b) Protect and enhance the vitality and viability of the village centre by ensuring that it remains the primary retail, commercial and mixed-use centre in Bearna and prohibiting a proliferation of any individual use or other uses, which in the opinion of the Planning Authority does not contribute to the vitality and viability of village.

BMSP 5 Coastal Edge (CE)

a). The Coastal Edge will be conserved and enhanced, as appropriate as a strategic high amenity resource, providing opportunities for recreation, conservation and local amenity, whilst avoiding development which would have a detrimental impact on this area.

b). Genuine rural housing need shall be considered within the Coastal Edge Zone in accordance with the provisions as set out under policy objectives in Chapter 4 Rural Living and Development.

BMSP 6 National School

Support the upgrading of Scoil Sheamus Naofa or its relocation to a more appropriate site within the plan boundary to facilitate increased pupil capacity, more expansive recreational facilities with improved and safer access.

BMSP 7 Coastal Amenity Park

Support the creation of a Coastal Amenity Park, extending from Mag's Boreen to Lacklea Boreen, to serve the recreation and amenity needs of the Bearna community, to provide an appropriate public interface between the village and the coastline and to create a focal point and attractive setting for high quality tourism and mixed use development on adjoining lands. The design of any works being undertaken to achieve this objective shall be informed from the outset by ecological considerations.

BMSP 8 Jetty/Marina Development

Support the preparation of a feasibility study for a jetty/marina development in the vicinity of Bearna Pier and any necessary marine/foreshore works to facilitate public access to and use of the area around the pier, such as breakwaters. This feasibility study shall take account of the requirements to comply with the European Habitats Directive.

BMSP 9 Coastal Setback

Ensure a general building setback of 30m from the foreshore field boundary line to allow for the development of the coastal amenity park and a seaside promenade, cycleway, children's playground(s), landscaped amenity space and improved access routes to the local beaches, Bearna Pier and water-based activities.

BMSP 10 ACA Appraisal and Management Plan

Prepare and publish an Architectural Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for the existing ACA along Pier Road, including Pier Road, the adjoining lands and structures identified and Bearna Pier, subject to the availability of resources.

BMSP 11 Town Centre Management

Subject to appropriate resources, the Council in collaboration with local stakeholders shall prepare a town centre management plan for Bearna. The Management Plan will consider some or all of the following:

- (a) Upgrade of public lighting.
- (b) Connectivity of the Town centre including upgrade of paving.
- (c) Consider upgrade/redesign of Town Centre
- (d) Scheme for façade improvement on identified priority streetscapes.
- (e) Upgrade and improvement of street furniture.
- (f) Consistent sustained signage design policy within the Town Centre.
- (g) Provision of appropriate quality soft landscaping and planting as well as functional public spaces.
- (h) Car parking management.
- (i) Consideration of reuse of backlands within the town centre for civic space/ other uses.
- (j) To facilitate the carrying out of streetscape enhancement works subject to resources being available.

BMSP 12 Tourism Development

- (a) Promote and facilitate the further development of Bearna as a key tourist destination for the benefit of the town and its surrounding areas.
- (b) To support and facilitate in co-operation with relevant bodies and landowners, the provision of tourism amenity routes around the town.
- (c) Encourage and assist the development of the sustainable tourism potential within Bearna in a manner that respects, builds on, protects and enhances the cultural, linguistic, built, architectural, archaeological and heritage significance of the town including natural heritage and biodiversity, and its local amenities.

BMSP 13 Public Infrastructure

Support and encourage infrastructural development and improvement works that benefit Bearnna and the wider Region.

BMSP 14 New Village Street

Support the completion of the proposed new Village Street (Inner Relief Road) north of the existing R336 and prohibit any development that would affect the future construction of the approved route.

BMSP 15 Pedestrian and Cycle Network

Encourage and support the development of a series of pedestrian and cycle routes linking the residential areas to the town centre and local community services, where feasible.

BMSP 16 Irish Language

Protect and promote the Irish language as the first community language of the Bearnna area, including:

- Ensuring that the naming of developments are in Irish only and reflect the character of the area.
- Encouraging the development of educational, recreational, tourism and business facilities that operate through the medium of the Irish language.

Signage shall be principally through the medium of Irish with internationally recognised symbols.

BMSP 17 Language Enurement Clause

A Language Enurement Clause will be applied on a portion of residential units in development of two or more units in Bearnna. The proportion of homes to which a language enurement clause will be a minimum of 20% or to the proportion of persons using Irish Language on a daily basis, in accordance with the latest published Census, whichever is greater.

