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» EFFECTIVE FROM 23rd FEBRUARY 2015

Plean Forbartha Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Development Plan

2015 » 2021



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council

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Appendices

Appendix I	Statement of Compliance
Appendix II	Galway County Housing Strategy
Appendix III	Architectural Conservation Areas
Appendix IV	County Galway Wind Energy Strategy
Appendix V	Record of Protected Structures (Available to view on CD attached)

Environmental Reports/Supporting Documents

- SEA Statement for the Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021 Strategic Environmental Assessment
- Appendix I – Non Technical Summary for the Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021
- Environmental Report for the Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021
- Natura Impact Report In Support of the Appropriate Assessment of the Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021
- Appendix II of Natura Impact Report In Support of the Appropriate Assessment of the Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021
- Stage 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for the Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021
- Landscape and Landscape Character Assessment

Introduction

1.1 Background

The *Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021* sets out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the functional area of Galway County Council. This plan includes the administrative area of what was formerly Ballinasloe Town Council. On foot of a recent amendment to the *Planning and Development Act, 2000* (as amended), by the *Electoral Local Government and Planning and Development Act, 2013*, the provisions and zonings of the Ballinasloe Development Plan will remain in force to the extent provided for by that Development Plan or until a Local Area Plan is prepared for Ballinasloe, whichever is the earlier. The plan presents Galway County Council's outlook for future development of the County up to 2021. It sets out the longer term vision for the development of the County, while protecting and enhancing its environment through employing the principles of sustainable development in the policies and objectives set out therein. Local Area Plans have been or will be prepared for the towns/areas with a population over 1,500 persons; however, the County Development Plan remains the overarching plan for the County.

Sustainable development can be described as a pattern of resource use that aims to meet human needs while respecting the environment so that these needs can be met not only in the present, but in the indefinite future. Sustainable development is founded on the “*three independent and mutually reinforcing pillars*” of economic development, social development and environmental protection. Information, integration and participation are key building blocks to help achieve development that recognises these independent pillars. Environmental and social concerns should be integrated into all development processes and broad public participation in decision-making is a fundamental prerequisite for achieving sustainable development.

This plan builds on the strategies, policies and objectives of the *Galway County Development Plan 2009-2015*, taking into account recent key development trends and national, regional and local policy developments. In particular, it also takes account of the increased emphasis on flooding, climate change, renewable energy and the need to support economic development. It also takes account of European Union (EU) requirements including the application of Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Directive Assessment to the plan.



1.2 Legislative Context

1.2.1 Planning and Development Act, 2000 (As Amended)

The *Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021* has been prepared in accordance with Sections 11 and 12 of the *Planning and Development Act, 2000* (as amended). A Development Plan is required to set out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area of the Development Plan and shall consist of a written statement and a plan or plans indicating the development objectives for the area in question.

The written statement shall include a Core Strategy which shows that the development objectives in the Development Plan are consistent, as far as practicable, with national and regional development objectives set out in the *National Spatial Strategy (NSS)* and the *Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region 2010-2022 (RPGs)*. The NSS is the national planning framework for Ireland which promotes self-sustaining growth through building up sufficient scale and critical mass through a network of gateways and hubs. The gateways and hubs are partnered by the county towns and other larger towns which support the role of smaller towns, villages and rural areas as a focus for business, residential, service and amenity functions. The RPGs provide a framework for the long term strategic development of the West Region through setting out goals, policies and objectives in relation to population targets, housing, infrastructure, economic development, environment, amenities, social infrastructure and community development, ensuring the successful implementation of the NSS at regional, County and local level.

The written statement is also required to include a separate statement which shows that the development objectives in the Development Plan are consistent, as far as practicable, with the conservation and protection of the environment.

The Development Plan must also include a number of mandatory objectives which are set out hereunder:

- the zoning of land for the use solely or primarily of particular areas for particular purposes (whether residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, recreational, as open space or otherwise, or a mixture of those uses), where and to such extent as the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, in the opinion of the planning authority, requires the uses to be indicated;
- the provision or facilitation of the provision of infrastructure including transport, energy and communication facilities, water supplies, and waste water services, waste recovery and disposal facilities (regard having been had to the waste management plan for the area made in accordance with the Waste Management Act 1996) and any ancillary facilities or services;
- the conservation and protection of the environment including, in particular, the archaeological and natural heritage and the conservation and protection of European sites and any other sites which may be prescribed for the purposes of this paragraph;
- the encouragement, pursuant to Article 10 of the Habitats Directive, of the management of features of the landscape, such as traditional field boundaries, important for the ecological coherence of the Natura 2000 network and essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species;
- the promotion of compliance with environmental standards and objectives established –
 - (i) for bodies of surface water, by the European Communities (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009;
 - (ii) for groundwater, by the European Communities (Groundwater) Regulations 2010; which standards and objectives are included in river basin management plans (within the meaning of Regulation 13 of the European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2003);

- the integration of the planning and sustainable development of the area with the social, community and cultural requirements of the area and its population;
- the preservation of the character of the landscape where, and to the extent that, in the opinion of the planning authority, the proper planning and sustainable development of the area requires it, including the preservation of views and prospects and the amenities of places and features of natural beauty or interest;
- the protection of structures, or parts of structures, which are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest;
- the preservation of the character of architectural conservation areas;
- the development and renewal of areas in need of regeneration;
- the provision of accommodation for Travellers, and the use of particular areas for that purpose;
- the preservation, improvement and extension of amenities and recreational amenities;
- the control, having regard to the provisions of the "Control of Major Accident Hazards Involving Dangerous Substances Directive" and any regulations, under any enactment, giving effect to that Directive, of (i) siting of new establishments, (ii) modification of existing establishments, and (iii) development in the vicinity of such establishments, for the purposes of reducing the risk, or limiting the consequences, of a major accident;
- the provision, or facilitation of the provision, of services for the community including, in particular, schools, crèches and other education and childcare facilities;
- the protection of the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Gaeltacht including the promotion of Irish as the community language, where there is a Gaeltacht area in the area of the Development Plan;
- the promotion of sustainable settlement and transportation strategies in urban and rural areas including the promotion of measures to:
 - (i) reduce energy demand in response to the likelihood of increases in energy and other costs due to long-term decline in non-renewable resources,
 - (ii) reduce anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions, and
 - (iii) address the necessity of adaptation to climate change; in particular, having regard to location, layout and design of new development;
- the preservation of public rights of way which give access to seashore, mountain, lakeshore, riverbank or other place of natural beauty or recreational utility, which public rights of way shall be identified both by marking them on at least one of the maps forming part of the Development Plan and by indicating their location on a list appended to the Development Plan, and
- landscape, in accordance with relevant policies or objectives for the time being of the Government or any Minister of the Government relating to providing a framework for identification, assessment, protection, management and planning of landscapes and developed having regard to the European Landscape Convention done at Florence on 20th October 2000.
- The Development Plan is also informed by a wide range of other legislation and in particular a number of European Directives and their associated legislation.

1.2.2 European Directives

1.2.2.1 Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC)

The plan is required to be subjected to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as per the *Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC)*, which is the process by which environmental considerations are fully integrated into the preparation and adoption of plans/programmes. In this regard, the plan is accompanied by a Strategic Environmental Assessment Report as a supporting document, which identifies the potential environmental impacts of implementing the plan and details how the environmental considerations have been fully integrated into same. The SEA has been prepared in accordance with the EU SEA Directive (2001/42/EC), the *Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (S.I. No. 436 of 2004)*, as amended by the *Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 201 of 2011)*, the 2004 national guidelines *Implementation of SEA Directive (2001/42/EC): Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment* as issued by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government. The plan has also had regard to Circular PSSP 6/2011 *Further Transposition of the EU Directive 2001/42/EC on Strategic Environmental Assessment*. The relevant recommendations and mitigation measures from the Strategic Environmental Assessment process and Environmental Report have been incorporated into the plan.

1.2.2.2 Habitats Directive Assessment Directive (92/43/EEC)

A Habitats Directive Assessment has been prepared in accordance with Article 6(3) of the *EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)*, the *European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011)*, the *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland-Guidance for Planning Authorities (2010)* issued by the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government and the *Planning and Development Act 2000*, (as amended). A Habitats Directive Assessment (also referred to as an 'Appropriate Assessment') is an assessment of the implications of a plan or project, alone and/or in combination with other plans and projects, on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site, in view of its conservation objectives. This plan was subjected to an Appropriate Assessment Screening which determined that a full Appropriate Assessment of the plan was required. The process was completed with a Stage 2 Assessment and this is detailed in the supporting document entitled Natura Impact Report. The relevant recommendations and mitigation measures arising from the process have been incorporated into the plan, as appropriate.

1.2.2.3 EU Floods Directive (2007/60/EC)

A *Stage 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment* has also been prepared for County Galway, which is a supporting document that considers the flood risk issues relevant to the County. It identifies flooding and surface water management issues that may warrant further investigation, as appropriate, at plan level or at planning application stage and also suggests measures to be integrated into the Development Plan that will contribute towards both flood risk management and compliance with the national flood risk guidelines. The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment has been prepared having regard to the *EU Floods Directive (2007/60/EC)*, the national *European Communities (Assessment and Management of Flood Risks) Regulations 2010 (S.I. No. 122 of 2010)*, including amendments and *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009)* issued by the DoEHLG and the OPW.

