

APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT SCREENING REPORT

as required under Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive

of

MATERIAL ALTERATIONS

to the

BALLINASLOE DRAFT LOCAL AREA PLAN 2015-2021

31st July 2015

On behalf of Galway County Council



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council

Prepared by: Moore Group – (Environmental Services)



July 2015

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APPENDIX 1 – PROPOSED UPDATES TO THE NIR

1. Introduction

1.1. General Introduction

The Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) requires that all land use plans must be screened for potential impact on Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) or Special Protection Areas (SPAs). This process aims to establish whether a full Appropriate Assessment as required by Article 6 of the Directive is required in any particular case.

This report contains information required for the competent authority, in this case Galway County Council, to commence an Appropriate Assessment (AA) process on Material Alterations of the Ballinasloe Local Area Plan 2015-2021.

The report assesses the potential for the proposed Material Alterations of the Plan to impact on sites of European-scale ecological importance. It is necessary that the Plan has regard to Article 6 of the Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (as amended) (referred to as the Habitats Directive). This is transposed into Irish Law by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations, 2011 (S.I. 477) (referred to as the Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations).

1.2. Legislative Background - The Habitats and Birds Directives

The Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora) is the main legislative instrument for the protection and conservation of biodiversity in the EU. Under the Directive member States are obliged to designate Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) which contain habitats or species considered important for protection and conservation in a European Union context.

The Birds Directive (Council Directive 79/409/EEC as amended 2009/147/EC), is concerned with the long-term protection and management of all wild bird species and their habitats in the EU. Among other things, the Directive requires that Special Protection Areas (SPAs) be established to protect migratory species and species which are rare, vulnerable, in danger of extinction, or otherwise require special attention.

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) designated under the Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas, designated under the Birds Directive, form a pan-European network of protected sites known as Natura 2000. The Habitats Directive sets out a unified system for the protection and management of SACs and SPAs.

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive set out the requirement for an assessment of proposed plans and projects likely to affect European sites.

Article 6(3) establishes the requirement to screen all plans and projects and to carry out a further assessment if required (Appropriate Assessment (AA)):

Article 6(3): “Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subjected to an appropriate assessment of its implications for the site in view of the site’s conservation objectives. In light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public.”

Article 6(4): “If, in spite of a negative assessment of the implications for the site and in the absence of alternative solutions, a plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature, Member States shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of the Natura 2000 is protected. It shall inform the Commission of the compensatory measures adopted. Where the site concerned hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species the only considerations which may be raised are those relating to human health or public safety, to the beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest.”

2. Stages of the AA Process

The Commission’s methodological guidance (EC, 2002) promotes a four-stage process to complete the AA, and outlines the issues and tests at each stage. An important aspect of the process is that the outcome at each successive stage determines whether a further stage in the process is required.

Stages 1-2 deal with the main requirements for assessment under Article 6(3). Stage 3 may be part of Article 6(3) or may be a necessary precursor to Stage 4. Stage 4 is the main derogation step of Article 6(4).

Stage 1 Screening: This stage examines the likely effects of a project either alone or in combination with other projects upon a European site and considers whether it can be objectively concluded that these effects will not be significant.

Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment: In this stage, the impact of the project is considered on the integrity of the European site with respect to the conservation objectives of the site and to its structure and function.

Stage 3 Assessment of Alternative Solutions: This stage examines alternative ways of implementing the project that, where possible, avoid any adverse impacts on the integrity of the European site.

Stage 4 Assessment where no alternative solutions exist and where adverse impacts remain: Where imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) exist, an assessment to consider whether compensatory measures will or will not effectively offset the damage to the sites will be necessary.

In order to ensure that the Plan complies fully with the requirements of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and all relevant Irish transposing legislation, Moore Group carried out the screening stage of the Plan on behalf of Galway County Council to determine if Stage 2 AA is required.

2.1. Guidance

The AA has been compiled in accordance with guidance contained in the following documents:

- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland - Guidance for Planning Authorities. (Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2010 rev.).
- Appropriate Assessment under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive: Guidance for Planning Authorities. Circular NPWS 1/10 & PSSP 2/10.
- Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological Guidance on the Provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC (European Commission Environment Directorate-General, 2001); hereafter referred to as the EC Article Guidance Document.
- Managing Natura 2000 Sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitat's Directive 92/43/EEC (EC Environment Directorate-General, 2000); hereafter referred to as MN2000.

2.2. Data Sources

Sources of information that were used to collect data on the Natura 2000 network of sites are listed below:

- Ordnance Survey of Ireland mapping and aerial photography available from www.osi.ie and Google Earth and Bing aerial photography.
- Online data available on Natura 2000 sites as held by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) from www.npws.ie including; the Natura 2000 network Data Form; Site Synopsis; Qualifying Interests and Conservation Objective data,
 - Online database of rare, threatened and protected species,
 - Publicly accessible biodiversity datasets.
- Status of EU Protected Habitats in Ireland. (National Parks & Wildlife Service, 2008).
- Biodiversity Data for County Galway including that collated in the Biodiversity Action Plan for County Galway 2008 - 2013
- Information on water quality in the area available from www.epa.ie
- Information on the River Basin Districts from www.wfdireland.ie
- Information on soils, geology and hydrogeology in the area available from www.gsi.ie
- Status of EU Protected Habitats in Ireland. (National Parks & Wildlife Service, 2008)
- Galway County Development Plan 2009-2015 (GCDP) and new GCDP 2015-2021
- GCDP AA Screening Report & Natura Impact Report 2014
- Ballinasloe Town Development Plan 2009-2015 as adopted and as varied on the 12-07-11

- Ballinasloe Local Area Plan Strategic Issues Paper

2.3. Screening Steps

In complying with the obligations under Article 6(3) and following the EC2000 and MN2000 Guidance, this AA has been structured as a stage by stage approach as follows:

Screening stage

- Description of the Material Alterations to the Plan;
- Brief description of the European site(s) potentially affected;
- Conservation objectives of the European site(s);
- Assessment criteria;
 - Likely impacts on European site(s);
 - Cumulative and in combination impacts;
 - Likely changes to European site(s);
 - Elements of the Plan where the impacts are likely to be significant;
- Identification and description of individual and cumulative impacts likely to result;
- Assessment of the significance of the impacts identified above on site(s) integrity;
- Exclusion of site(s) where it can be objectively concluded that there will be no significant effects; and
- Screening conclusion and statement.

3. Description of proposed Material Alterations

The Ballinasloe Draft Local Area Plan 2015-2021 was prepared and placed on public display for six weeks from Thursday the 2nd April to Thursday 14th May 2015. A total of 25 submissions were received on the Draft Plan and a Chief Executive's Report on the Draft Submissions was prepared and submitted to the Members of Galway County Council for their consideration.

On the 20th of July 2015, at Council Meeting, the Elected Members considered the Draft plan and Chief Executive's Report and proposed a number of Alterations to the Ballinasloe Draft Local Area Plan, which were deemed to be Material Alterations. They are listed in the table hereunder and are reflected on the attached Material Alterations Maps (Map 1A & 2A) as appropriate.

The following text formatting is used to highlight changes that are recommended as part of the proposed Material Alterations to the Ballinasloe Draft Local Area Plan:

- Existing Text – Shown in black text
- Proposed Addition – Shown in red text highlighted yellow
- Proposed Deletion – Shown in red strikethrough text with yellow highlight

<p>Proposed Material Alterations to the Ballinasloe Draft Local Area Plan 2015 – 2021</p> <p>Proposed Land Use Zoning Material Alterations (see attached Map 1A)</p>
<p>MA 1: Rezone the subject land from Agricultural zoned land to R – Residential (Phase 2) outside the 90m buffer zone from the M6 Motorway at Garbally Demesne (Mackney) as per attached Map 1A.</p>
<p>MA 2A: Rezone undeveloped lands from Commercial/Mixed Use to Business and Enterprise (B & E) as per attached Map 1A.</p> <p>Amend the Land Use Zoning Matrix under Business and Enterprise (B & E) zoning re cinema from 'Not Permitted' to 'Open for Consideration'.</p> <p>MA 2B: Rezone the subject land from R – Residential Existing to Commercial/Mixed Use (C2), as per attached Map 1A.</p>
<p>MA 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Rezone undeveloped C1 land in Flood Zone B to Open Space, Recreation and Amenity (to address the mapping error noted), as per attached Map 1A. b) Consequential amendments to be made to the Specific Objectives Maps 2A/2B. c) Amend the Disclaimer on the title page of the Draft SFRA as follows (and to delete the existing one) <p>The maps produced as part of this study were prepared for the purpose of informing the Ballinasloe Draft Local Area Plan 2015-2021 and broadly indicate areas that may be prone to flooding. The study has taken into account various factors including local knowledge, photography, site walkovers and published data sources indicative of flood risk. The Indicative Flood Risk Zones should not be solely relied upon for site-specific flood risk assessments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> d) Insert the following User Note to Figures 5 and 7 of the Draft SFRA as follows: The delineation of Indicative Flood Risk Zones has taken into account various factors including local knowledge, photography, and site walkovers and published data sources indicative of flood risk. The Zones indicate broadly areas that may be prone to flooding and have informed the Plan. The Zones are indicative and should not be relied upon solely for site-specific flood risk assessment. The Zones may be updated in the future to take account of new information.
<p>Proposed Material Alterations to the Ballinasloe Draft Local Area Plan 2015 – 2021</p> <p>Proposed Textual Alterations</p>
<p>MA 4:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Amend the text in the Local Area Plan, as appropriate, to reference European sites and update terminology in relation to the AA process, as appropriate, throughout the plan document. 2. Include the following text amendments to the Draft Local Area Plan and amendments to the NIR as appropriate: <p>Objective CF 4 – Lands for Community Facilities and Amenities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Ensure that.....and allow for existing community facilities to expand on adjacent Community, Facilities and Amenities (CF) lands zoned for such uses.

Amend **Specific Objectives Maps 2A/2B**, to delete the Specific Objective CF5 from the south eastern area of the plan adjoining the cycle and pedestrian network.