BMSP 18 Bus Services, Stops and Shelters

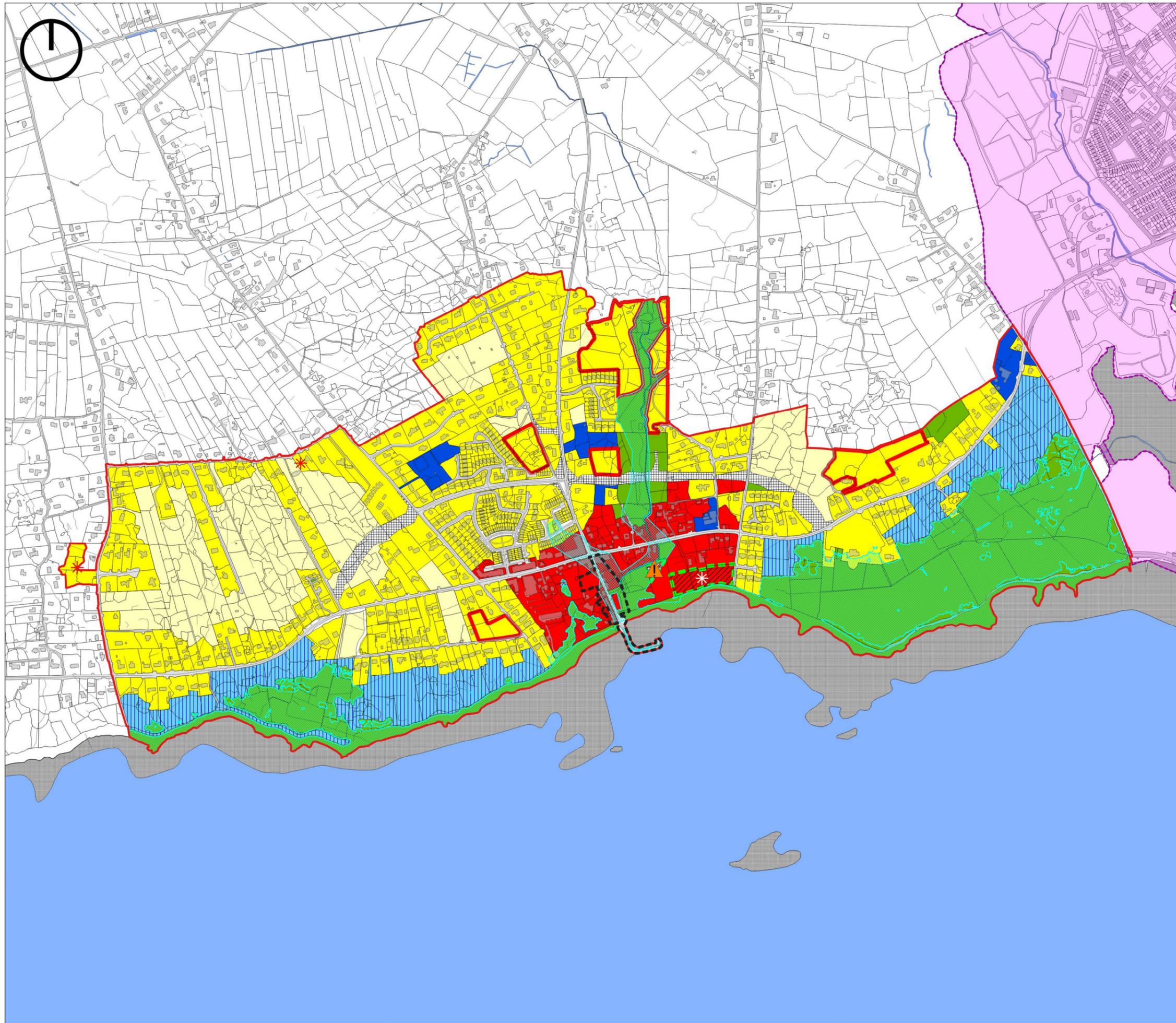
Promote an improved bus service in Bearnna and investigate the potential to provide more frequent stops and bus shelters along the R336 and new Village Street.

BMSP 19**Public Footpath & Lighting Network**

1. Support improvements to the existing public footpaths network within the plan area.
2. New development shall be required to connect to the footpath and public lighting network that currently serves the village centre.
3. Support the provision of footpaths and-public lighting from the existing residential development to the village centre. In order to protect light sensitive species such as bats, lighting fixtures should provide only the amount of light necessary for personal safety and should be designed so as to avoid creating glare or emitting light above a horizontal plane.
4. Facilitate the provision of pedestrian crossings adjacent to the national school, residential areas and at other appropriate locations within the plan area, as required.