1.3 Plan Informants

This County Development Plan was prepared in accordance with the legislation and European Directives outlined above and was also informed by a wide range of other legislation, EU Directives, policy documents, guidelines and public consultation including those outlined below:

Table 1.1 Plan Informants

<p>Public Consultation</p>	<p>Issues raised by the local community and other stakeholders through the publication of the Pre-Draft Issues Paper, the facilitation of pre-draft public consultations throughout the County and written submissions on the Pre-Draft, Draft Plan and Material Alterations to the Draft Plan.</p>
<p>Legislative Context</p>	<p>All relevant Irish and European planning and environmental legislation, in particular the:</p> <p><i>Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended); Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended); EU Directives including the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EEC); Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC); Birds Directive (2009/147/EEC); European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats Regulations) 2011 (SI No. 477 of 2011); Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC); Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (85/337/EEC) and as amended/codified by (Directive 2011/92/EU); Urban Wastewater Directive (91/271/EEC); Waste Framework Directive (2008/98/EC); Drinking Water Directive (98/83/EC); Environmental Noise Directive (2002/49/EC); Environmental Liability Directive (2004/35/EC); Groundwater Directive (2006/118/EC); Bathing Water Directive (2006/7/EC); Flood Directive (2007/60/EC); Renewable Energy Directive (2009/28/EC) & EU Directive 2001/77/EC – promotion of electricity produced from renewable energy sources; EU Renewable Energy Road Map; Renewable Energies in the 21st Century: Building a More Sustainable Future; EU Nitrates Directive; EU Shellfish Directive (2006/113/EC); EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive 2008/56/EC; Council Directive 66/404/EEC on the marketing of forest reproductive material; European Communities (Forest Consent and Assessment) Regulations 2010 (S.I. No 558 of 2010); EU Common Fisheries Policy (and its reform); The Climate Change Bill (as initiated in October 2013) including the bills adoption and the commencements of various sections within any future Climate Change Act that may occur within the lifetime of the Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021; The National Climate Change Regulations following the coming into operation of the Climate Change Act; Marine Waters Council Directive 2008/56/EC and EU Regulation No 1255/2011; Forestry Regulation (EC) 2152/2003; Transport Decision 661/2010/EC; Emissions Trading Scheme Directive 2009/29/EC (which amends Directive 2003/87/EC); Waste Management Act 1996-2007; The Water Services Act (2007 & 2013); Wastewater Discharge Authorisation Regulations 2007 and authorisations issued under these regulations; Drinking Water Regulations 2007; The Water Pollution Act 1977-2007; The National Monuments Act 1930-2004; Wildlife Acts 1976-2000; The European Communities (Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Waters) Regulations (2006 and 2007) and all relevant associated regulations.</i></p>

Strategic Planning Context

National and regional policy documents and guidelines, in particular the following:

Our Sustainable Future-A Framework for Sustainable Development for Ireland (2012); the *National Development Plan (NDP) (2007-2013)* and *Transport 21* as superseded by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform document titled *Infrastructure and Capital Investment 2012-2016*; the *National Spatial Strategy 2002-2022*; *Implementing the National Spatial Strategy 2010-Update and Outlook*; the *National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012* and follow-on document *National Climate Change Adaptation Framework Building Resilience to Climate Change 2012*; *National Renewable Energy Action Plan* (2010); *Atlantic Gateways Initiative Achieving Critical Mass* (2006) and follow on report *Atlantic Gateways Corridor Development Framework-Overview Report* (2009); *A Sustainable Transport Future-A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009-2020*; *Ireland's First National Cycle Policy Framework* (2009); *Actions for Biodiversity-Ireland's National Biodiversity Plan 2011-2016*; *National Heritage Plan* (2002); the White Paper on *Delivering a Sustainable Energy Solution for Ireland 2007-2020*; *Maximising Ireland's Energy Efficiency: The Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources*; *Government Policy Statement on Strategic Importance of Transmission and Other Energy Infrastructure* (July 2012); the *National Energy Efficiency Action Plan 2009-2020*; *EC (2013) EU Strategy and Adaptation to Climate Change*; *Strategy for Renewable Energy 2012-2020*; the *North Seas Offshore Grid Initiative* - an agreement entered into by Ireland and 9 other States, the EU Commission & ACER; *National Hazardous Waste Management Plan 2008-2012* (and any updated version thereof); the *National Digital Strategy for Ireland 2013 - Doing More with Digital - Phase 1 Digital Engagement*; the *National Broadband Plan for Ireland 2012-Delivering a Connected Society*; *CAP Towards 2020: Meeting the Food, Natural Resources and Territorial Challenges of the Future* (COM (2010)) 672; *EU Integrated Maritime Policy*; *EU State of the World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2010*; *EU Blue Growth, Opportunities for Marine and Maritime Sustainable Growth* (COM (2012)) 494; *EU Common Fisheries Policy and its Reform*; *Green Infrastructure - Enhancing Europe's Natural Capital* (SWD (2013)) 155; the Government's White Paper *Ensuring the Future - A Strategy for Rural Development in Ireland 1999*; *Food Harvest: A Vision for Agri-Food and Fisheries 2020 Report* 2013; *Animal Health and Welfare Act 2013*; *Origin Green*-a national sustainability development programme launched by Bord Bia; *An Integrated Marine Plan for Ireland - Harnessing our Ocean's Wealth* 2012; the *Maritime Area and Foreshore (Amendment) Bill 2013*; the *Forestry Bill 2013*; *Strategy for Broadleaf Trees*; IFFPA document *An Overview of the Irish Forestry and Forest Product Sector 2012*; *S.I. No. 442/2012*; *S.I. No 477 of 2011*; the *NRA Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (2000)*; *Road Link Design* Volume 6, Section 1, Part 1, NRA TD9/12, Feb 2012; *Geometric Design of Major/Minor Priority Junctions and Vehicular Access to National Roads*, Volume 6, Section 2, Part 6, NRA TD 41-42/11, November 2011; *Guidance on Minor Improvements to the National Roads*, Volume 6, Section1, Part 1, NRA TA 85/11; *Road Safety Audit*, Volume 5, Section 2, Part 2, NRA HD 19/12; *Metric Handbook Planning and Design Data 3rd Edition*; the *2013 National Housing Development Survey*.

Statutory Planning Context

Statutory plans, in particular the *Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region 2010-2022*; the *Galway County Development Plan 2009-2015*; the *Ballinasloe Town Development Plan 2009-2015*; *Galway County Council and Ballinasloe Town Council Joint Housing Strategy 2009-2015*; *Connaught Regional Waste Management Plan 2006-2011* and the *Replacement Waste Management Plan for the Connacht Region 2006-2011*; and adjoining Local Authority's Development Plans and any Draft Plans published including *Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017*; *Galway City Development Plan 2011-2017*; *Roscommon County Development Plan 2008-2014*; *Offaly County Development Plan 2009-2015*; *Mayo County Development Plan 2008-2014* and the statutorily required Local Area Plans for towns with a population over 5,000 which include Tuam, and Loughrea.

Statutory planning context includes the national planning guidelines for Planning Authorities including: *Retail Planning (2012)*; *Spatial Planning and National Roads (2012)*; *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management (2009)*; *Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland (2009)*; *Development Plans: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2007)*; *Implementation of SEA Directive(2001/42/EC): Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment (2004)* and the *Departmental Guidance Note on Core Strategies (Issued November 2010)*; *Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (2013)*; the *Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines (2012)*; the *Traffic Management Guidelines (2003)*; the *Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines (2007)* and any updated/superseding documents and any forthcoming guidelines in relation to street design and cycling facilities; *Quarries and Ancillary Activities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2004)*; EPA guidelines *Environmental Management in the Extractive Industry: Non Scheduled Minerals 2006*; *Planning Guidelines for Wind Energy Development for Planning Authorities (2006)*; the *Telecommunications Antennae & Support Structures (1996)* and *Circular Letter PL 07/12*; *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas–Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009)* including its accompanying document *Urban Design Manual – Best Practice Guide (2009)*; *Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments (2007)*; *DoEHLG Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities – Best Practice Guidelines for Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities (2007)*; *Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines (2005)*; *Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2011)*; *The Provision of Schools and the Planning System (2008)*; Department of Education and Skills, *Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001)*; *Development Contribution Schemes – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2013)* including any updated or superseding versions of these documents that may be published during the lifetime of this plan.

<p>Local Planning Context</p>	<p>Local plans, strategies and studies, including: the <i>Biodiversity Action Plan for County Galway 2008-2013</i>; the <i>Galway County Heritage Plan 2009-2014</i>; <i>Galway Transportation and Planning Study 1999 and 2003</i>; Galway County Council's <i>Galway Clustered Housing Guidelines</i>; Galway County Council's <i>Design Guidelines for the Single Rural House (2005)</i>; <i>Developing Sustainable Tourism in Galway: A Framework for Action 2003-2012</i>; <i>Water-Based Tourism – A Strategic Vision for Galway 2002</i>; <i>Working Together: Shaping Our Future: Galway County Strategy for Economic, Social and Cultural Development 2002-2012</i>; the <i>River Basin Management Plan for the Western River Basin District in Ireland (2009-2015)</i>; the <i>Shannon International River Basin Management Plan (2009-2015)</i>; Galway County Council's <i>Walking and Cycling Strategy Report (2013)</i>; and Local Area Plans for a number of towns/villages within the County including Oranmore, Athenry, Gort, Maigh Cuilinn, Bearna, An Ghaeltacht, and Craughwell; <i>GCC Galway's Living Landscapes – Part 1 : Eskers: the Galway Climate Change Strategy Report 2001</i>, commissioned by Galway Energy Agency Limited (GEAL); <i>Galway County Council's Groundwater Protection Scheme for County Galway</i>; <i>Galway County Council's Architectural Survey and Assessment Best Practice Guide</i>.</p>
<p>Environmental Assessment</p>	<p>Assessment of potential environmental impacts of the Galway County Development Plan, including a Strategic Environmental Assessment, an Appropriate Assessment, a Stage 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for County Galway and OPW Preliminary Flood Risk Assessments and Areas of Further Assessments conducted within the County.</p>