Include a new objective in **S. 2.2.5** of the Draft Plan as follows:

Objective DS 9 – Appropriate Assessment Screening/Appropriate Assessment and the Conservation Objectives of European Sites

It is an objective of Galway County Council to ensure that Appropriate Assessment Screening and Appropriate Assessment, if required, is undertaken in view of the Conservation Objectives of the European sites that may be affected by any proposed development that:

a) the AA process will be a scientific assessment that will present relevant evidence where required, including data and analysis as available from the most up to date Article 17 reports on the conservation status of the natural habitats and species in the Habitat Directive Annexes and the most up to date Article 12 reports on status and trends of bird species, in addition to, data on ecological features in or near the Plan area available from other sources e.g. National Biodiversity Data Centre, Bird Watch Ireland, Bat Conservation Ireland and other sources as appropriate.

b) similarly that all habitats and species protected by Article 10 of the Habitats Directive and any other sites that may be considered as stepping stones in support of European sites will be addressed as part of the AA process.

Include a new Development Management Guideline in **S. 3.10.2** of the Draft Plan as follows

DM Guideline NH2 – Conservation Management Plan/Environmental Operating Plan and Project Specific Mitigation Measures

Project specific mitigation measures may be included in a Construction Management Plan (CMP) or an Environmental Operating Plan (EOP) and will be commensurate to the level of impact predicted and determined to be successfully employable with regard to the Conservation Objectives of the European sites in question.

The CMP or EOP may be required to present information on mitigation in terms of :

- 1) Evidence of how these will be secured and implemented and by whom;
- 2) Evidence of the degree of confidence of their likely success;
- 3) Timescale, relative to the plan or project, for their implementation or completion;
- 4) Evidence as to how the measures will be monitored and, should mitigation failure identified, how that failure will be rectified.

Amend the titles of Objective DS3 and Objective NH1 as follows:

- **Objective DS3 - ~~Natura 2000 Network and Habitats Directive Assessment European Sites~~;**
- **Objective NH 1 – ~~Natura 2000 Sites European Sites~~**

Include additional text as follows:

'Refer to Objective DS 9 – Appropriate Assessment Screening/Appropriate Assessment and the Conservation Objectives of European Sites and to DM Guideline NH2 - Construction Management Plans/Environmental Operating Plan and Project Specific Mitigation Measures'

to each of the following Objectives

- **Objective DS 3 – ~~Natura 2000 Network and Habitats Directive Assessment European Sites~~**
- **Objective CF 4 - Lands for Community Facilities and Amenities**
- **Objective CF 5 - Educational Facilities (Refer to Maps 1A/1B and to Maps 2A/2B)**
- **Objective CF 13 – Amenity Network;**
- **Objective CF 14 – Linear Park**
- **Objective CF 15 – Cycle and Pedestrian Networks;**
- **Objective CC 2–Climate Change & Green Infrastructure;**
- **Objective UD 4 – Green Networking and Landscaping;**

- **Objective ED 8 – Water-Based Tourism;**
- **Objective TI 7- Walking and Cycling Strategies;**
- **Objective TI 12 – Rail Facilities/Services & Dualing of the Rail Tracks;**
- **Objectives TI 13 – Amenity/Walking Cycling Network.**
- **Objective NH 1 – ~~Natura 2000 Sites-European Sites~~**

Amend Objective FL 4 as follows:

Objective FL 4 - Management of Flood Risk in relation to ~~Natura Sites European Sites~~

In circumstances where certain measures proposed to mitigate or manage the risk of flooding associated with new developments are likely to result in significant effects to the environment or ~~Natura 2000 European~~ sites, ~~the new developments~~ and ~~such these~~ measures will undergo environmental assessment and ~~Habitats Directive-Appropriate~~ Assessment, as appropriate.

Amend **Objective FL 7 - Protection of Water Bodies and Watercourses** with the inclusion of new text as follows:

- ~~Ensure that any new development proposals within or near the 10m buffer are adequately assessed, undergo Appropriate Assessment and the preparation of an NIS, should screening show that this is necessary and where the PA consider that such screening/assessments are required.~~

Amend **Objective NH 6 – Biodiversity and Ecological Networks (Refer to Maps 2A/2B)** with the inclusion of new text under new part e) as follows:

- e) ~~Ensure that any new development proposals within or near the 10m buffer are adequately assessed, undergo Appropriate Assessment and the preparation of an NIS, should screening show that this is necessary and where the PA consider that such screening/assessments are required.~~

Amend **Objective NH 3 – Environmental Management** as follows:

Ensure that any new development proposals on or near the environmental management area that may impact on River Suck Callows Special Protection Area (SPA; Site Code 004097), the Suck River Callows Natural Heritage Area (NHA: Site Code 000222; S.I 575 of 2005) are adequately assessed, undergo ~~environmental and/or Habitats Directive-Appropriate~~ Assessment ~~and the preparation of an NIS, should screening show that this is necessary~~

- Seek to ensure that a **minimum setback of 10 meters** is
- In the event of lighting being proposed along watercourse corridors an Ecological Impact Assessment extent possible. No lighting will be installed without prior ~~consultation with NPWS~~ **planning permission** and shall be in line with advances in knowledge into

Amend **Objective NH 4** as follows:

Protect Natural Heritage.....Where a proposed development within the plan area may give rise to likely significant effects on any Natural Heritage Area or proposed Natural Heritage Area (e.g. Ballinasloe Esker proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA: Site Code 001779), an **EIA/EIS** may be required ~~and shall be carried out in accordance with the EIA Directive and associated regulations.~~

Amend **Objective NH 13** as follows:

Objective NH 13 – ~~Consultation with Environmental Authorities~~ Screening for Appropriate Assessment

Ensure that all development proposals are screened to determine whether they ~~on their own or in combination with other plans and projects~~ are likely to have a significant ~~direct, indirect or cumulative~~ effect on ~~the integrity or conservation objectives of any~~ **Natura 2000** a **European** site ~~in view of its conservation objectives.~~ ~~and, wW~~ where significant effects are likely or uncertain; an NIS will be required ~~in accordance with the Habitats Directive.~~

~~there will be a requirement for consultation with the relevant environmental authorities as part of~~

~~any Habitats Directive Assessment that may be required.~~

Amend **Objective NH 14** as follows:

Objective NH 14 – NPWS & Integrated Management Plans

Galway County Council shall seek to engage with and support the National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS) ~~at their request~~ to ensure integrated Management Plans are prepared for all ~~Natura European~~ sites within the sphere of influence of the Ballinasloe LAP area and ensure that such plans ~~prioritise achieving the conservation objectives of European sites, that they~~ are practical, achievable and sustainable and have regard to all relevant ecological, cultural, social and economic considerations and with special regard to the local community.

Amend **Objective NH1** and consequential amendments to **Objective DS3** of the Draft plan as follows:

Objective NH 1/Objective DS3 – ~~Natura 2000~~ European Sites

Protect European sites that form part of the Natura 2000 network.....

A plan or project (e.g. proposed development) within the plan area will only be authorised after the competent authority (Galway County Council) has ascertained, based on scientific evidence ~~including a Screening for Appropriate Assessment and Appropriate Assessment if necessary; Habitats Directive Assessment where necessary, that~~

1. The plan or project will not give rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of any ~~Natura 2000~~ European site (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects); or
2. The plan or project will adversely affect the integrity of any ~~Natura 2000~~ European site (that does not host a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species)
3. The plan or project will adversely affect the integrity of any ~~Natura 2000~~ European site (that hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species)

MA 5:

Update **Policy TI 2** in the Draft plan as follows:

Policy TI 2 – Roads, Streets and Parking

.....In this regard, the principles, approaches and standards set out in relevant national policy, including the Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines, the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines and the accompanying Urban Design Manual, the Traffic Management Guidelines (2003), the Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines ~~(2007)(2014)~~, the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (2013) ~~and the NRA Design Manual for Roads and Bridges as appropriate to the national road network outside areas subject to a reduced urban speed limit~~, and any forthcoming guidelines in relation to street design and cycling facilities shall be applied to new developments, as appropriate.

MA 6:

- 1) Include specific reference to the SEA Regulations, S.I. No. 201 of 2011 within S. 1.3.2 Statutory Process (p. 6 in the Draft plan) as follows:

The Environmental Report (ER) has been prepared in accordance with the EU Directive on SEA (2001/42/EC), the ~~national Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004~~ (SI No. 436 of 2004) ~~as amended by the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 201 of 2011), the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 (SI No. 200 of 2011) amending the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (S.I. No.435 of 2004), and~~ the 2004 Strategic Environmental Assessment Guidelines. Regard has also being given to *Circular PSSP 6/2011 'Further Transposition of the EU Directive 2001/42/EC on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)*. An Environmental Report (ER) is required as part of the plan making process to assess the likely significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the Local Area Plan, before a decision is made to adopt it.

- 2) Include a new Objective as follows:

Objective DS 10 – Future Developments and EU Directives

Ensure that all future developments within the plan area fully take into account the requirements of the EIA, Habitats, Birds, Water Framework and Flood Directives respectively, as relevant and as appropriate.

- 3) Apply textual amendments **as per Objective NH 14 - NPWS & Integrated Management Plans as set out in MA 4.**

MA 7:

Amend the capacity figures in **S. 3.6.2 Utilities Infrastructure – Water Supply as follows:**

- 1) The current capacity of the town's water supply at Derrymullen is **4,500-4,750** m³/day and the current demand is **3,300-3,630** m³/day.
- 2) Make textual inclusions, deletions and wording changes to S. 3.6.2 Utilities Infrastructure – Water Supply as follows:

Wastewater Disposal

Ballinasloe is serviced by a public wastewater collection network with both primary and secondary treatment (with phosphorus removal). The wastewater works collects and treats domestic and commercial effluent and surface water from a combined sewerage system. The wastewater treatment plant at Pollboy has a current design capacity of 13,500 population equivalent (P.E.); the current loading to the plant is 12,100 P.E., leaving a spare capacity of 1,400 P.E. The existing plant is considered sufficient to cater for wastewater loads up to 2020, ~~the period of this plan. The waste assimilative capacity at the estimated 2020 population equivalent is 13,309 P.E. The proposed additional upgrade of the wastewater treatment plant to 1,800 P.E. is not included on Irish Water's Capital Investment Programme 2014-2016 and such works will not commence prior to 2018. The requirement and provision for any further upgrades will be reviewed and considered by Irish Water when planning any subsequent Capital Investment Programme~~.