BMSP 20**Non-Conforming Uses**

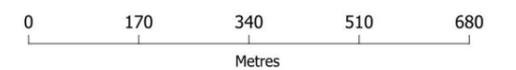
Where existing uses do not conform with the land use zoning objectives or matrix of the plan, the Planning Authority shall facilitate/support their relocation to more sustainable and appropriately zoned lands.



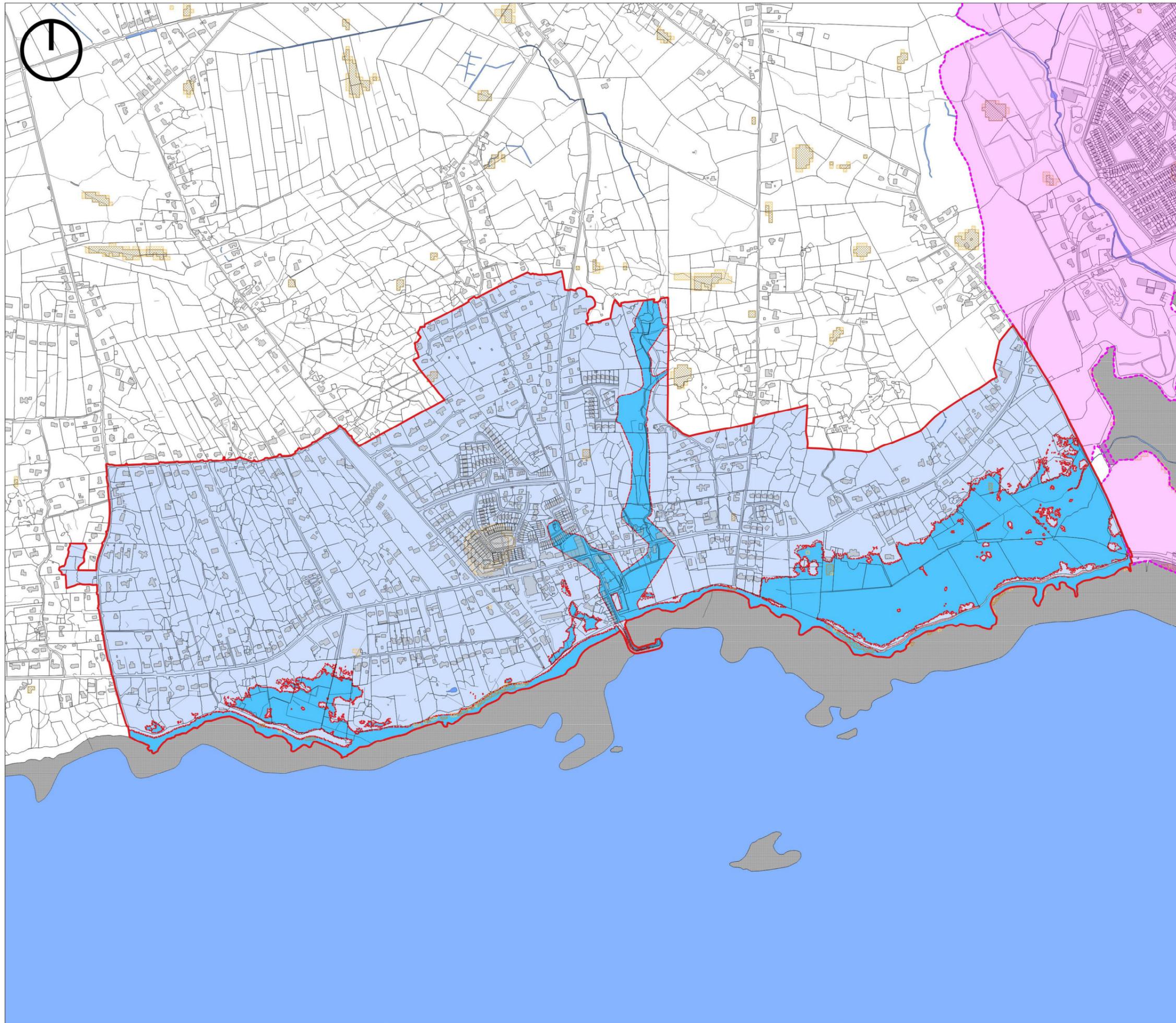
-  Settlement Boundary
-  R - Residential Existing
-  R - Residential (Phase 1)
-  R - Residential (Phase 2)
-  R - Residential Infill
-  C1 - Town Centre
-  TCI - Town Centre Infill/Residential
-  CF - Community Facilities
-  OS - Open Space/Recreation & Amenity
-  CE - Coastal Edge
-  TI - Transport Infrastructure
-  Water/Rivers/Streams
-  Proposed Road
-  Constrained Land Use
-  Architectural Conservation Area
-  Galway City Administrative Area
-  See Policy Objective FL 18 Inappropriate Development on Flood Zones in Volume 1 Written Statement Chapter 14