Table 1.1 Plan Informants

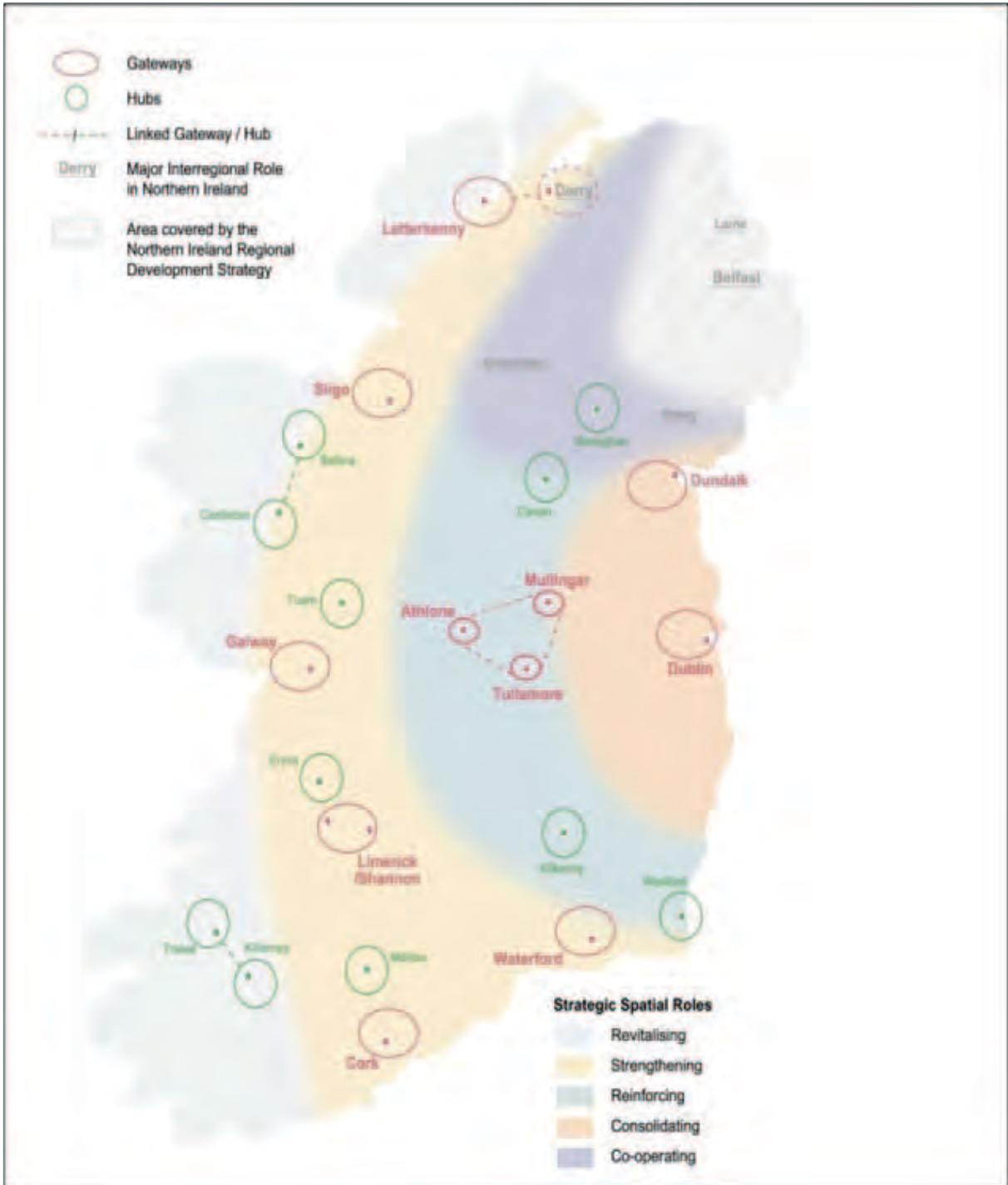
1.4 Profile of County Galway

County Galway is located on the west coast of Ireland in the province of Connacht and extends to an area of 6,148km². County Mayo is located to its north, Counties Roscommon and Offaly to its east, County Tipperary to its south east and County Clare to its south. Its natural boundaries are Galway Bay to the west, the River Shannon to the east and Lough Derg to the south east. Galway City, Roscommon, Mayo and Galway together form part of the west region of Ireland, with Galway City as the nearest designated gateway and Tuam town as the hub town for the County, as designated under the NSS.

The County is characterised by a diverse, natural landscape that includes the spectacular mountainous Conamara region west of the River Corrib, rich agricultural lands to the east and a more varied limestone area to the south. These topographical attributes combine to give Galway its outstanding and widely varied landscape setting.

County Galway has a vibrant and diverse population of over 175,124 persons, which has continued to increase at a steady rate over the last decade and is in line to reach the RPG 2022 population target of 198,500 persons. The growth in population has mainly been in the areas closest to Galway City and the area of the County identified as the Galway Transportation and Planning Study boundary. More rural parts of County Galway have experienced mixed growth with some electoral divisions in the extreme north east, south east, western, and upland areas of the County still experiencing population decline. The 2011 Census highlighted that 75.6% of private households are located in rural areas, that the County had the highest average household size in the

State at 2.9, while the largest proportion of people in the County were in the 35-39 age category, with the 60-64 age category seeing the biggest increase since the 2006 Census. These demographics will influence and have consequences for the provision of housing, infrastructure and services across the County into the future.



Map GH: Gateway & Hubs (Source: National Spatial Strategy for Ireland 2002-2020)

Manufacturing industries, wholesale and retail trade, health and social work and education are the broad industrial groups that are the greatest sources of employment in the County, while the location of third level education facilities within easy reach provides considerable opportunities for providing and enhancing the knowledge economy of the County.

Galway has benefited from a developing and expanding road infrastructure network, with the addition of the M6 Galway to Dublin motorway and the imminent delivery of the M17 Gort to Tuam motorway. Similarly, the Western Rail Corridor from Gort to Oranmore (via Athenry) has been reopened since the last County Development Plan improving public transport links south of the County. Convenient access is available to neighbouring international airports in Counties Mayo and Clare and Ros an Mhíl is the main ferry port for the Oileáin Árann and continues to be an important deep sea fishing port for the region and country.

In the County, some infrastructural services are limited, or in some cases have exceeded capacity, however they continue to be invested in and improved upon on an ongoing basis and as resources permit, in order to meet environmental regulations, ensure public health and improve the quality of life for the residents and businesses of the County. The establishment of Irish Water, which will have full responsibility for all aspects of water service planning, delivery and operation, aims to improve the quality of service, increase the cost efficiency, provide access to new funding sources, and accelerate the pace of delivery of planned investments needed to upgrade the water and sewerage networks in the area.

County Galway possesses a strong community identity and a rich and diverse cultural heritage. Significant progress continues to be made in the improvement of physical, social and community infrastructure in the towns and villages throughout the County, as it is recognised that social infrastructure and community development supports economic growth, provides employment opportunities and improves the well being and quality of life of the citizens of the County. Galway also has the largest and most populous Gaeltacht in the country. The language and culture of the An Ghaeltacht is a unique and precious inheritance and its preservation and protection is of primary importance and is enshrined in the policies and objectives throughout this plan.

1.5 Planning Issues in County Galway

The *Galway County Development Plan 2009-2015* was compiled during a period of economic prosperity, while the preparation of the current plan coincides with an economic downturn, presenting a number of challenges that need to be considered. Furthermore, new policy developments, legislative changes, increased awareness of environmental issues, flood risk, population growth, economic decline and other trends highlight issues that this County Development Plan should address. These issues include inter alia:

- National, regional and local policy developments;
- Changing environmental conditions and regulations including the need for Habitats Directive Assessment, Strategic Environmental Assessment and Flood Risk Assessments, as required;
- Achieving population targets as set out in the Core Strategy;
- Changing demographics of the population, in particular an ageing population;
- Emergence of unfinished housing estates and high levels of residential vacancies;
- Changes to how social and affordable housing is provided;

- New and planned infrastructural developments;
- Balancing the provision of renewable energy resources against the protection of the environment;
- Economic uncertainty;
- Increased unemployment and promoting economic development and rural economic diversification;
- Declining levels of retail activity;
- Limiting retail vacancy and maintaining vibrant town and village centres;
- Managing flood risk;
- Adaptation to climate change;
- Reduce the linguistic erosion of Irish speaking areas.

1.6 Vision for County Galway

“Enhance the quality of life of the people of Galway and maintain the County as a uniquely attractive place in which to live, work, invest and visit, harnessing the potential of the County’s competitive advantages in a sustainable and environmentally sensitive manner.”

1.7 Strategic Aims of the Plan

Strategic Aims

Strategic Aim 1 – Promote Regional Development

Promote regional development and growth through harnessing the economic and employment potential of the competitive advantages of County Galway such as its strategic location, quality of life, landscape, heritage and natural resources, in a sustainable and environmentally sensitive manner.

Strategic Aim 2 – Environmental Protection

Afford suitable protection to the environment and natural resources of the County and ensure the fulfilment of environmental responsibilities.

Strategic Aim 3 – Living Landscapes

Recognise the importance of living landscapes where people live, work, visit and enjoy while ensuring they are managed in a sustainable and appropriate manner.

Strategic Aim 4 – Balanced Urban and Rural Areas

Prioritise development within the Hub town of Tuam, the Galway Metropolitan Area, Ballinasloe, the key towns and smaller towns, villages and settlements within the County, while supporting the role of the rural area in sustaining the rural based economy.

Strategic Aim 5 – Inclusive Communities

Encourage and support the development of inclusive communities which engage and include all members of society facilitating equal physical, social and cultural access and integration.

Strategic Aim 6 – Integrated Development

Ensure a more sustainable and integrated concept of development with regard to land use, transportation, water services, energy supply and waste management over the lifetime of the plan.

Strategic Aim 7 – Sustainable Transportation

Minimise travel demand and promote the increase of sustainable mobility throughout the County.

Strategic Aim 8 – An Ghaeltacht

Promote An Ghaeltacht as an Irish speaking community, recognising its importance locally, nationally and internationally and endeavour to enhance, sustain and protect the remaining Irish speaking communities of An Ghaeltacht, where possible.

Strategic Aim 9 – Infrastructural Projects

Facilitate the development of infrastructural projects, which will underpin sustainable development throughout the County and region during the plan period.

Strategic Aim 10 – Heritage

Enhance and protect the built heritage and natural environment, including buildings, archaeology, landscape and biodiversity, within the County.

Strategic Aim 11 – Climate Change Adaptation

Engage in efforts to limit the human induced causes of climate change and take account of climate change in planning and delivering work programmes. Engage in efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change and integrate climate change considerations in planning and delivering work programmes.

1.8 Monitoring and Implementation

It is important for a plan to be monitored in order to assess its effectiveness and to ensure the implementation of the objectives set out within the County Development Plan. Section 15 (1) and (2) of the *Planning and Development Act, 2000* (as amended) provides a statutory requirement for the Planning Authority to take such steps within its powers, as may be necessary, for securing the objectives of the Development Plan. In this regard, not more than 2 years after the making of a Development Plan, the Chief Executive is obliged to give a report to the members of the authority on the progress achieved in securing the objectives of the Development Plan. Monitoring and implementation of the County Development Plan is dealt with in Chapter 12 of this plan.