An Appropriate Assessment Screening for the Ballinasloe Agglomeration was undertaken by Irish Water in relation to the Waste Water Certificate of Authorisation: D0032-01 process and it was determined that that the discharge from the wastewater treatment plant or in-combination with other sources (diffuse agricultural runoff) will not have a significant impact on the River Suck Callows SPA or downstream receiving ~~Natura 2000 European sites~~¹. ~~The private sewerage works² located in the Portnick area will be connected to the foul sewer network and treatment system. Any new development within the grounds of the former St. Brigid's hospital will be required to link up with GCC network.~~ Some developments at the outer areas of the town remain connected to individual septic tanks or proprietary wastewater treatment systems. ~~The connection of existing houses to the wastewater system (which is currently served privately) should be progressed through Irish Water's New Connection process and potentially in conjunction with a DECLG subsidised Group Wastewater scheme. This New Connections process ensures that the cost associated with serving new customers is recovered from these new customers and this cost does not fall on the existing customer base.~~

- 3) Make textual inclusions, deletions and wording changes to S. 3.6.3 Water Supply, Wastewater & Surface Water Policies and Objectives as follows:

Amend Policy UI 1- Water Supply, Wastewater and Surface Water Infrastructure

Support Irish Water in the provision and maintenance of adequate ~~wastewater disposal~~, water supply, ~~wastewater management, and surface water drainage~~ infrastructure, in accordance with EU Directives, to service the development of Ballinasloe. This will include satisfactory capacity for public wastewater ~~networks and storm water sewers~~ as appropriate ~~and a satisfactory quantity and quality of water supply. and the promotion of Sustainable Drainage System approaches and~~

¹ (Source: Irish Water AA Screening for the Ballinasloe Waste Water Certificate of Authorisation: D0032-01; submitted to EPA 14/08/2014 and GCC Water Services Section).

² (primary treatment GCC Discharge Licence W 005/78)

techniques within the plan area:

Amend **Objective UI 2 – Water Supply and Water Conservation** as follows:

Support Irish Water in:

- a) **Ensure Ensuring** that new developments are adequately serviced with a suitable quantity and quality of drinking water supply, promote water conservation/demand management to reduce the overall level of water loss in the public supply and require that new domestic developments provide infrastructure to facilitate for water supply metering when making a connection to the public water supply is required;
- b) ~~Collaborate with Irish Water~~ In the upgrading of the existing water treatment plant capacity at Derrymullen as deemed necessary.

MA 8:

Include a new narrative on p. 35 of Draft Plan after Tourism Linkages as follows:

Agriculture Linkages

It is recognised that Ballinasloe is an important market town having a large agricultural hinterland, which is well served in recognising services such as livestock equine mart. In addition the plan recognises the importance of the Agricultural, Educational and Advisory services to the plan area.

MA 9:

Include a new narrative on p. 65 of the Draft Plan as follows:

Ballinasloe Fair

The Ballinasloe Plan supports and recognises the significance of the Ballinasloe Fair which is renowned as the largest such Fair in Europe. The Fair is highly important to the local economy of Ballinasloe and the plan recognises this.

MA 10:

Include a new policy on p. 65 of Draft Plan as follows:

Policy BAC 3 – Bridleways in Ballinasloe

Support the creation of bridleways within Ballinasloe plan area given the strong local equine connections.

MA 11:

Include a new policy on p. 42 of the Draft Plan as follows:

Policy TI 4 Bi – Lingual Road Signage

Support and facilitate Bi – Lingual Road Signage within the plan area.

MA 12 :

Amend **Objective LU 3 – Residential** to include a new subparagraph No. 3 as follows:

3. Existing commercial businesses in Residential Zonings shall, as far as is practicable, be facilitated to expand and develop their commercial activity.

Amend **Land Use Zoning Matrix** as follows:

Amend **Residential Zoning from 'Not Permitted' to 'Open for Consideration' for Petrol Station.**

MISCELLANEOUS

- Update *Maps 1A and 1B-Land Use Zoning, Maps 2A and 2B - Specific Objectives and Maps 3A and 3B Flood Risk Management*, as required;
- Update *Table 1 Capacity of Zoned Land within the Ballinasloe Draft LAP* on p. 26 of the Ballinasloe Draft Local Area Plan 2015-2021 as a consequence of the Material Alterations.
- Update any typos in the document, as required.
- Any necessary updates to the NIR and SEA, as appropriate.

NB. Proposed updates to the NIR are presented in Appendix 1 to this report.

3.1. Is the Plan Necessary to the Management of European Sites?

The Plan and proposed Material Alterations are not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the European sites in the Plan area. However, the Plan does include, inter alia, measures to protect, conserve and manage the area's natural heritage in a prudent and sustainable manner, including European sites, and to seek its enhancement where appropriate and feasible.

4. Identification of European Sites

This section of the screening process describes the European sites within a 15km of the LAP area. A 15 km buffer zone has been chosen as a precautionary measure to ensure that all potentially affected European sites are included in the screening process. Figure 4.1 indicates the location of the Ballinasloe LAP area in relation to European sites within 5 km, 10 km and 15km. This is in line with Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland-Guidance for Planning Authorities, produced by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

There is one designated European site in the Plan area, the River Suck Callows SPA (Site Code 004097) which traverses the Plan area and there are a number of designated sites in the vicinity.

Table 4.1 lists these European sites with their respective codes, distances from the LAP boundary and potential pathways between the sites and the plan area.

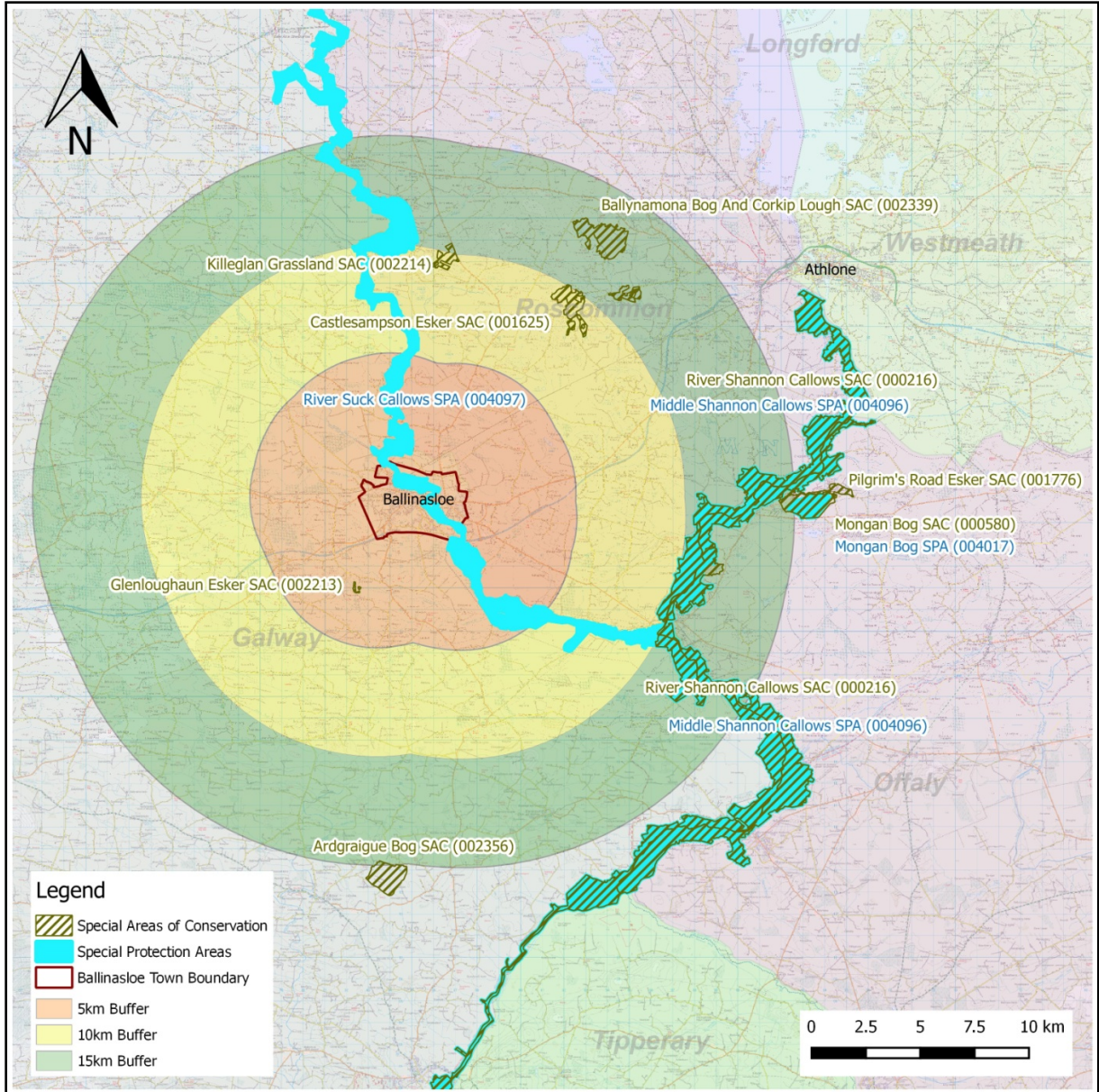


Figure 4.1. The LAP area in relation to the surrounding European sites.

Table 4.1. Pre-screening of European sites within 15 km of the Ballinasloe LAP area.