**Galway County Development Plan
2022-2028**

**Galway Metropolitan Area
Berna
Land Use Zoning Map**



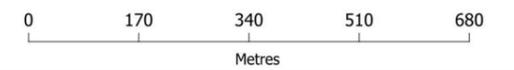
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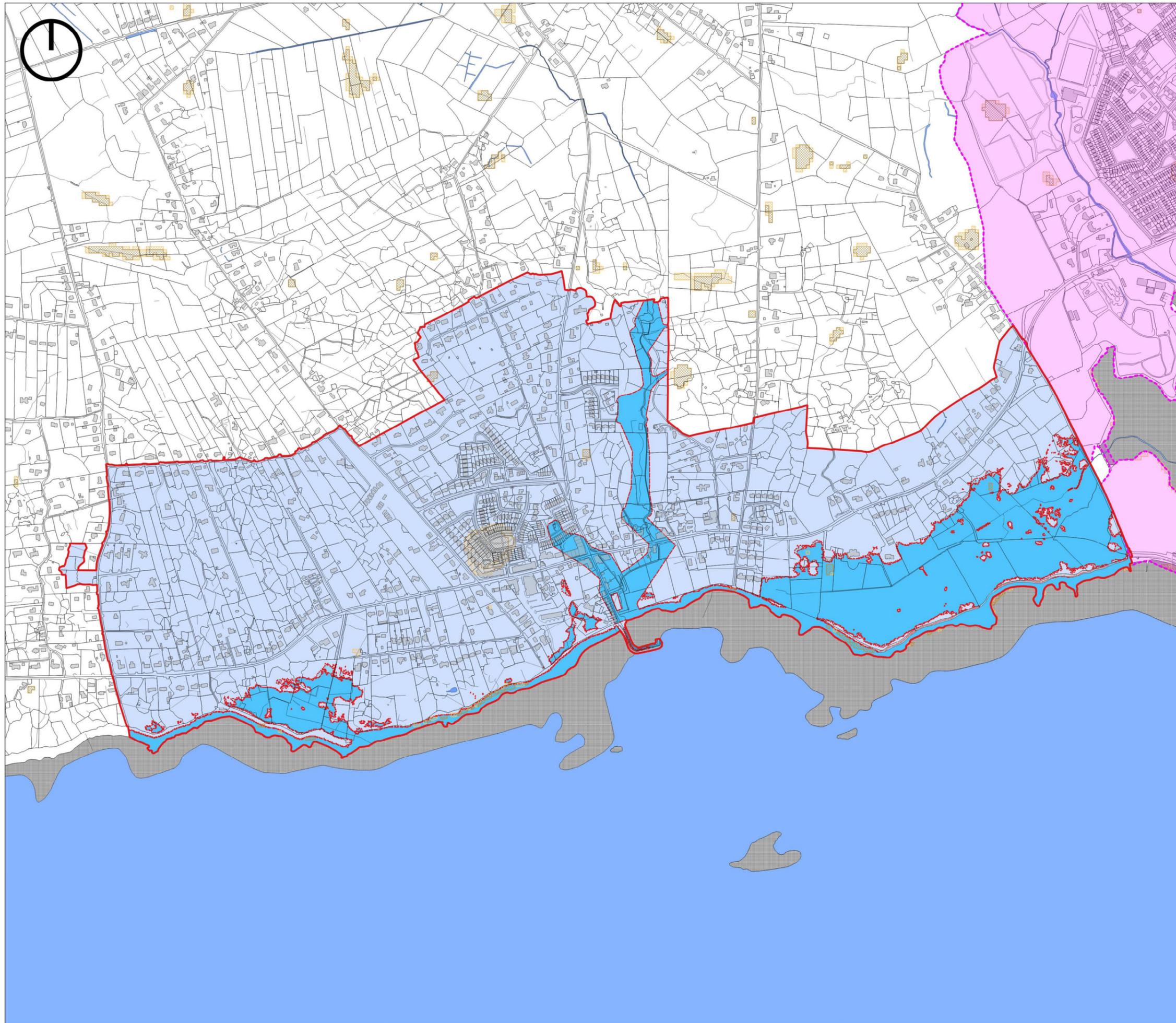
-  Settlement Boundary
-  Indicative Flood Zone A
-  Indicative Flood Zone B
-  Indicative Flood Zone C
-  PFRA Pluvial Indicative
-  PFRA Pluvial Extreme
-  Galway City Administrative Area
-  Water