1.9 Statement Demonstrating Objectives of the Galway County Development Plan are Consistent with Conservation of the Environment

Section 10 (1D) of the *Planning and Development Act, 2000* (as amended), requires that the written statement of the County Development Plan includes a separate statement which demonstrates that the development objectives in the Development Plan are consistent as far as practicable, with the protection and conservation of the environment.

The *Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021* sets out a vision for the County which is to “enhance the quality of life of the people of Galway and maintain the County as a uniquely attractive place in which to live, work, invest and visit, harnessing the potential of the County’s competitive advantages in a sustainable and environmentally sensitive manner”. Section 1.7 of the plan outlines eleven strategic aims of the plan to help realise the vision and which underpin the objectives throughout the plan. These include:

- Promoting regional development;
- Protecting the environment;
- Recognising the importance of living landscapes;
- Balancing urban and rural development;
- Encouraging and supporting inclusive communities;
- Ensuring a more sustainable and integrated concept of development;
- Minimising travel demand and promoting the increase of sustainable mobility;
- Promoting An Ghaeltacht as an Irish speaking community;
- Facilitating the development of identified infrastructural projects;
- Enhancing and protecting the built heritage and natural environment, including buildings, archaeology, landscape and biodiversity;
- Engaging in efforts to limit the human induced causes of climate change and adaptation to address the impacts and opportunities resulting from climate change.

The principle of sustainable development is a major component of the plan which is reflected throughout the policies and objectives in the document, with sustainable development described as a pattern of resource use that aims to meet human needs while respecting the environment, so that these needs can be met not only in the present, but in the indefinite future. Key considerations in the plan which underpin the principle of sustainable development are the protection of the natural environment, the conservation of natural resources, promoting renewable energy, reducing reliance on fossil fuels, encouraging reduction in travel demand, facilitating environmentally friendly patterns of development, energy efficiency and high quality designs. The Core Strategy further establishes a transparent evidence-based strategy for the sustainable spatial development of the County, while the Preferred Development Option for the County seeks to provide for an enhanced quality of life for all citizens in County Galway, based on high quality, sustainable residential communities, developed in tandem with social infrastructure and the provision of a pleasant working and recreational environment for all.

The plan also includes detailed sections with associated policies and objectives with regard to climate change and flooding (Chapter 8), sustainable transportation (Chapter 5), water/wastewater and waste management (Chapter 6), environmental management, natural heritage and biodiversity (Chapter 9). The objectives of the plan have also been framed to promote compliance with the Water Framework Directive (and associated River Basin Management Plans), the Groundwater Directive, Habitats Directive, Shellfish Waters Directive, Marine Strategy Framework Directive and Nitrates Directive, with the other policies and objectives of the plan formed to ensure the conservation of the environment.

In addition, the plan has been subjected to a full Strategic Environmental Assessment and a full Appropriate Assessment, which deemed that the plan if implemented would not have a significant effect on the environment or on a designated site. The SEA and AA are iterative processes and the findings from these processes have been fully integrated into the objectives and policies in the plan, resulting in policies and objectives which afford a high level of protection to the environment and Natura 2000 sites.

Having regard to the foregoing, it is considered that the objectives of the *Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021* are consistent as far as practicable, with the protection and conservation of the environment.



1.10 Format of the Plan

The County Development Plan has been structured into 13 main chapters as outlined below:

Chapter 1	This chapter sets out an introduction to the County Development Plan, details the legislative background and requirements, examines the policy and guidance that has informed the plan and outlines the format of the document. It also provides a descriptive profile of the County, highlights the main planning issues and sets out a vision for and the strategic aims of the plan, referring also to the monitoring and implementation programme that should be undertaken.
Chapter 2	This chapter sets out the overarching Spatial Strategy of the County, references the development options considered for the growth and details the preferred development option chosen. It details the Core Strategy, including the statutorily required Map and Core Strategy Table and sets out the application of regional population targets to the Core Strategy and the settlement hierarchy determined as part of the Spatial Strategy. Finally, it also outlines the policies and objectives in relation to the Core and Settlement Strategy for the County.

<p>Chapter 3</p>	<p>This chapter sets out the contextual analysis of urban and rural housing. The Council has a dual role in relation to housing in the County, through its statutory powers as a Planning Authority it ensures that sufficient land is zoned to meet the projected housing requirements and through its Housing role it provides residential units for households in need of accommodation who cannot provide such accommodation through their own resources. This chapter outlines the different types of housing that are required for the changing needs of individuals, with objectives that ensure that the provision of social and specialist housing for individuals/groups is addressed. In relation to urban areas there is an analysis of the appropriate locations for new residential developments that are responsive to their site context and are in keeping with the character, amenity, heritage and landscape of the area. In relation to rural areas, analysis is provided on the different rural types within the County and as a result there are specific objective responses to facilitate and manage new single houses in the countryside, while supporting the sustainable re-use of the existing housing stock within the County.</p>
<p>Chapter 4</p>	<p>This chapter provides a basis to enable the County to prosper economically in a balanced manner into the future. It emphasises the County's competitive advantage and strategic location in a regional, national and international context. Furthermore, it endeavours in the interests of proper planning and sustainable development to appropriately synchronise economic development and land use planning. The chapter also promotes the tourism resources and prowess of the County and simultaneously acknowledges the obligation of stakeholders to safeguard its integrity. In relation to retail, the importance of vibrant towns, villages and communities is recognised and mechanisms are incorporated in the chapter to augment the retail industry in the County.</p>
<p>Chapter 5</p>	<p>This chapter details an integrated approach to transportation and land use planning and builds on the priority access infrastructure noted within the <i>Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022</i>. It also details the Priority Transportation Infrastructure Projects for County Galway and the policies and objectives that support the transportation strategy as outlined within this chapter.</p>
<p>Chapter 6</p>	<p>This chapter outlines the progress that has been made to date in implementing the current Irish Water's <i>Proposed Capital Investment Plan 2014-2016</i>. It also schedules the water and waste water infrastructure projects that are envisaged to be completed in the County over the lifetime of the plan. Furthermore, the chapter stresses the importance associated with conserving water, protecting water sources through adherence with the relevant River Basin Management Plans and working in partnership with Irish Water going forward. In relation to waste management, the emphasis is on minimisation and therefore there is an onus on all stakeholders in the County to reduce, reuse and recycle. When considering quarries and associated developments, the Council will have regard to the protection of residential and natural amenities, the prevention of pollution and the safeguarding of aquifers and groundwater.</p>

Chapter 7	This chapter outlines the importance of having high quality energy and communication infrastructure in order for County Galway to progress in the context of social and economic development. It also outlines the importance of supporting the development of renewable energy sources in the interest of delivering on the <i>National Climate Change Strategy</i> and in providing security of energy supply throughout the County and region. The policies and objectives in this chapter support this approach.
Chapter 8	This chapter sets out the Council's approach to address the effects of climate change including the risks from flooding within County Galway. A Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (Stage 1 SFRA) has been undertaken and prepared in accordance with <i>The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities</i> (2009) as part of this County Development Plan and is available as a support document to the plan. The policies and objectives outlined in this chapter are in accordance with the <i>Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009</i> and recommendations stemming from the SFRA.
Chapter 9	This chapter provides for a strategic context in relation to heritage, landscape and environmental management. It sets out general heritage policies as well as the legislative context to built heritage including the architectural heritage, protected structures, architectural conservation areas, vernacular architecture, energy efficiency, traditional built structures, designed landscapes and archaeological heritage. This chapter also contains architectural and archaeological heritage policies and objectives. The natural heritage and biodiversity section of the chapter provides a contextual overview of the natural heritage and biodiversity of the County and the legislative framework as well as supporting policies and objectives. The landscape character and important focal points and views are also dealt with in the chapter with accompanying policies and objectives.
Chapter 10	This chapter provides an overarching introduction and information on the cultural heritage and community identity of the County. It outlines the policies and objectives relating to An Ghaeltacht, the islands, community facilities and services, recreation and amenity, public rights of way, and social inclusion and universal access.
Chapter 11	This chapter promotes the sustainable development potential of the County on land and sea. It acknowledges the importance of our indigenous agri-food, fisheries, marine resources and forestry industry and the role they play as key enablers in rural development/diversification and within the rural economy at a County and regional level.
Chapter 12	This chapter provides details on monitoring and implementation of the plan to assess its effectiveness and to ensure the implementation of the objectives set out within the County Development Plan.

Chapter 13

When making a Development Plan, the *Planning and Development Act, 2000* (as amended) requires Planning Authorities to consider the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. To achieve sustainable development, economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system and in the implementation of the plan. The Development Management Standards and Guidelines as set out within this chapter seek to promote, guide and enforce high standards of development, quality in urban and rural areas throughout the County, in a sustainable and equitable manner.

Supporting documents include the Habitats Directive Assessment - Natura Impact Report, the Strategic Environmental Assessment - Environmental Report and the Stage 1 - Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for County Galway which are all available separate to the plan.





Spatial Strategy, Core & Settlement Strategy

**Subject to Variation
No.1-See separate
link(Adopted 24th
April 2017)**

2.1 Background

In its simplest terms the County Development Plan's Spatial Strategy is the broad spatial distribution of people and activities, which sets the framework for the sustainable development of Galway into the future. The Spatial Strategy is determined by examining a range of potential development options for the County, arriving at the most appropriate outcome which will assist in delivering the Strategic Aims, as outlined in Chapter 1.

2.2 Spatial Strategy

In setting the framework for the sustainable development of the County into the future, the Spatial Strategy must take account of the regional population targets set out in the Regional Planning Guidelines and determine how best to allocate this population throughout the County, over the lifetime of the plan. In this regard, a number of development options were examined so as to ascertain which option would deliver most effectively on the vision for County Galway and the Strategic Aims of the Plan.