Natura 2000 Site	Site Code	Distance from Plan (km)	Hydrological Pathway?	Aerial Pathway?	Disturbance Pathway?
River Suck Callows SPA	004097	0	The River Suck runs through the Plan area and therefore potential upstream and downstream impacts need to be considered	Yes	Two species occur regularly, Greenland White-fronted Goose and Whooper Swan, both listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive
Glenloughaun Esker SAC	002213	2.2	This site is at a distance and direction unlikely to incur hydrological impacts	Limited	None
Castlesampson Esker SAC	001625	7.7	This site is at a distance and direction unlikely to incur hydrological impacts	Limited	None
Killeglan Grassland SAC	002214	8.4	This site is at a distance and direction unlikely to incur hydrological impacts	Limited	None
Ballynamona Bog and Corkip Lough SAC	002339	11.5	This site is at a distance and direction unlikely to incur hydrological impacts	Limited	None
Middle Shannon Callows SPA	004096	10	The Plan area is connected through the River Suck which discharges into the River Shannon and therefore potential downstream impacts need to be considered	Limited	Internationally important for the total numbers of birds and for Whooper Swan in particular. In summer the site supports important populations of breeding waders and is one of the most important National sites for Corncrake
River Shannon Callows SAC	000216	10	The Plan area is connected through the River Suck which discharges into the River Shannon and therefore potential downstream impacts need to be considered	Limited	Internationally important winter site for numbers and species of waterfowl and in summer it holds very large numbers of breeding waders, rare breeding birds and the endangered Corncrake. The presence of Otter adds further importance to the site
Ardgraique Bog SAC	002356	14.3	This site is at a distance and direction unlikely to incur hydrological impacts	Limited	None
Mongan Bog SAC	000580	14.3	This site is at a distance and direction unlikely to incur hydrological impacts	Limited	None
Pilgrim's Road Esker SAC	001776	14.4	This site is at a distance and direction unlikely to incur hydrological impacts	Limited	None
Mongan Bog SPA	004017	14.7	This site is at a distance and direction unlikely to incur hydrological impacts	Limited	This site has lost its importance as a wintering site for Greenland White-fronted Geese and any connectivity with the River Suck flock will be considered with the River Suck Callows SPA

4.1. Detailed Description of European Sites within the Zone of Influence

The following is a detailed description of the European sites located within the Zone of Influence of the Ballinasloe Local Area Plan. Site synopses for all eleven European sites are available on the NPWS metadata website.

4.1.1. Special Protection Areas

Special Protection Areas (SPAs) have been selected for protection under the 1979 European Council Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (79/409/EEC as amended 2009/147/EC) - referred to as the Birds Directive - by the DoAHG due to their conservation value for birds of importance in the European Union. Including the site that runs through the Plan area which is detailed below, there are three SPAs within 15km of the Plan area. The characteristics of these sites are summarised and then their conservation objectives are listed.

River Suck Callows SPA (Site Code 004097): The Suck River Callows comprise a long, sinuous area of semi-natural lowland wet grassland, which floods extensively each winter along the River Suck between Castlecoote in the north and Shannonbridge in the south, and passing through Ballinasloe. The River Suck is the largest tributary of the River Shannon. The site follows the river from Castlecoote, near Fuerty to its confluence with the River Shannon, a distance of approximately 70 km of river course. Of note is that two of the species which occur regularly, Greenland White-fronted Goose and Whooper Swan, are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive. Golden Plover, a species that is listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive, occurs at times.

Main conservation objective:

Objective: To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA:

A038 Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*
A050 Wigeon *Anas penelope*
A140 Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*
A142 Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*
A395 Greenland White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons flavirostris*

To acknowledge the importance of Ireland's wetlands to wintering waterbirds, "Wetland and Waterbirds" may be included as a Special Conservation Interest for some SPAs that have been designated for wintering waterbirds and that contain a wetland site of significant importance to one or more of the species of Special Conservation Interest.

Thus, a second objective is included as follows:

Objective: To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the wetland habitat at River Suck Callows SPA as a resource for the regularly-occurring migratory waterbirds that utilise it.

Middle Shannon Callows SPA (Site Code 004096): The Middle Shannon Callows SPA is a long and diverse site which extends for approximately 50 km from the town of Athlone (at southern point of Lough Ree) to the town of Portumna (northern point of Lough Derg). In winter the site is internationally important for the total numbers of birds

(regularly exceed 20,000) and for Whooper Swan in particular. It also holds nationally important populations of a further five species. Some of the wintering species are listed on Annex I of the EU Birds Directive, including Whooper Swan, Greenland White-fronted Goose and Golden Plover. In summer the site supports important populations of breeding waders. Perhaps the most important species which occurs in the site is Corncrake (the site holds 40% of the national total), as this is listed on Annex I of the EU Birds Directive and is Ireland's only globally endangered species.

Main conservation objective:

Objective: To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the bird species listed as Special Conservation Interests for this SPA:

A038 Whooper Swan *Cygnus cygnus*
A050 Wigeon *Anas penelope*
A122 Corncrake *Crex crex*
A140 Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*
A142 Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*
A156 Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*
A179 Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

To acknowledge the importance of Ireland's wetlands to wintering waterbirds, "Wetland and Waterbirds" may be included as a Special Conservation Interest for some SPAs that have been designated for wintering waterbirds and that contain a wetland site of significant importance to one or more of the species of Special Conservation Interest.

Thus, a second objective is included as follows:

Objective: To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the wetland habitat at Middle Shannon Callows SPA as a resource for the regularly-occurring migratory waterbirds that utilise it.

Mongan Bog SPA (Site Code 004017): Mongan Bog is a midland raised bog of medium size situated immediately east of the monastic site of Clonmacnoise, Co. Offaly, and 12 km south of Athlone. It is situated in a basin, surrounded on part of its perimeter by high ground on mineral soil. A study of the birds of Mongan Bog has shown that Mallard, Snipe, Curlew, Skylark and Meadow Pipit breed on the peat dome. In winter, the bog was occasionally used as a refuge by Greenland White-fronted Goose, but they appear to have abandoned the site in recent years. The cut-away area of bog provides habitat for a range of bird species, including birds of prey, thrushes, warblers and finches.

Main conservation objective:

To maintain the special conservation interest for this SPA at favourable conservation status: Greenland White-fronted Goose.

4.1.2. Special Areas of Conservation

Glenloughaun Esker SAC (Site Code 002213): Situated approximately 5 km south-west of Ballinasloe in Co. Galway, this small site comprises a fine example of dry, mostly unimproved, orchid-rich calcareous grassland on an esker ridge. A feature of the site is the somewhat unusual mixture of calcicole and calcifuge species. Leaching of the base-

rich substrate of the esker is likely to have given rise to soil conditions suitable for colonisation by calcifuge plants. Overall, this grassland site has an excellent species diversity and a very significant population of the scarce Green-winged Orchid. It is typical of the orchid-rich calcareous grassland habitat and is perhaps one of the best remaining examples in the country.

Objective: To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected:

6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco Brometalia) (* important orchid sites)*

* denotes a priority habitat

Castlesampson Esker SAC (Site Code 001625): Castlesampson Esker is a complex site with esker, turlough and raised bog all found. The esker is the most westerly of an important group of eskers centred on Adrnacloon Hill in south-east Co. Roscommon, 9 km west of Athlone. It forms a steep-sided, crescent-shaped hill composed of glacial gravels, situated on the south side of a metalled road. Although gravel is being quarried all around the esker and gravel pits occur within the site, the esker ridge itself is largely intact and fairly undisturbed. Lying to the east of the esker is a raised bog, whilst to its west is a turlough. The Castlesampson Esker site is of high conservation for the proximity and juxtaposition of esker, raised bog and turlough. The pattern of flooding is also unusual, appearing to come mostly from a few swallow holes in the south. Turlough is a habitat listed with priority status on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive.

Objective: To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected:

3180 Turloughs*

6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco Brometalia) (* important orchid sites)*

* denotes a priority habitat

Killeglan Grassland SAC (Site Code 002214): Killeglan grassland is situated in County Roscommon, approximately 9.5 km north of Ballinasloe. The underlying geology is Upper Carboniferous Limestone. A shallow rendzina type soil formation has developed in places between the outcropping limestone boulders and the shattered limestone formations. The topography of the site is undulating. Overall, the site is of outstanding quality and provides an excellent example of the Annex I priority habitat orchid-rich calcareous grasslands. It plays host to an important population of the Red Data Book plant species Green-winged Orchid, along with a number of Red Data Book mammals.

Objective: To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected:

6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco Brometalia) (* important orchid sites)*

* denotes a priority habitat

Ballynamona Bog and Corkip Lough SAC (Site Code 002339): Ballynamona Bog and Corkip Lough is situated approximately 9 km west of Athlone, mainly in the townlands of

Skeanamuck, Carrowkeeran and Pollalaher, in Co. Roscommon. The site comprises a relatively small portion of what was once a large bog complex, and includes areas of high bog and cutover bog, and also the turlough, Corkip Lough. Ballynamona Bog and Corkip Lough is a site of considerable conservation significance as it consists of a raised bog, a rare habitat in the E.U. and one that is becoming increasingly scarce and under threat in Ireland. Ireland has a high proportion of the total E.U. resource of raised bog (over 60%) and so has a special responsibility for its conservation at an international level. Active raised bog, bog woodland and turlough are listed as priority habitats on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. Priority status is given to habitats and species that are threatened throughout the E.U. Areas of species-rich calcareous grassland add to the diversity of the site.

Objective: To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected:

3180 Turloughs*

7110 Active raised bogs*

7120 Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration

7150 Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion

91D0 Bog woodland*

River Shannon Callows SAC (Site Code 000216): The River Shannon Callows is a long and diverse site which consists of seasonally flooded, semi-natural, lowland wet grassland, along and beside the river between the towns of Athlone and Portumna. It is approximately 50 km long and averages about 0.75 km wide (reaching 1.5 km wide in places). Along much of its length the site is bordered by raised bogs (many, but not all, of which are subject to large-scale harvesting), esker ridges and limestone-bedrock hills. The soils grade from silty-alluvial to peat. This site has a common boundary, and is closely associated, with two other sites with similar habitats, River Suck Callows and Little Brosna Callows.

The Shannon Callows has by far the largest area of lowland semi-natural grassland and associated aquatic habitats in Ireland, and one in which there is least disturbance of natural wetland processes. Botanically, it is extremely diverse with two legally protected species of plants and many scarce species. Excellent examples of two habitats listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive occur within the site – *Molinia* meadows and lowland hay meadows with good examples of a further two Annex habitats (both with priority status). In winter the site is internationally important for numbers and species of waterfowl. In spring it feeds large numbers of birds on migration, and in summer it holds very large numbers of breeding waders, rare breeding birds and the endangered Corncrake, as well as a very wide variety of more common grassland and wetland birds. The presence of Otter, an Annex II species, adds further importance to the site.