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2022-2028**

**Galway Metropolitan Area
Berna
Flood Risk Management**



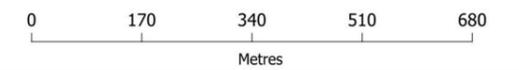
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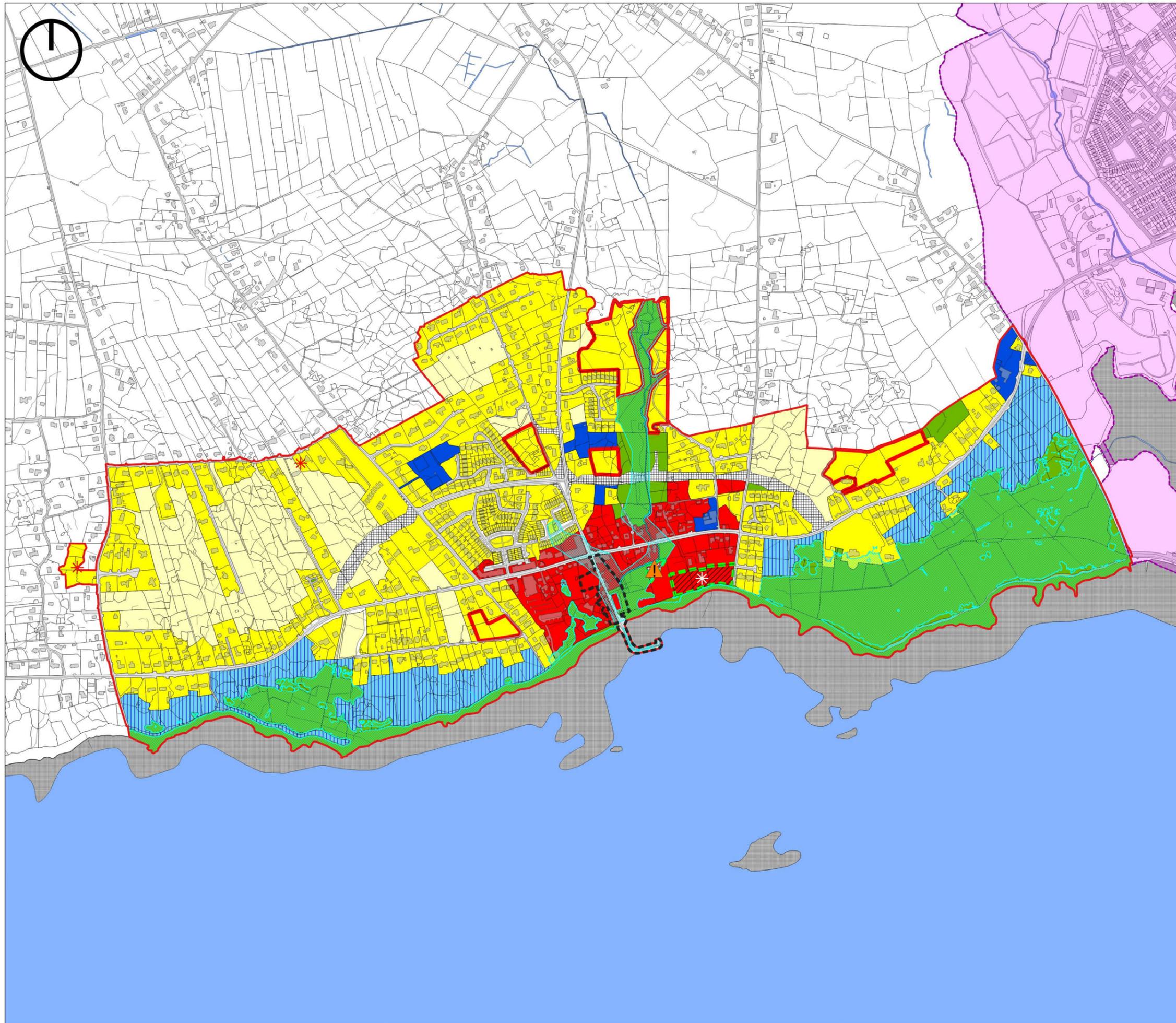
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2022-2028**

**Galway Metropolitan Area
Berna
Flood Risk Management**



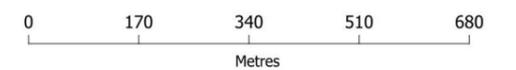
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**Galway Metropolitan Area
Berna
Land Use Zoning Map**



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