2.2.1 Development Options

A number of potential development options are listed hereunder, which were framed having regard to a range of considerations including the size of the settlements within the County, population and growth trends, regional population allocations, environmental sensitivities and the availability of services. The options are elaborated on and appropriately assessed as part of the Environmental Report of the SEA of the Plan. They include **a)** concentrating growth in urban areas and settlements, **b)** focusing growth predominantly into the Hub town of Tuam, **c)** promoting dispersed development throughout the County and finally **d)** developing the Hub town of Tuam, supporting the Gateway and key towns while encouraging the development of other settlement centres and appropriate development in the rural areas.

2.2.2 Preferred Development Options

The County's Spatial Strategy builds on the principles established in the previous *Galway County Development Plan 2009-2015*, and the frameworks provided by the *National Spatial Strategy* and the *Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region 2010-2022*.

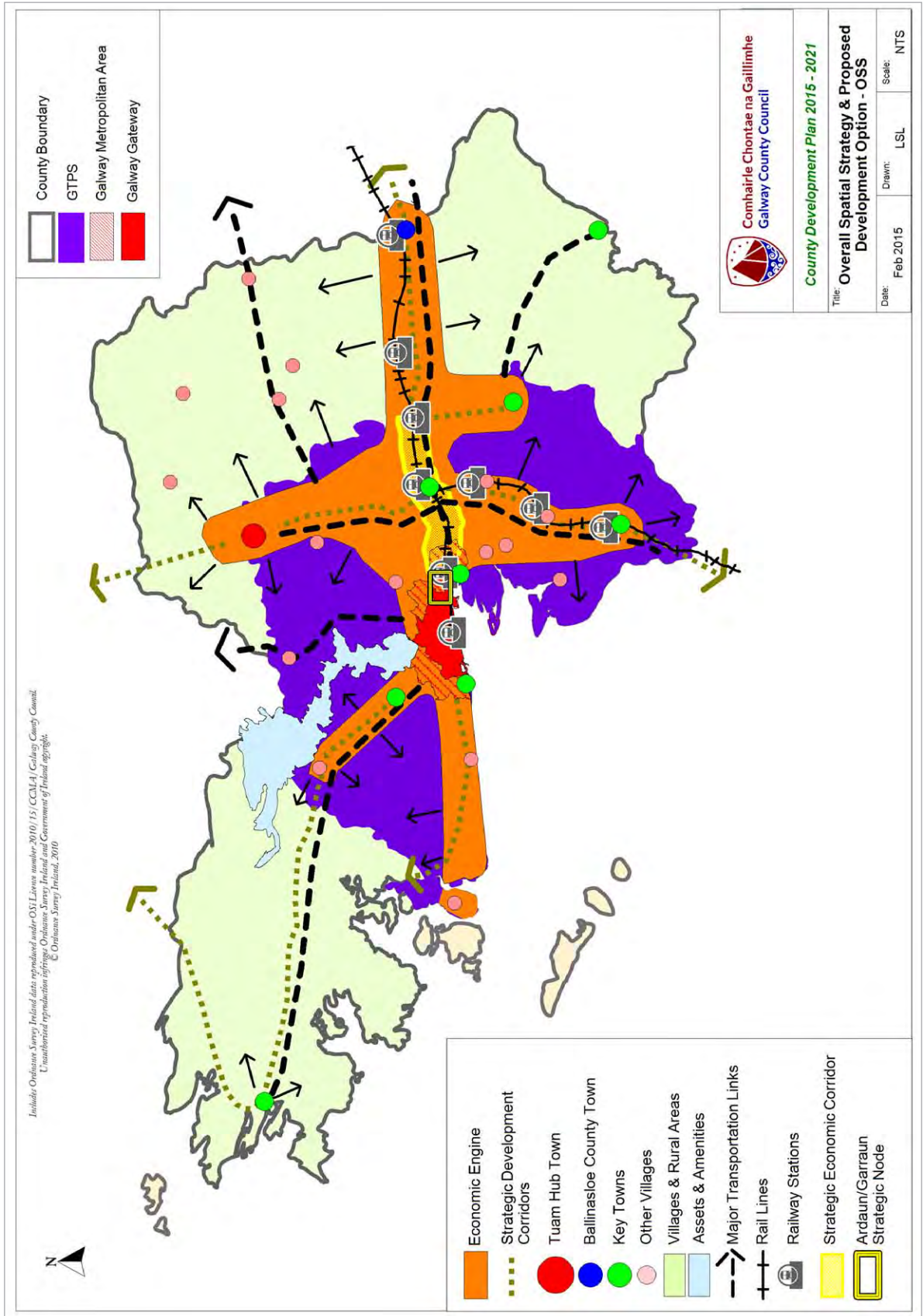
The preferred option is primarily a structured approach to the future development of the County, building strong urban centres, facilitating job creation and regeneration, supporting the rural economy and carefully managing the County's environmental, heritage and natural assets, while avoiding exacerbation of flood risk.

The preferred development option supports the nearby Gateway of Galway City and recognises the associated Galway Metropolitan Area, as referenced in the Regional Planning Guidelines, which includes the City area and a number of adjoining Electoral Divisions in the County which are inextricably linked to and function as part of the Gateway. This option focuses on fostering critical mass in the Hub town of Tuam to complement the Gateway and promote the development of the key towns and smaller villages along strategic development corridors, which it is anticipated will energise the surrounding rural areas within the County. While the strategic development corridors focus on the main established, and planned, transportation routes within the County including road and rail, simultaneously a greater emphasis shall be placed on the integration of land use and transportation generally, reducing travel distance and realising modal shift to more sustainable transportation options.

This approach continues with the concept of a Strategic Economic Corridor to the east of Galway City, between Oranmore and Attymon, an area which has easy access and a high concentration of established and valuable infrastructure. This area has the potential to attract significant levels of investment and stimulate economic development and employment creation, performing a number of economic functions to support both the City, County and broader region. However, in addition to progressing the concept of the economic corridor, sustaining the buoyancy of the existing economic centres throughout the County, while augmenting the tourism base and supporting sustainable rural-resourced enterprise, is critical to ensuring a balanced approach to the further development of the County.

The preferred development option also proposes to pursue the main elements of the *Galway Transportation and Planning Study (GTPS)*, as adopted by both Galway City and County in 2003. The GTPS study area included Galway City and its hinterland, which is an area within an approximate 30km radius of the City. The recommendations of the study included both settlement and transportation options. It proposed consolidating development within Galway City and County within a planned corridor for expansion to the east, generally known as the Ardaun and Garraun area. It also focused on developing the main county towns within Galway's catchment, linking to Galway City via a county-based, fixed route, radial network. It also proposed to continue with the careful management of the *Galway Transportation and Planning Study (GTPS)* area. This is the area of the County which experienced a rapid pace of growth during the prosperous years of the Celtic Tiger, resulting in high levels of single house development and increasing trends of dependency on the private car. Finally, in broader terms, the preferred development option seeks to provide for an enhanced quality of life for all citizens in County Galway, based on high quality sustainable residential communities, developed in tandem with social infrastructure and the provision of a pleasant working and recreational environment for all.





2.3 Development Strategy Objectives

Development Strategy Objectives

Objective DS 1 – Development Strategy

It is the overarching objective of Galway County Council to support and facilitate the sustainable development of County Galway in line with the preferred development strategy option:

Option 4 – To Develop the Hub Town of Tuam, Supporting the Gateway and Key Towns while Encouraging the Development of Other Settlement Centres and Appropriate Development in Rural Areas, which will allow County Galway to develop in a manner that maintains and enhances the quality of life of local communities, promotes opportunities for economic development, sustainable transport options, social integration, and protects the cultural, built, natural heritage and environment while also complying with relevant statutory requirements.

Objective DS 2 – Galway Transportation and Planning Study Area (GTPS)

- a) Continue to recognise the defined Galway Transport and Planning Study Area, the commuter zone of Galway City, which requires careful management of growth and strong policies to shape and influence this growth in a sustainable manner;
- b) Support a review of the *Galway Transportation and Planning Study* during the lifetime of the plan, in co-operation with Galway City Council. Consideration of the inclusion of a Strategic Transport Assessment shall form part of this review.

Objective DS 3 – Integrated Land Use and Sustainable Transportation

Integrate land use planning and sustainable transportation planning, promote the consolidation of development, encourage sustainable travel patterns by reducing the need to travel particularly by private transport, while prioritising walking, cycling and public transport.

Objective DS 4 – Supporting and Securing Investment

Galway County Council shall seek to secure investment or support investment, as appropriate, in the necessary infrastructure to pursue the Spatial, Core and Settlement Strategies as set out in this plan.

Objective DS 5 – Protection and Management of the Assets of the County

Protect and manage the assets that contribute to the unique visual and environmental character and sense of identity of County Galway, and which underpin tourism, heritage, biodiversity and quality of life.

Objective DS 6 – Natura 2000 Network and Habitats Directive Assessment

Protect European sites that form part of the Natura 2000 network (including Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation) in accordance with the requirements in the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), EU Birds Directive (2009/147/EC), the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010, the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI No.477 of 2011) (and any subsequent amendments or updated legislation) and having due regard to the guidance in the Appropriate Assessment Guidelines 2010 (and any updated or subsequent guidance). 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, Screening for Appropriate Assessment, and/or a Habitats Directive Assessment where necessary, that:

- a) The plan or project will not give rise to significant adverse direct, indirect or secondary effects on the integrity of any European site (either individually or in combination with other plans or projects); or
- b) The plan or project will have significant adverse effects on the integrity of any European site (that does not host a priority natural habitat type/and or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of Natura 2000; or
- c) The plan or project will have a significant adverse effect on the integrity of any European site (that hosts a natural habitat type and/or a priority species) but there are no alternative solutions and the plan or project must nevertheless be carried out for imperative reasons for overriding public interest, restricted to reasons of human health or public safety, to beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment or, further to an opinion from the Commission, to other imperative reasons of overriding public interest. In this case, it will be a requirement to follow procedures set out in legislation and agree and undertake all compensatory measures necessary to ensure the protection of the overall coherence of Natura 2000 sites.