Objective: To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected:

6410 *Molinia* meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (*Molinia caerulea*)

6510 Lowland hay meadows (*Alopecurus pratensis*, *Sanguisorba officinalis*)

8240 Limestone pavements*

91E0 Alluvial forests with *Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior* (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae)*

* denotes a priority habitat

1355 Otter *Lutra lutra*

Ardgraique Bog SAC (Site Code 002356): Ardgraique Bog is situated approximately 3 km north-east of Killimor, in Co. Galway, in the townlands of Ardgraique, Kilquain, Woodfield, and Lissaniska North and South. The site comprises a raised bog that includes both areas of high bog and cutover bog. It is surrounded by agricultural fields and is located within a cluster of raised bogs. The bog is just north of the Killimor-Eyrecourt road with a number of local access roads leading to the bog and one leading onto the high bog.

Ardgraique Bog is a site of considerable conservation significance as it comprises a raised bog, a rare habitat in the E.U. and one that is becoming increasingly scarce and under threat in Ireland. The site has a high diversity of raised bog plant species and supports a good diversity of raised bog microhabitats, including hummock/hollow complexes, pools, and flushes, as well as a number of scarce plant species. Active raised bog is listed as a priority habitat on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. Priority status is given to habitats and species that are threatened throughout the E.U. Ireland has a high proportion of the total E.U. resource of this habitat type (over 60%) and so has a special responsibility for its conservation at an international level.

Objective: To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected:

7110 Active raised bogs*

7120 Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration

7150 Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion

* denotes a priority habitat

Mongan Bog SAC (Site Code 000580): Mongan Bog is a midland raised bog of medium size situated immediately east of the monastic site of Clonmacnoise, Co. Offaly, and 12 km south of Athlone. It is situated in a basin, surrounded on 95% of its perimeter by high ground on mineral soil. At two points in the north it shares a common boundary with Pilgrim's Road Esker SAC. Most of the bog is a Statutory Nature Reserve, established in 1987. The bog has been the subject of ongoing intensive research since 1972. Mongan Bog is of high conservation importance as it is a good example of a raised bog site which contains examples of the Annex 1 habitats active raised bog, degraded raised bog and depressions on peat substrates (Rhynchosporion). It is mostly intact and has classic hummock and pool formations over a large proportion of the surface. It has several features of special zoological interest. Scenically it is part of an area rich in intact natural features (callows, eskers, limestone pavement) which enhances its importance further. The ongoing intensive research on aspects of bog ecology at the site reinforces its international importance.

Objective: To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected:

Code Description

7110 Active raised bogs*

7120 Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration

7150 Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion

* denotes a priority habitat

Pilgrim's Road Esker SAC (Site Code 001776): Pilgrim's Road Esker SAC is a narrow esker ridge extending 2 km east from Clonmacnoise in Co. Offaly. The site is adjacent to the River Shannon Callows, to the north, and Mongan raised bog, to the south. The western area includes Bunthulla Hill (north of the road) and Hanging Hill (south of the road); the central area runs along both sides of the summit ridge before widening out eastwards to include a substantial area of esker grassland centred on the site of an old ring-fort.

Pilgrim's Road Esker is the most scenically impressive esker in the midlands and the one best known to the public. Orchid-rich calcareous grassland is a rare habitat in Ireland and is listed as a priority habitat under Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. Furthermore the population of the rare Green-winged Orchid is the largest known in Ireland.

Objective: To maintain or restore the favourable conservation condition of the Annex I habitat(s) and/or the Annex II species for which the SAC has been selected:

6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco Brometalia) (* important orchid sites)*

* denotes a priority habitat

4.1.3. Ecological Network Supporting European Sites

An analysis of the proposed Natural Heritage Areas and designated Natural Heritage Areas in terms of their role in supporting the species using European sites was undertaken. It was assumed that these supporting roles mainly related to mobile fauna such as mammals and birds which may use pNHAs and NHAs as "stepping stones" between European sites.

Article 10 of the Habitats Directive and the Habitats Regulations 2011 place a high degree of importance on such non-Natura 2000 areas as features that connect the Natura 2000 network. Features such as ponds, woodlands and important hedgerows were taken into account during the rest of the AA process.

Areas of conservation concern supporting species using the European sites considered with in the 15 km zone of influence is presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2. Areas of conservation concern supporting species using the European sites considered.

Site Name	Site Code	Distance from Plan (km)	Species Connectivity
Suck River Callows NHA	000222	0	Considered under Natura 2000
Cloonoolish Bog NHA	000249	13	None
Crit Island West NHA	000254	4.1	None
Castle Ffrench West Bog NHA	000280	12.5	None
Kilnaborris Bog NHA	000284	13.8	None
Castle Ffrench East Bog NHA	0001244	13	None
Eskerboy Bog NHA	001264	12.5	None
Killure Bog NHA	001283	0.4	None
Moorfield Bog NHA	001303	11.4	None
Annaghbeg Bog NHA	002344	3.2	None
River Shannon Callows pNHA	000216	10	Considered under Natura 2000
Clonfert Cathedral pNHA	000244	11.8	None
Mongan Bog pNHA	000580	14.3	Considered under Natura 2000
Clorhane Wood pNHA	000894	11.1	None
Lough Nanag Esker pNHA	000910	12	None
Ardgraique Bog pNHA	001224	14.3	None
Callow Lough pNHA	001239	10.5	None
Cloonascragh Fen and Black Wood pNHA	001247	2.1	None
Castlesampson Esker pNHA	001625	7.7	Considered under Natura 2000
Cranberry Lough pNHA	001630	4.1	None
Feacle Turlough pNHA	001634	10.7	None
Pilgrim's Road Esker pNHA	001776	14.4	None
Ballinasloe Esker pNHA	001779	0	None

5. Identification of Potential Impacts & Assessment of Significance

5.1. Examples of Direct, Indirect or Secondary Impacts

In general, any development that may result from implementation of the proposed Development Plan, such as construction of housing, roads, rail, water and wastewater infrastructure, gas, electricity and telecommunications infrastructure could lead to a number of impacts depending on where development is sited, the scale of development and types and quantities of emissions. In practice and as outlined in the EU document “Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting European sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC”, and the national guidance document ‘Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland. Guidance for Planning Authorities’, impacts that could potentially occur through the implementation of the proposed Development Plan can be categorised under a number of headings:

- Habitat loss within European site,
- Direct species mortality,
- Disturbance of species during construction,
- Disturbance of species due to active/passive recreation,
- Disturbance due to lighting,
- Surface water run off during construction,
- Surface water run off from increased hard standing areas,
- Disturbance of watercourses due to diversions, culverting,
- Water Supply,
- Wastewater treatment plant capacity.

In order to identify those sites that could be potentially affected, it is necessary to describe the European site in the context of why it has been designated i.e. in terms of its Qualifying Interests and the environmental and ecological conditions that maintain the condition of these features. The underpinning conditions that are required to maintain the ‘health’ of these features are listed in Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1. Qualifying Interests and Key environmental conditions supporting site integrity.

Qualifying Interests	Key environmental conditions supporting site integrity	Current Threats to Qualifying Interests
Active raised bogs	Surface water supply. Low nutrient, acidic conditions to support growth of Sphagnum spp. Restricted drainage at perimeter.	Surface and groundwater dependant. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Inappropriate management.
* Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (Alno - Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae)	Riparian/lacustrine habitat prone to flooding.	Grazing, Invasive Species, Drainage, Planting of nonnative conifers, felling of native tree species.

* Bog woodland	Surface and groundwater dependent. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Inappropriate management.	Drainage, peat cutting, burning and development.
Degraded raised bogs still capable of natural regeneration	Surface and groundwater dependent. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Inappropriate management.	Changes in agricultural practices; afforestation and general forest management; burning; peat extraction; drainage; and the introduction of invasive species.
Depressions on peat substrates of the Rhynchosporion	Surface and groundwater dependent. Low sensitivity to hydrological changes. Erosion, land-use changes.	Drainage; burning; peat extraction; overgrazing; afforestation; erosion; and climate change.
* Limestone pavements	Physical removal. Scrub encroachment	Quarrying, reclamation for agriculture and reduced farming activity which has facilitated the spread of scrub over some areas. Intensive agriculture and domestic/municipal waste sources in the vicinity of pavement may also threaten groundwater.
Lowland hay meadows (<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i> , <i>Sanguisorba officinalis</i>)	Surface and groundwater dependent. Moderately sensitive to hydrological change. Changes in management. Changes in nutrient status.	Agricultural intensification; drainage; abandonment of pastoral systems
<i>Molinia</i> meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey - silt - laden soils (<i>Molinia caerulea</i>)	Surface and groundwater dependent. Moderately sensitive to hydrological change. Changes in management. Changes in nutrient status.	Agricultural intensification; drainage; abandonment of pastoral systems
Otter	Prey availability. Water Quality. Riparian vegetation for breeding sites. Unhindered passage along waterways.	Decrease in water quality: Use of pesticides; fertilisation; vegetation removal; professional fishing (including lobster pots and fyke nets); hunting; poisoning; sand and gravel extraction; mechanical removal of peat; urbanised areas; human habitation; continuous urbanisation; drainage; management of aquatic and bank vegetation for drainage purposes; ; and canalisation or modifying

		structures of inland water course.
Orchid-rich Calcareous Grassland	Changes in management. Changes in nutrient or base status. Moderately sensitive to hydrological change.	The main threats to this habitat include the abandonment of traditional agricultural practices and reclamation.
Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (Festuco Brometalia)(*important orchid sites)	Changes in management. Changes in nutrient or base status. Moderately sensitive to hydrological change.	The main threats to this habitat include the abandonment of traditional agricultural practices and reclamation.
* Turloughs	Surface and Groundwater dependent. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Changes in nutrient or base status.	Nutrient enrichment and inappropriate grazing; drainage, peat cutting; marl extraction and quarrying.
Wetlands & Waterbirds	Highly sensitive to hydrological changes and loss of wetland habitat. Sensitive to disturbance.	A number of pressures have been identified by Crowe (2005). These pressures include: the modification of wetland sites, particularly for industry or housing and increased levels of disturbance, largely related to recreational activity. Eutrophication at a number of wetland sites as a result of nutrient inputs from a range of polluting activities were also identified as a potential pressure. However this latter pressure is now being alleviated through stricter control of activities associated with water discharge/runoff etc. Climate change was also noted as a significant factor underlying changes in trends of wintering waterbirds in Ireland.

5.2. Assessment of Material Alterations

The Material Alterations to the Plan contain changes to the Plan which constitute either a positive impact or a neutral input, in that the proposed alterations improve the wording of the Plan and the Policies and Objectives contained therein with regard to the avoidance of potential impacts on European sites and sites of ecological importance that may be considered stepping stones for European sites.

The proposed alterations to the Plan also contain new Objectives e.g. **DS 9 – Appropriate Assessment Screening/Appropriate Assessment and the Conservation Objectives of European Sites** with regard to Appropriate Assessment and **DS 10 – Future Developments and EU Directives** with regard to Future Development and EU Directives which are considered as positive additions.

A screening matrix of the proposed Material Alterations is presented in Table 5.2 below.

The adoption of the proposed Material Alterations to the Plan will include updating of the Natura Impact Report. The proposed updates to the NIR are presented in Appendix 1 at the end of this screening report.

Table 5.2. Screening matrix of Material Alterations proposed to the Plan.

Proposed Material Alterations to the Ballinasloe Draft Local Area Plan 2015 – 2021 Proposed Land Use Zoning Material Alterations (see Map 1A)	Potential for Negative Impact on European Sites
<p>MA 1: Rezoned the subject land from Agricultural zoned land to R – Residential (Phase 2) outside the 90m buffer zone from the M6 Motorway at Garbally Demesne (Mackney) as per attached Map 1A.</p>	<p>No potential for impacts on European sites to arise due to this proposed alteration.</p> <p>Such an alteration would therefore not necessitate Stage 2 AA.</p>
<p>MA 2A: Rezoned undeveloped lands from Commercial/Mixed Use to Business and Enterprise (B & E) as per attached Map 1A.</p> <p>Amend the Land Use Zoning Matrix under Business and Enterprise (B & E) zoning re cinema from ‘Not Permitted’ to ‘Open for Consideration’.</p> <p>MA 2B: Rezoned the subject land from R – Residential Existing to Commercial/Mixed Use (C2), as per attached Map 1A.</p>	<p>No potential for impacts on European sites to arise due to this proposed alteration.</p> <p>Such an alteration would therefore not necessitate Stage 2 AA.</p>
<p>MA 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> e) Rezoned undeveloped C1 land in Flood Zone B to Open Space, Recreation and Amenity (to address the mapping error noted), as per attached Map 1A. f) Consequential amendments to be made to the Specific Objectives Maps 2A/2B. g) Amend the Disclaimer on the title page of the Draft SFRA as follows (and to delete the existing one) <p>The maps produced as part of this study were prepared for the purpose of informing the Ballinasloe Draft Local Area Plan 2015-2021 and broadly indicate areas that may be prone to flooding. The study has taken into account various factors including local knowledge, photography, site walkovers and published data sources indicative of flood risk. The Indicative Flood Risk Zones should not be solely relied upon for site-specific flood risk assessments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> h) Insert the following User Note to Figures 5 and 7 of the Draft SFRA as follows: <p>The delineation of Indicative Flood Risk Zones has taken into account various factors including local knowledge, photography, and site walkovers and published data sources indicative of flood risk. The Zones indicate broadly areas that may be prone to flooding and have informed the Plan. The Zones are indicative and should not be relied upon solely for site-specific flood risk assessment. The Zones may be updated in the future to take account of new information.</p>	<p>No potential for impacts on European sites to arise due to this proposed alteration.</p> <p>Such an alteration would therefore not necessitate Stage 2 AA.</p>
<p>Proposed Material Alterations to the Ballinasloe Draft Local Area Plan 2015 – 2021 Proposed Textual Alterations</p>	
<p>MA 4:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Amend the text in the Local Area Plan, as appropriate, to reference European sites and update terminology in relation to the AA process, as appropriate, throughout the plan document. 2. Include the following text amendments to the Draft Local Area Plan and amendments to the NIR as appropriate: <p>Objective CF 4 – Lands for Community Facilities and Amenities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b) Ensure that.....and allow for existing community facilities to expand on adjacent Community, Facilities and Amenities (CF) lands zoned for such uses. <p>Amend Specific Objectives Maps 2A/2B, to delete the Specific Objective CF5 from the south eastern area of the plan adjoining the cycle and pedestrian network. Include a new objective in S. 2.2.5 of the Draft Plan as follows:</p>	<p>No potential for impacts on European sites to arise due to this proposed alteration.</p> <p>Such an alteration would therefore not necessitate Stage 2 AA.</p>

<p>Objective DS 9 – Appropriate Assessment Screening/Appropriate Assessment and the Conservation Objectives of European Sites It is an objective of Galway County Council to ensure that Appropriate Assessment Screening and Appropriate Assessment, if required, is undertaken in view of the Conservation Objectives of the European sites that may be affected by any proposed development that:</p> <p>a) the AA process will be a scientific assessment that will present relevant evidence where required, including data and analysis as available from the most up to date Article 17 reports on the conservation status of the natural habitats and species in the Habitat Directive Annexes and the most up to date Article 12 reports on status and trends of bird species, in addition to, data on ecological features in or near the Plan area available from other sources e.g. National Biodiversity Data Centre, Bird Watch Ireland, Bat Conservation Ireland and other sources as appropriate.</p> <p>b) similarly that all habitats and species protected by Article 10 of the Habitats Directive and any other sites that may be considered as stepping stones in support of European sites will be addressed as part of the AA process.</p> <p>Include a new Development Management Guideline in S. 3.10.2 of the Draft Plan as follows DM Guideline NH2 – Conservation Management Plan/Environmental Operating Plan and Project Specific Mitigation Measures Project specific mitigation measures may be included in a Construction Management Plan (CMP) or an Environmental Operating Plan (EOP) and will be commensurate to the level of impact predicted and determined to be successfully employable with regard to the Conservation Objectives of the European sites in question. The CMP or EOP may be required to present information on mitigation in terms of : 1) Evidence of how these will be secured and implemented and by whom; 2) Evidence of the degree of confidence of their likely success; 3) Timescale, relative to the plan or project, for their implementation or completion; 4) Evidence as to how the measures will be monitored and, should mitigation failure identified, how that failure will be rectified.</p> <p>Amend the titles of Objective DS3 and Objective NH1 as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective DS3 - Natura 2000 Network and Habitats Directive Assessment European Sites; • Objective NH 1 – Natura 2000 Sites European Sites <p>Include additional text as follows: 'Refer to Objective DS 9 – Appropriate Assessment Screening/Appropriate Assessment and the Conservation Objectives of European Sites and to DM Guideline NH2 - Construction Management Plans/Environmental Operating Plan and Project Specific Mitigation Measures' to each of the following Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective DS 3 – Natura 2000 Network and Habitats Directive Assessment European Sites • Objective CF 4 - Lands for Community Facilities and Amenities • Objective CF 5 - Educational Facilities (Refer to Maps 1A/1B and to Maps 2A/2B) • Objective CF 13 – Amenity Network; • Objective CF 14 – Linear Park • Objective CF 15 – Cycle and Pedestrian Networks; • Objective CC 2–Climate Change & Green Infrastructure; • Objective UD 4 – Green Networking and Landscaping; • Objective ED 8 – Water-Based Tourism; 	<p>The addition of these points is likely to benefit the protection of the Natura 2000 network within the Plan area</p> <p>Such an alteration would therefore not necessitate Stage 2 AA.</p>
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- **Objective TI 7- Walking and Cycling Strategies;**
- **Objective TI 12 – Rail Facilities/Services & Dualing of the Rail Tracks;**
- **Objectives TI 13 – Amenity/Walking Cycling Network.**
- **Objective NH 1 – ~~Natura 2000 Sites-European Sites~~**

Amend Objective FL 4 as follows:

Objective FL 4 - Management of Flood Risk in relation to ~~Natura Sites European Sites~~

In circumstances where certain measures proposed to mitigate or manage the risk of flooding associated with new developments are likely to result in significant effects to the environment or ~~Natura 2000 European sites, the new developments~~ and ~~such these~~ measures will undergo environmental assessment and ~~Habitats Directive Appropriate Assessment~~, as appropriate.

Amend **Objective FL 7 - Protection of Water Bodies and Watercourses** with the inclusion of new text as follows:

- ~~Ensure that any new development proposals within or near the 10m buffer are adequately assessed, undergo Appropriate Assessment and the preparation of an NIS, should screening show that this is necessary and where the PA consider that such screening/assessments are required.~~

Amend **Objective NH 6 – Biodiversity and Ecological Networks (Refer to Maps 2A/2B)** with the inclusion of new text under new part e) as follows:

- f) ~~Ensure that any new development proposals within or near the 10m buffer are adequately assessed, undergo Appropriate Assessment and the preparation of an NIS, should screening show that this is necessary and where the PA consider that such screening/assessments are required.~~

Amend **Objective NH 3 – Environmental Management** as follows:

Ensure that any new development proposals on or near the environmental management area that may impact on River Suck Callows Special Protection Area (SPA; Site Code 004097), the Suck River Callows Natural Heritage Area (NHA: Site Code 000222; S.I 575 of 2005) are adequately assessed, undergo ~~environmental and/or Habitats Directive Appropriate Assessment and the preparation of an NIS, should screening show that this is necessary~~

- Seek to ensure that **a minimum setback of 10 meters** is
- In the event of lighting being proposed along watercourse corridors an Ecological Impact Assessment extent possible. No lighting will be installed without prior ~~consultation with NPWS planning permission~~ and shall be in line with advances in knowledge into

Amend **Objective NH 4** as follows:

Protect Natural Heritage.....Where a proposed development within the plan area may give rise to likely significant effects on any Natural Heritage Area or proposed Natural Heritage Area (e.g. Ballinasloe Esker proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA: Site Code 001779), an **EIA/EIS** may be required **and shall be carried out in accordance with the EIA Directive and associated regulations.**