Objective DS 7 – Flood Risk Management and Assessment

Ensure that proposals for developments located within identified or potential flood risk areas, or which may exacerbate the risk of flooding elsewhere, are assessed in accordance with the provisions of the Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009 (or any updated/superseding document) the relevant policies, objectives and guidelines within this plan and shall also take account of the National CFRAM Programme Flood Hazard Mapping and Flood Risk Management Plans when they become available.

Objective DS 8 – Climate Change

Galway County Council shall support the *National Climate Change Strategy* and follow on document *National Climate Change Adaptation Framework Building Resilience to Climate Change 2012*, on an ongoing basis through implementation of supporting objectives in this plan, particularly those supporting the use of alternative and renewable energy sources, sustainable transport, air quality, biodiversity, green infrastructure, coastal zone management, flooding and soil erosion.

Objective DS 9 – Projects/Associated Improvement Works/Infrastructure and Appropriate Assessment

Ensure that proposed projects and any associated improvement works or associated infrastructure relating to renewable energy projects; water supply and abstraction; wastewater and discharges; flood alleviation and prevention; roads, power lines and telecommunications; and amenity and recreation provision are subject to Appropriate Assessment where relevant.

Objective DS 10 – Impacts of Developments on Protected Sites

Have regard to any impacts of development on or near existing and proposed Natural Heritage Areas, Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation, Nature Reserves, Ramsar Sites, Wildfowl Sanctuaries, Salmonoid Waters, refuges for flora and fauna, Conamara National Park, shellfish waters, freshwater pearl mussel catchments and any other designated sites including future designations.

Objective DS 11 – Strategic Development Corridors

Co-ordinate new growth within the key towns, villages and settlements along the strategic development corridors throughout the County in order to create more sustainable development patterns and to optimise public and private investment made within the County and support the appropriate development of the Strategic Economic Corridors.

Objective DS 12 – Service Led Development

Development shall only be permitted where there is satisfactory water and wastewater provision to service same, either existing or to be provided by the applicant in tandem with the development.

Objective DS 13 – SEA Monitoring of the Plan

Carry out SEA monitoring of the plan to ensure that any potential significant environmental effects of implementing the plan are identified and can be addressed accordingly.

2.4 Core Strategy

The Core Strategy is an integral component of the Spatial Strategy. It transposes the population targets for Galway set out in the Regional Planning Guidelines and allocates them throughout the County, which in turn determines the Settlement Hierarchy and provides a rationale for the amount and location of land proposed to be zoned.

The preparation of a Core Strategy as part of the County Development Plan process is a statutory requirement under the *Planning and Development Act, 2000* (as amended), establishing a transparent evidence-based strategy for the sustainable spatial development of the County. It is also a mechanism to demonstrate that the objectives of the Development Plan are consistent with national and regional development objectives as set out in the National Spatial Strategy and the Regional Planning Guidelines.

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS FOR THE CORE STRATEGY

The Planning and Development Act requires the Core Strategy to:

- Provide relevant information to demonstrate that the Development Plan and the Housing Strategy are consistent with the National Spatial Strategy and Regional Planning Guidelines.
- Take account of any policies of the Minister in relation to population targets.
- Quantify the requirements for zoning of lands for residential and or a mix of residential and other uses and quantify the housing units to be included in the area.
- Demonstrate how the zoning proposals accord with national policy and that development will take place on a phased basis.
- Demonstrate that in setting out objectives regarding retail development in the plan, the Planning Authority has had regard to any Ministerial guidelines that relate to retail.
- Set out a settlement hierarchy.
- Include a diagrammatic type Core Strategy Map/visual representation, depicting the above information.
- Include a Core Strategy Table, summarising the key statistics in the Core Strategy regarding the distribution of future population and housing and its alignment with the Regional Planning Guidelines.

Core Aims of the Core Strategy

- Build on the regional level linkages between County Galway, the Gateway and other parts of the West Region by supporting the implementation of the regional spatial strategy, as set out in the West Regional Planning Guidelines. The regional spatial strategy aims to develop the Galway Gateway, the Tuam Hub and Castlebar-Ballina Linked Hub, supported by the development of the Athlone Gateway and key towns, encouraging the development of other settlement centres and appropriate development in the rural areas of the region;
- Provide for the growth of the County towards a target population of up to 198,500 persons by 2022, as set out in the *Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region 2010-2022* and to distribute that part of the population growth anticipated up to 2021, in line with the Settlement Strategy and Hierarchy set out in this plan;
- Focus a greater growth in the Hub town of Tuam, the key towns, lower tier other towns and villages in a sequential manner, recognising the role that new infrastructure and public transport links will play in their future, while maintaining the viability of rural communities in the hinterlands of these towns and villages;
- Ensure a high level of environmental protection in the implementation of the Core Strategy and strategic aims and objectives of the plan.

2.4.1 Consistency with National Spatial Strategy and Regional Planning Guidelines

In broad terms, the key objectives of the *National Spatial Strategy* and the *Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region 2010-2022* with which the County Development Plan should align are as follows:

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES OF THE NSS & RPG'S

- Providing for population growth in compliance with regional population targets.
- Promoting the development of the West region and notably for Galway the Galway City Gateway and Hub town of Tuam, linking the capabilities of the Gateway to other areas.
- Supporting the complementary roles for medium sized towns, smaller towns and villages as a focus for economic and social activity and residential development.
- Sustaining vibrant and diversified rural areas and identifying different types of rural areas with the need for differing responses to appropriate circumstances.
- Revitalising the West based on diversification of an economy previously centred on agriculture, and recognising the economic potential based in tourism, marine and natural resources and certain types of enterprise development.
- Meeting the infrastructural requirements of the region for now and into the future.
- Recognising that a high quality environment is a prerequisite for economic success, social cohesion and sustainable development.
- Enhancing the quality of life for all citizens and strengthening and protecting the cultural heritage of the An Ghaeltacht.
- Strengthening linkages in terms of good transport, communications and energy networks to enable areas to play to their strengths.
- Facilitating and providing integrated access infrastructure and sustainable transport, promoting public transport, minimising travel demand, maximising safety and enabling the efficient movement of goods and people.
- Promoting co-operation with other regions to develop economic corridors that accelerate overall regional growth.

2.4.2 Compliance with National and Regional Population Targets

The Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) for the West Region have given effect to national population targets assigned by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, by designating a maximum target at County level and a minimum target at Hub level. The County Development Plan must be consistent with the population targets set out in the RPGs, which is the starting point of the Core Strategy population allocation among the various settlements within the County.

Population Targets	West Region	Galway County	Tuam Hub
2010	442,200	170,100	7,600
2016	484,700	185,860	8,600
2022	521,400	198,500	9,500
Target Increase 2010-2022:	79,200	28,400	1,900

Table 2.1: West Region Population Targets (Source: Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022)

Area	Population Census 2011
West Region	445,356
Galway County	175,124
Tuam	8,242 (Includes Tuam & Environs)

Table 2.2: Census Population Figures (Source: Census 2011)

2.4.3 Analysis of Regional Population Figures

According to Census data analysis, the population of the West Region grew by 65,059 during the nine year period between 2002 and 2011, which equates to an average population increase of 7,229 per annum. The Regional Planning Guidelines regional population growth target of 79,200 over the period 2010 to 2022 would deliver an average population increase of 6,600 each year, however, the RPGs annual growth rate target from 2010-2016 is 7,083 and from 2016-2022 is 6,117. The overall trend to date has been a positively increasing population; with the actual increase from the 2010 target to the 2011 Census figure being 3,156 or 45% of the annual targeted growth for the period 2010-2016.

The RPG population target for the West Region in 2010 was 442,200. When the average annual growth from 2002-2011 of 7,229 is added to this figure of 442,200, a figure of 449,429 emerges for 2011, which is slightly higher than the actual 2011 Census population figure for the West Region, which was 445,356. County Galway is progressing well towards the RPG 2016 target, as the average annual growth rate anticipated for County Galway is 2,627 with the actual growth rate from County Galway for 2010 to 2011, was almost double this figure at 5,024.

The Central Statistics Office (CSO) is preparing national population forecasts based on the Census 2011 results. Once these are prepared, it is anticipated that the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government will prepare revised population targets for the Regional Authority Areas, Gateways and Hubs which will feed into the next review of the Regional Planning Guidelines. It is expected however, that significant changes to population targets will not result as the population targets in the West Region continue to provide a realistic basis for the development of the region and for the Core Strategy for County Galway, for the period 2015 to 2021.

2.4.4 Analysis of County Population Figures

The population of the administrative area of County Galway increased from 143,245 in 2002 to 175,124 persons in 2011. The most comparable figures between actual population and targets are the 2011 Census Figures of 175,124 and the stated 2010 RPG estimates of 170,100, a difference of 5,024. At County level the population increased by 31,879 from 2002 to 2011, which is an average annual increase of 3,542 persons per annum. The RPG population target for the period 2010 to 2016 is 15,760, equating to an average annual growth of 2,627 persons per annum. Therefore the 2011 population figures could have reached 173,642 or 172,727 if these trends were followed, both of which were below the actual 2011 Census figure of 175,124, a difference of 1,482 or 2,397 persons respectively. As previously referred to, the 2011 Annual Report of the West Regional Authority indicated that County Galway is in line to achieve its 2016 RPG targets.

Population Figures	Galway County	Tuam (& Environs)
2002 Census	143,245	5,947
2006 Census	159,256	6,885
2010 RPG Estimates	170,100	7,600
2011 Census	175,124	8,242
2016 RPG Target	185,860	8,600
2022 RPG Target	198,500	9,500

Table 2.3: Census Population Figures & RPG Population Targets

(Source: Census 2002, 2006, 2011 & Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region 2010-2022)

2.4.5 Analysis of Tuam Hub Figures

The only other specific population target in the RPGs that relates to the administrative area of County Galway is that for the Hub Town of Tuam. When an analysis of these figures is undertaken, similar to that applied to the County figures above, it highlights actual population figures compared to target population figures are increasing at a higher than anticipated rate.