Amend **Objective NH 13** as follows:

Objective NH 13 – ~~Consultation with Environmental Authorities Screening for Appropriate Assessment~~

Ensure that all development proposals are screened to determine whether they ~~on their own or in combination with other plans and projects~~ are likely to have a significant ~~direct, indirect or cumulative~~ effect on ~~the integrity or conservation objectives of any Natura 2000 a European site~~ in view of its conservation objectives. ~~and, where significant effects are likely or uncertain; an NIS will be required in accordance with the Habitats Directive.~~
~~there will be a requirement for consultation with the relevant environmental authorities as part of any Habitats~~

<p>Directive Assessment that may be required.</p> <p>Amend Objective NH 14 as follows: Objective NH 14 – NPWS & Integrated Management Plans Galway County Council shall seek to engage with and support the National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS) at their request to ensure integrated Management Plans are prepared for all Natura European sites within the sphere of influence of the Ballinasloe LAP area and ensure that such plans prioritise achieving the conservation objectives of European sites, that they are practical, achievable and sustainable and have regard to all relevant ecological, cultural, social and economic considerations and with special regard to the local community.</p> <p>Amend Objective NH1 and consequential amendments to Objective DS3 of the Draft plan as follows: Objective NH 1/Objective DS3 – Natura 2000 European Sites Protect European sites that form part of the Natura 2000 network A plan or project (e.g. proposed development) within the plan area will only be authorised after the competent authority (Galway County Council) has ascertained, based on scientific evidence including a Screening for Appropriate Assessment and Appropriate Assessment if necessary, Habitats Directive Assessment where necessary, that</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. The plan or project will not give rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary impacts on the integrity of any Natura-2000 European site (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects); or 5. The plan or project will adversely affect the integrity of any Natura 2000 European site (that does not host a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species) 6. The plan or project will adversely affect the integrity of any Natura-2000 European site (that hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species) 	
<p>MA 5: Update Policy TI 2 in the Draft plan as follows:</p> <p>Policy TI 2 – Roads, Streets and Parking In this regard, the principles, approaches and standards set out in relevant national policy, including the Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines, the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines and the accompanying Urban Design Manual, the Traffic Management Guidelines (2003), the Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines (2007)(2014), the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (2013) and the NRA Design Manual for Roads and Bridges as appropriate to the national road network outside areas subject to a reduced urban speed limit, and any forthcoming guidelines in relation to street design and cycling facilities shall be applied to new developments, as appropriate.</p>	<p>No potential for impacts on European sites to arise due to this proposed alteration.</p> <p>Such an alteration would therefore not necessitate Stage 2 AA</p>
<p>MA 6: 1) Include specific reference to the SEA Regulations, S.I. No. 201 of 2011 within S. 1.3.2 Statutory Process (p. 6 in the Draft plan) as follows: The Environmental Report (ER) has been prepared in accordance with the EU Directive on SEA (2001/42/EC), the national Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (SI No. 436 of 2004) as amended by the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 201 of 2011), the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011(SI No. 200 of 2011) amending the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (S.I. No.435 of 2004),and the 2004 Strategic Environmental Assessment Guidelines. Regard has also been given to Circular PSSP 6/2011 'Further Transposition of the EU Directive 2001/42/EC on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). An Environmental Report (ER) is</p>	<p>No potential for impacts on European sites to arise due to this proposed alteration.</p> <p>Such an alteration would therefore not necessitate Stage 2 AA.</p>

<p>required as part of the plan making process to assess the likely significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the Local Area Plan, before a decision is made to adopt it.</p> <p>2) Include a new Objective as follows: Objective DS 10 – Future Developments and EU Directives Ensure that all future developments within the plan area fully take into account the requirements of the EIA, Habitats, Birds, Water Framework and Flood Directives respectively, as relevant and as appropriate.</p> <p>3) Apply textual amendments as per Objective NH 14 - NPWS & Integrated Management Plans as set out in MA 4.</p>	
<p>MA 7: Amend the capacity figures in S. 3.6.2 Utilities Infrastructure – Water Supply as follows:</p> <p>4) The current capacity of the town’s water supply at Derrymullen is 4,500 4,750 m3/day and the current demand is 3,300 3,630 m3/day.</p> <p>5) Make textual inclusions, deletions and wording changes to S. 3.6.2 Utilities Infrastructure – Water Supply as follows:</p> <p>Wastewater Disposal <i>Ballinasloe is serviced by a public wastewater collection network with both primary and secondary treatment (with phosphorus removal). The wastewater works collects and treats domestic and commercial effluent and surface water from a combined sewerage system. The wastewater treatment plant at Pollboy has a current design capacity of 13,500 population equivalent (P.E.); the current loading to the plant is 12,100 P.E., leaving a spare capacity of 1,400 P.E. The existing plant is considered sufficient to cater for wastewater loads up to 2020, the period of this plan. The waste assimilative capacity at the estimated 2020 population equivalent is 13,309 P.E. The proposed additional upgrade of the wastewater treatment plant to 1,800 P.E. is not included on Irish Water’s Capital Investment Programme 2014-2016 and such works will not commence prior to 2018. The requirement and provision for any further upgrades will be reviewed and considered by Irish Water when planning any subsequent Capital Investment Programme.</i></p> <p>An Appropriate Assessment Screening for the Ballinasloe Agglomeration was undertaken by Irish Water in relation to the Waste Water Certificate of Authorisation: D0032-01 process and it was determined that that the discharge from the wastewater treatment plant or in-combination with other sources (diffuse agricultural runoff) will not have a significant impact on the River Suck Callows SPA or downstream receiving Natura 2000-European sites³. The private sewerage works⁴ located in the Portnick area will be connected to the foul sewer network and treatment system. Any new development within the grounds of the former St. Brigid’s hospital will be required to link up with GCC network. Some developments at the outer areas of the town remain connected to individual septic tanks or proprietary wastewater treatment systems. The connection of existing houses to the wastewater system (which is currently served privately) should be progressed through Irish Water’s New Connection process and potentially in conjunction with a DECLG subsidised Group Wastewater scheme. This New Connections process ensures that the cost associated with serving new customers is recovered from these new customers and this cost does not fall on the existing customer base.</p> <p>6) Make textual inclusions, deletions and wording changes to S. 3.6.3 Water Supply, Wastewater & Surface</p>	<p>The addition of these points is likely to benefit the protection of the Natura 2000 network within the Plan area</p> <p>Such an alteration would therefore not necessitate Stage 2 AA.</p>

³ (Source: Irish Water AA Screening for the Ballinasloe Waste Water Certificate of Authorisation: D0032-01; submitted to EPA 14/08/2014 and GCC Water Services Section).

⁴ (primary treatment GCC Discharge Licence W 005/78)

<p>Water Policies and Objectives as follows:</p> <p>Amend Policy UI 1- Water Supply, Wastewater and Surface Water Infrastructure Support Irish Water in the provision and maintenance of adequate wastewater disposal, water supply, wastewater management, and surface water drainage infrastructure, in accordance with EU Directives, to service the development of Ballinasloe. This will include satisfactory capacity for public wastewater networks and storm-water sewers as appropriate and a satisfactory quantity and quality of water supply. and the promotion of Sustainable Drainage System approaches and techniques within the plan area.</p> <p>Amend Objective UI 2 – Water Supply and Water Conservation as follows: Support Irish Water in: c) Ensure Ensuring that new developments are adequately serviced with a suitable quantity and quality of drinking water supply, promote water conservation/demand management to reduce the overall level of water loss in the public supply and require that new domestic developments provide infrastructure to facilitate for water supply metering when making a connection to the public water supply is required; d) Collaborate with Irish Water The upgrading of the existing water treatment plant capacity at Derrymullen as deemed necessary.</p>	
<p>MA 8 : Include a new narrative on p. 35 of Draft Plan after Tourism Linkages as follows:</p> <p>Agriculture Linkages It is recognised that Ballinasloe is an important market town having a large agricultural hinterland, which is well served in recognising services such as livestock equine mart. In addition the plan recognises the importance of the Agricultural, Educational and Advisory services to the plan area.</p>	<p>No potential for impacts on European sites to arise due to this proposed alteration.</p> <p>Such an alteration would therefore not necessitate Stage 2 AA.</p>
<p>MA 9 : Include a new narrative on p. 65 of the Draft Plan as follows:</p> <p>Ballinasloe Fair The Ballinasloe Plan supports and recognises the significance of the Ballinasloe Fair which is renowned as the largest such Fair in Europe. The Fair is highly important to the local economy of Ballinasloe and the plan recognises this.</p>	<p>No potential for impacts on European sites to arise due to this proposed alteration.</p> <p>Such an alteration would therefore not necessitate Stage 2 AA.</p>
<p>MA 10: Include a new policy on p. 65 of Draft Plan as follows:</p> <p>Policy BAC 3 – Bridleways in Ballinasloe Support the creation of bridleways within Ballinasloe plan area given the strong local equine connections.</p>	<p>Bridleways are generally informal pathways on grassland/agricultural land or along existing routes.</p> <p>No potential for impacts on European sites to arise due to this proposed alteration.</p> <p>Such an alteration would therefore not necessitate Stage 2 AA.</p>
<p>MA 11: Include a new policy on p. 42 of the Draft Plan as follows:</p> <p>Policy TI 4 Bi – Lingual Road Signage Support and facilitate Bi – Lingual Road Signage within the plan area.</p>	<p>No potential for impacts on European sites to arise due to this proposed alteration.</p> <p>Such an alteration would therefore not necessitate Stage 2 AA.</p>
<p>MA 12: Amend Objective LU 3 – Residential to include a new subparagraph No. 3 as follows: 3. Existing commercial businesses in Residential Zonings shall, as far as is practicable, be facilitated to expand and develop their commercial activity.</p>	<p>No potential for impacts on European sites to arise due to this proposed alteration.</p> <p>Such an alteration would therefore not necessitate Stage 2 AA.</p>

<p>Amend Land Use Zoning Matrix as follows: Amend Residential Zoning from 'Not Permitted' to 'Open for Consideration' for Petrol Station.</p>	
<p>MISCELLANEOUS</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update <i>Maps 1A and 1B-Land Use Zoning, Maps 2A and 2B - Specific Objectives and Maps 3A and 3B Flood Risk Management</i>, as required; • Update <i>Table 1 Capacity of Zoned Land within the Ballinasloe Draft LAP</i> on p. 26 of the Ballinasloe Draft Local Area Plan 2015-2021 as a consequence of the Material Alterations. • Update any typos in the document, as required. • Any necessary updates to the NIR and SEA as appropriate. 	<p>No potential for impacts on European sites to arise due to this proposed alteration.</p> <p>Such an alteration would therefore not necessitate Stage 2 AA.</p>

5.3. Assessment of Potential Cumulative Effects

Cumulative impacts or effects are changes in the environment that result from numerous human-induced, small-scale alterations. Cumulative impacts can be thought of as occurring through two main pathways: first, through persistent additions or losses of the same materials or resource, and second, through the compounding effects as a result of the coming together of two or more effects.