The population of Tuam increased from 5,947 in 2002 to 8,242 persons in 2011, an increase of 2,295 persons which is an average annual increase of 255 persons, per annum. The RPG population target for Tuam for the period 2010 to 2016 is 1,000 persons, equating to an estimated average annual growth of 167 persons per annum. Therefore the 2011 population figures could have reached 7,855 or 7,767 if these trends continued, both of which were less than the actual 2011 Census figure of 8,242, a difference of 387 or 475 respectively. The Census 2011 population figures for Tuam were 8,242 as compared to the RPG 2010 estimates of 7,600. Notwithstanding the higher than anticipated population of Tuam, of note is that the regional allocation figures for Tuam are based on minimum population targets, given its status as a Hub Town, and therefore the additional population can be accommodated once the overall population growth for the County remains within the maximum County targets set by the RPGs.

2.4.6 Population Allocation

The County Development Plan 2009-2015 provided for a maximum population target of 15,760 to the period 2016, through its Core Strategy. This target was to be achieved by accommodating housing for 10,227 persons on zoned land within the urban areas of the County and by accommodating 5,533 persons in other settlements and the rural countryside. The Regional Planning Guidelines provide a maximum county target population up to the period 2022, which is 198,500 persons, however as this County Development Plan timeframe runs from 2015-2021, adjustments need to be made to allow for the extra year. This methodology has been devised in consultation with the West Regional Authority, who were satisfied with the approach taken. The following table demonstrates how the Planning Authority arrived at the population allocations that will be included in the current Core Strategy Table.

Population Figures	Population Adjustment Calculations
RPG Population Allocation 2010-2016 (6 years)	Estimates for 2010 = 170,100 Estimates for 2016 = 185,860 (185,860 – 170,100) = 15,760 15,760 / 6 = 2,626.6 Persons Average annual increase per annum
RPG Population Allocation 2016-2022	Estimates for 2016 = 185,860 Estimates for 2022 = 198,500 (198,500 – 185,860) = 12,640 12,640 / 6 = 2,106.6 Persons Average annual increase per annum
County Development Plan 2015-2021 = 6 Years	Years 2015-2016 = 2,626.6 persons 2016-2017 = 2,106.6 persons 2017-2018 = 2,106.6 2018-2019 = 2,106.6 2019-2020 = 2,106.6 2020-2021 = 2,106.6 2016-2021 = 2,626.6 + 5(2,106.6) =13,159.6
Core Strategy Population Allocation for 2015-2021	13,160 persons

Table 2.4: Core Strategy Population Allocation Calculations 2015-2021

2.4.7 Application of the Core Strategy Population Allocations

The Core Strategy sets out the relevant figures for the population targets and the associated housing land requirement for the various urban areas listed in the Core Strategy Table at the end of this chapter. The housing land requirement is reflected through the quantum of zoned lands which facilitate residential development. *The Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021* does not contain detailed zoning for the settlements, as zoning for the various towns and villages is specifically addressed in the relevant Local Area Plans, as appropriate, which are generally in place for all towns with a population over 1500 persons. The Core Strategy must also set out how it is proposed to address the issue of any over-zoning in the Local Area Plans in place. In this regard, the approach assumed is that of phased sequential development and the re-zoning of lands as appropriate, in order to address any over-zoning and environmental constraints identified. This will ensure that the quantum of zoned lands that is available for development remains within the allocation outlined under the Core Strategy and that the Local Area Plans are consistent with the County Development Plan. This approach will also ensure that the urban settlements are consolidated by keeping them as physically compact as possible, which in turn reduces travel demand, better integrates land use and transportation options, allowing the promotion of more sustainable transportation modes.

2.4.8 The Core Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy

The Core Strategy is statutorily required to provide for a Settlement Hierarchy which forms the basis of the Spatial Strategy for the County. The settlement hierarchy means a rank assigned to a town based on an assessment by the Planning Authority of the proposed function, role and the potential for economic and social development of the town. The Settlement Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy are dealt with in detail in Section 2.6, which also provides details on the rural areas of the County in respect of which the Ministerial Planning Guidelines *Sustainable Rural Housing-Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2005) apply.

2.4.9 Extant Permissions and Unfinished Housing Estates

In preparing the Core Strategy, an analysis of extant permissions on residential lands within Tiers 1, 2, 3 and 4 occurred. This analysis showed that the majority of units of extant permissions relate to R1 (Phase 1) zonings within the settlements that have live Local Area Plans. Notwithstanding the foregoing, there is a degree of uncertainty associated with extant permissions along with a number of wide-ranging variables to consider. A number of these permissions may expire prior to the adoption of this plan, some may receive an extension of duration pursuant to Section 42 of the *Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended)*, some may not be constructed owing to issues of viability and non-compliance with newly introduced building regulations, while on the other hand some may well be developed. It is not anticipated that most extant permissions will be developed and or will be subject to revised planning applications. The position with regard to all such developments will be known with more certainty at the next review of the Local Area Plans and will be fully addressed at such a review. The figures relating to extant permissions are outlined below in Table 2.5. Unfinished estates within the County are currently being addressed through the implementation of the national guidelines *Managing and Resolving Unfinished Housing Developments Guidance* (DoECLG, 2011) and through the allocation of monies from the National Site Resolution Fund. Similar to the extant permissions, the final outcome of unfinished units is uncertain given the various stages of construction of the units, the various stakeholders involved and whether the units will be completed, sold, occupied or demolished. It is considered that only units complete and vacant will be of supply benefit over the plan period and according to the most recent figures available, this extends to a total of 295 units within the County. It is also difficult to appropriately gauge current demand for such units in the market, where location is a key desirability factor. This issue will be addressed progressively as information becomes available and the next review of the Local Area Plans will provide an opportunity to incorporate all available information at that time. It should be noted that Unfinished Estates come under the heading of extant permissions and as noted above the majority of these are in the Phase 1 zoned lands for residential purposes. Table 2.5 details the unfinished estates data.



Town	Extant Units on R1 (Or Equivalent)	Extant Units on R2 (Or Equivalent)
Tuam	86	64
Ballinasloe	39 (Phase1) & 0 (Phase2)	271 (Phase 1) & 26 (Phase2)
Loughrea	29	76
Oranmore/ Garraun	211	68
Athenry	293	100
Gort	24	282
Clifden	0	1
Bearna	32	11 (R2+OV+IV Zonings)
Portumna	178	0 (42 Units on Mixed Use Zone)
Maigh Cuilinn	157	47
Baile Chláir	6	0
Ardaun	-	-
Oughterard	5	0
Headford	185	16
An Cheathrú Rua	0	1
Craughwell	59	0
An Spidéal	0	2
TOTAL:	1,307	965

Table 2.5: Number of Units Relating to Extant Permissions in Local Area Plan Settlements

2.4.10 Vacancy Rates and Residential Yield on Mixed Use Zonings

Vacancy Rates

The most recent Census indicates that the average residential vacancy rate for County Galway is 19.4%, equating to a figure of 15,066 units of which 3,274 are classified as vacant holiday homes. Having regard to this high level of vacant units, the Core Strategy Table has factored vacancy into its calculations, in so far as it can. It applies and includes the 19.4% vacancy rate in the figures presented therein to arrive at the figures in Column 7 in the Table entitled *Housing Units on Residential Zoned Lands 100% Zoning*, and has therefore influenced the remainder of figures within the table. It is acknowledged that vacant units contribute to supply and for this reason it has been considered alongside future demand requirements. This vacancy rate has also informed the Housing Strategy and figures contained therein. The approach taken reflects access to best available datasets from the CSO, which presently inhibits more detailed analysis of holiday/second homes. It should be noted that the vacancy rate applied does not take account of the usual frictional vacancy rate which would result in a lesser rate than that applied in the calculations in the Core Strategy Table.

Residential Yield on Mixed Use Zonings

An analysis of planning histories in mixed use zones and/or town centre zones was carried out for the larger settlements. The pattern of development experienced in Galway towns over an extended period does not suggest that the mixed use town centre zone provides residential developments of any significance. During the period of economic growth a number of town centre developments comprising commercial and residential uses were permitted and while some of the smaller proposals have been developed, the majority of the larger developments have not commenced. Given the current economic climate and the type of developments in question, it is not anticipated that these will progress.

2.4.11 Household Size and Density Specifications

The household sizes used in the calculations of the Core Strategy are 2.4 for Tuam and 2.6 for the remainder of the County. These are the same household sizes used in the Core Strategy of the *Galway County Development Plan 2009-2015* and were originally provided by the *Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region*. Density specifications are typically used to manage development intensity and also to ensure that insufficient densities are not permitted which can compromise existing services, minimise the choice of housing options and undermine the viability of sustainable transportation options. Encouraging higher densities in appropriate locations capitalises on investment in existing infrastructure, supports employment, helps create sustainable and inclusive communities and encourages the preservation of the surrounding rural character and agricultural land uses. In relation to density and the Core Strategy, the Core Strategy Table provides for indicative density assumptions for the purposes of calculating the development land requirements for the various settlements listed within the table. In addition, Local Area Plans prepared for a number of the settlements in the County and Chapter 3 and DM Standard 2 of this plan, details more specifically the densities considered appropriate in the different settlements within the settlement hierarchy tiers.

2.4.12 The Core Strategy and Transportation Strategy

Chapter 5 of the County Development Plan sets out the Transportation Strategy which supports the Spatial Strategy, Core Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy for the County. It provides a strategic transportation framework promoting inter-connections between the Hub, the key towns and other settlements. The Settlement Strategy focuses on developing population centres along the County's existing transportation network, so as to provide the critical mass to support the maintenance and development of the network, and in the case of the Western Rail Corridor railway line, provide the critical mass and demand for its full re-opening in the future, benefiting the County and the Region as a whole. Galway County Council continues to support the extension of and improvements to existing transport infrastructure within the County, such as

road, cycle, port and harbour networks and in conjunction with other agencies supports the improvements to rail, air and bus services, including the Rural Transport Programme. Details of the national and regional network and the inter-urban and commuter rail routes in the County are provided in Chapter 5, on Map TI 1-Strategic Transport Network.