In relation to potential cumulative impacts from the Draft LAP and proposed Material Alterations in conjunction with other plans and projects, it is a requirement that each of these, in addition to each individual application within the proposed LAP itself, will all be subject to screening for appropriate assessment to ensure there will be no significant negative impact on European sites. Taken together, adherence to this required approach will ensure no cumulative impacts will arise from these plans.

5.4. Likely Impacts on European Sites

This section documents the final stage of the screening process. It uses the information collected on the sensitivity of each European site and describes any likely significant effects of implementation of the Plan. This assumes the absence of any controls, conditions or assumption mitigation measures.

A screening matrix of potential impacts is presented in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3. Outlining the potential impacts in the absence of mitigation of the Material Alterations to the Plan.

Site	Reduction in Habitat Area	Disturbance to Key Species	Habitat or Species Fragmentation	Reduction in Species Diversity	Changes in Key Indicators of Conservation Value (Water Quality etc.)	Stage 2 AA Required
River Suck Callows SPA	No	No	No	No	None	No
Glenloughaun Esker SAC	No	No	No	No	None	No
Castlesampson Esker SAC	No	No	No	No	None	No
Killeglan Grassland SAC	No	No	No	No	None	No
Ballynamona Bog and Corkip Lough SAC	No	No	No	No	None	No
Middle Shannon Callows SPA	No	No	No	No	None	No
River Shannon Callows SAC	No	No	No	No	None	No
Ardgraique Bog SAC	No	No	No	No	None	No

Mongan Bog SAC	No	No	No	No	None	No
Pilgrim's Road Esker SAC	No	No	No	No	None	No
Mongan Bog SPA	No	No	No	No	None	No

6. Screening Statement

This screening report has evaluated the proposed Material Alterations to the Ballinasloe Draft Local Area Plan 2015-2021 to determine whether or not significant negative impacts on European sites are likely to arise by virtue of the inclusion of the proposed Material Alterations.

The report finds that the proposed Material Alterations Plan have been formulated to ensure that developments and effects arising from them, either individually or in combination with other plans and projects, shall not give rise to significant effects on the integrity of any European site.

The Appropriate Assessment procedure has therefore concluded at this Screening Stage and a detailed (Stage 2) Appropriate Assessment is not required.

7. References

Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (2010) Guidance on Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland (as amended February 2010).

European Commission (2000) Managing Natura 2000 sites: the provisions of Article 6 of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC.

European Commission Environment DG (2001) Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. European Commission, Brussels.

European Commission (2007) Guidance document on Article 6(4) of the 'Habitats Directive' 92/43/EEC: Clarification of the concepts of: alternative solutions, imperative reasons of overriding public interests, compensatory measures, overall coherence and opinion of the Commission. European Commission, Brussels.

NPWS (2002) Middle Shannon Callows SPA [004096] Site Synopsis. Version date: 20.06.2002. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

NPWS (2005) River Suck Callows SPA [004097] Site Synopsis. Version date: 01.04.2005. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

NPWS (2008) The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Dublin.

NPWS (2013) Castlesampson Esker SAC [001625] Site Synopsis. Version date: 06.11.2013 001625_Rev13.Doc. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

NPWS (2013) Mongan Bog SAC [000580] Site Synopsis. Version date: 29.08.2013 000580_Rev13.Doc. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

NPWS (2013) River Shannon Callows SAC [000580] Site Synopsis. Version date: 12.08.2013 000216_Rev13.Doc. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

NPWS (2014) Ardgraique Bog SAC [002356] Site Synopsis. Version date: 9.11.2014 002356_Rev13.Doc. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

NPWS (2014) Glenloughaun Esker SAC [002213] Site Synopsis. Version date: 3.01.2014 002213_Rev13.Doc. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

NPWS (2014) Killeglan Grassland SAC [002214] Site Synopsis. Version date: 3.01.2014 002214_Rev13.Doc. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

NPWS (2014) Ballynamona and Corkip Lough SAC [002339] Site Synopsis. Version date: 9.01.2014 002339_Rev13.Doc. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

NPWS (2014) Pilgrim's Road Esker SAC [001776] Site Synopsis. Version date: 23.01.2014 001776_Rev13.Doc. National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

NPWS (2015) Conservation objectives for Mongan Bog SPA [004017]. Generic Version 4.0. Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

NPWS (2015) Conservation objectives for Middle Shannon Callows SPA [004096]. Generic Version 4.0. Department of Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht.

NPWS (2015) Conservation objectives for River Suck Callows SPA [004097]. Generic Version 4.0. Department of Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht.

NPWS (2015) Conservation objectives for Glenloughaun Esker SAC [002213]. Generic Version 4.0. Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

NPWS (2015) Conservation objectives for Castlesampson Esker SAC [001625]. Generic Version 4.0. Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

NPWS (2015) Conservation objectives for Killeglan Grassland SAC [002214]. Generic Version 4.0. Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

NPWS (2015) Conservation objectives for River Shannon Callows SAC [000216]. Generic Version 4.0. Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

NPWS (2015) Conservation objectives for Ardgraique Bog SAC [002356]. Generic Version 4.0. Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

NPWS (2015) Conservation objectives for Mongan Bog SAC [000580]. Generic Version 4.0. Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

NPWS (2015) Conservation objectives for Pilgrim's Road Esker SAC [001776]. Generic Version 4.0. Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

Appendix 1

Proposed Updates to the NIR:

Amend the NIR Report as follows:

The title of the report will be amended to reflect the AA process.

All references to Natura 2000 sites will be changes to 'European Sites'.

The Chief Executive's recommendations with regard to changes to text relating to Objectives will be included and updated in the amended NIR.

Update the in-combination section of the Natura Impact Report (NIR) in relation to any potential in-combination effects associated with the National Cycle Policy Framework.

Update Table 3.3 of the NIR to expand on the individual bird species to include the following:

A038 Whooper Swan *Cygnus Cygnus*

A050 Wigeon *Anas penelope*

A122 Corncrake *Crex crex*

A140 Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*

A142 Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*

A156 Black-tailed Godwit *Limosa limosa*

A179 Black-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*

A395 Greenland White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons flavirostris*

Section 4 and approach to scientific assessment or analysis – shall provide more detail in the Potential Likely Significant Impact column of Table 4.1 and shall expand on the content of the Mitigation column. Other textual amendments with regard to particular species will be made in the NIR to address the potential impacts in view of the other listed impacts acknowledged by the Department, as appropriate.

Iterative reviews were carried out by the Appropriate Assessment team and recommendations were forwarded to the Council after each review to allow them to consider the proposed changes. The output was the final version of each Chapter that contained amended policies and mitigation measures specifically designed to address impacts on European sites.

Prior to the required analysis of each Policy and Objective of the Plan, it is possible to further scientifically assess the potential impacts on the Qualifying Interests of the SACs and Special Conservation Interests of the SPAs listed.

To this end, Table 4.1 will be amended to set out such an analysis based on the most up to date data available from the sources listed in Section 2.2 of the report. Habitat status is reported per the findings of the most recent Article 17 Report - Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland, 2013 and Article 12 Report (Birds Directive) on the status and trends of bird species.

Following the identification of potential impacts based on the most recent available scientific data for Qualifying Interests and Special Conservation Interests, Table 4.2 shows how specific elements of the Draft Local Area Plan were deemed to pose likely significant effects to the Conservation Objectives of the European sites considered.

It also demonstrates where these policies and objectives can be used as mitigation tools to avoid, reduce or minimise the potential adverse effects identified.

At Plan level it is not always possible to include specific information with regard to development and as such the recognition of mitigating Policies and Objectives that play a role in avoiding significant potential impacts on the Conservation Objectives of European sites is considered.

Therefore in most cases where the Policies and Objectives of the Plan are determined to have potential significant impacts, in the absence of mitigation, and in-combination with other plans or projects, then those Policies and Objectives that support the protection of European sites and Article 10 habitats are listed as mitigation measures.

If a Policy or Objective has no bearing on the Conservation Objectives or Integrity of a European site then the potential impact is not applicable and N/A is assigned in the potential impact column of Table 4.2. It follows that no mitigation is applicable in these cases also.

The screening process identifies plans and projects that could act in combination with the Local Area Plan to pose likely significant effects on European sites in its administrative area and its environs. The 'In-combination' Section will be amended to identify if the Plans and Projects considered in-combination have undergone appropriate assessment in their own right.

The M6 Motorway is complete within the zone of influence of the Ballinasloe LAP. There are no immediate plans to develop or connect to the motorway within the Plan area. Any future proposals will be subject to the Appropriate Assessment Screening and/or Appropriate Assessment and thus in-combination effects will be determined through the AA process.

The text of the NIR includes the clarification from IW which will be reiterated in the assessment of policies and Objectives: 'An Appropriate Assessment Screening for the Ballinasloe Agglomeration was undertaken by Irish Water in relation to the Waste Water Certificate of Authorisation: D0032-01 process and it was determined that that the discharge from the wastewater treatment plant or in-combination with other sources (diffuse agricultural runoff) will not have a significant impact on the River Suck Callows SPA or downstream receiving Natura 2000 Sites'.

The conclusion of the **NIR Report** will be amended to update the reference to European sites and their conservation objectives.