2.4.13 Water and Wastewater Capacity

In preparation of the Core Strategy cognisance has been taken of the provision of water and wastewater infrastructure and the availability of capacity within the public supply networks. The responsibility for the provision of these services now lies with Irish Water, supported by Galway County Council, as appropriate. While the overarching aim is to protect and enhance the water quality of the County and to ensure the implementation of the Water Framework Directive and Western River Basin Management Plan, it is acknowledged that infrastructure availability may be limited in some of the key towns and settlements identified in the Core Strategy Table. Notwithstanding this, in allocating population to the various towns and villages within the County, strategic decisions were taken based on the proposed role and function of the particular settlement and in the knowledge that infrastructural investment is required. It is considered that inclusion in the Core Strategy would assist in providing a plan led approach to securing the investment necessary in the future. The objectives set out in this section of the plan clearly assert that development may not proceed unless the necessary water and wastewater infrastructure is in place to service same.

2.4.14 The Core Strategy and Retail Development

The Core Strategy is also statutorily required to contain information to show that in setting out objectives for retail development, the Planning Authority has had regard to the *Retail Planning Guidelines* and that the estimates of required future retail development are based on and take account of the specific population targets. In addressing this requirement, Galway County Council intends to prepare a Retail Strategy in conjunction/consultation with Galway City Council as set out in Chapter 4, Objective R3 of this plan. This Retail Strategy shall take account of the above requirements. Chapter 4 of the plan sets out the retail hierarchy for the County and provides a number of other objectives regarding retail management, set within the framework of the *Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2012*. The retail hierarchy aligns with the designation of settlements in the Core Strategy table and associated Settlement Hierarchy, with the Hub town, County town and the key towns as the main focus for new retail developments. However, appropriately scaled new retail development in centrally located sites within 'Other Villages' and 'Other Settlements' shall also be encouraged.

2.4.15 Economic Development and Other Land Uses

Land uses such as employment/industry uses and transport options have also informed the Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy in terms of assisting in identifying the role and capacity that individual settlements have for development and also in determining where the population allocations under the Core Strategy should go. The Spatial and Core Strategy, in line with the Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region, recognises priority areas in relation to economic development for the County, such as the provisions for a Strategic Economic Corridor to the eastern area of the County, the role of urban areas in sustaining economic buoyancy, the importance of attracting foreign direct investment, promoting indigenous industry, the food and craft sector, tourism, renewable energy and the smart economy, which are all detailed in Chapter 4 of the Plan and Map ED 1.

In addition, Chapter 6 details policies and objectives in relation to services and infrastructure which are vital to the support of industrial and commercial development to both zoned lands in key towns and non-zoned lands in smaller settlements. National guidance on transport and residential development, such as policy on *Smarter Travel-A Sustainable Transport Future (2009-2020)*, the *Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2012)* and the *Guidelines for Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2009)* have also informed the Core Strategy, advocating the need to promote compact

urban development, reduce car dependency and promote sustainable mobility. This is achieved through closely integrating housing with other significant land uses such as employment and commercial zones, amenity and community facilities and ensuring the provision of sufficient amounts of lands identified for employment purposes at suitable locations, taking account of national planning policies such as those above and the availability of the required physical infrastructure, particularly access and water services.



2.5 The Core Strategy Objectives

Core Strategy Objectives

Objective CS 1 – Provision of a Settlement Hierarchy

Galway County Council shall provide a strong and clearly defined hierarchical network of settlements that allow for the sustainable and balanced growth of the County's economy.

Objective CS 2 – Development Consistent with the Core Strategy

Galway County Council shall ensure that developments permitted within the County are consistent with the County population allocations set out in the Regional Planning Guidelines.

Objective CS 3 – Economic and Employment Development

Galway County Council shall encourage the development of mixed-use settlement forms, supporting economic and employment development at appropriate locations, ensuring the provision of a satisfactory quantum of zoned land for employment and industry purposes, and ensuring housing, employment uses and community facilities are located in close proximity to each other and to public transport corridors, where possible.

Objective CS 4 – Development of Serviced Lands

Galway County Council shall ensure that the zoning of lands for residential use is in accordance with the Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy in order to meet the development needs of the County, and ensure that the development of zoned lands is subject to adequate capacity being available in the relevant water and wastewater treatment facilities, prior to or in tandem with the development, in the interest of the protecting water resources in the area.

Objective CS 5 – Phasing of Development of Lands

The zoning of residential zoned lands within the urban areas shall be based on a phased, sequential approach as set out within the Local Area Plans, with a strong emphasis placed on consolidating existing patterns of development, encouraging infill opportunities and promoting sustainable transport options.

Objective CS 6 – Local Area Plans

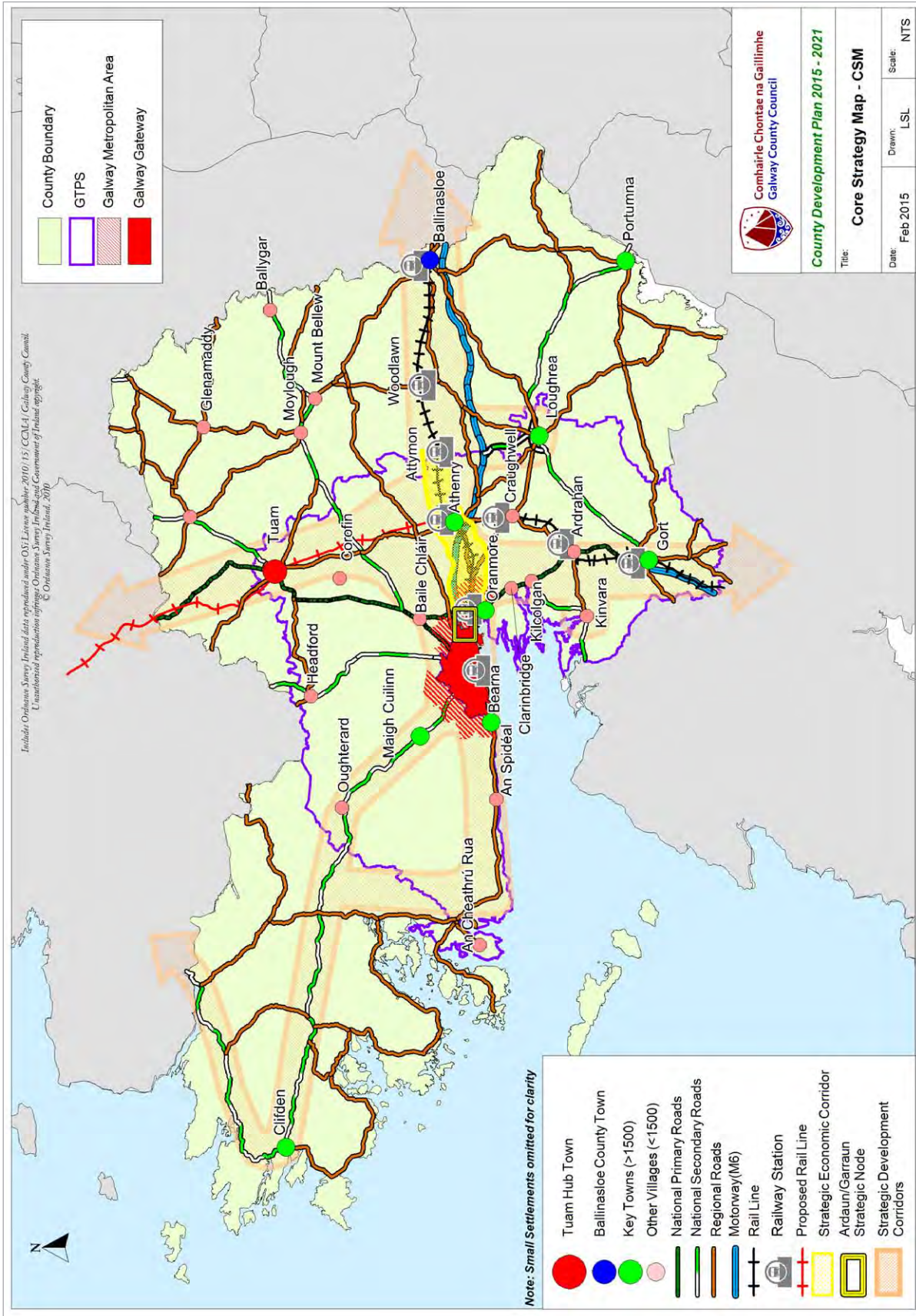
Galway County Council shall seek to prepare Local Area Plans for all settlements which have a population in excess of 1,500 persons either on an individual basis or in an electoral area Local Area Plan, having regard to the *Local Area Plans Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2013)* and the associated *Local Area Plans Manual (2013)*.

Objective CS 7 – Core Strategy and the Countryside/Rural Areas

Galway County Council shall recognise the important role of the rural areas within the County and shall protect and support these areas through the careful management of its key assets, including its physical and environmental resources, while supporting appropriate development in a balanced and sustainable manner and in accordance with the relevant policies and objectives set out throughout the plan.

Objective CS 8 – Core Strategy and Demand for Development

Galway County Council is committed to ensuring that the overall population growth of the County complies with the level of growth set by the Regional Planning Guidelines and settlement hierarchy as outlined within the Core Strategy.



2.6 Settlement Strategy

Strong settlements are imperative to a buoyant and vibrant County as they support a range of jobs, services and sustainable transport options, while providing a range of housing choices and a focus for community networks within the settlement area and beyond. In this regard, a Settlement Strategy is a spatial expression of population distribution, settlement size, and settlement role and hierarchy. The County Spatial Strategy together with the Core Strategy informs the Settlement Strategy, providing a planning framework for the location of population and development over the six year life span of this County Development Plan. The Settlement Strategy is very closely aligned with the Core Strategy and identifies potential development patterns for different areas of the County and informs the basis of policies and objectives necessary to create conditions that will influence the location of development into the future. The Settlement Strategy also gives effect to the broader objectives outlined in the *National Spatial Strategy* and the *Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region 2010-2022*.

2.6.1 Settlement Hierarchy

The Settlement Strategy builds on the Spatial Strategy taking account of the maximum Core Strategy population provision of 13,160 persons. The Settlement Hierarchy has been developed to allocate future population growth between the various towns, villages and the rural area of the County. It has taken account of the analysis of a range of criteria including the capacity of the settlement to contribute towards achieving the objectives of the Spatial Strategy and Core Strategy, the existing settlement size in terms of trends in population and household growth over previous census periods, the presence and capacity of water and wastewater services including planned investments in water and wastewater infrastructure, service functions (such as the number of services and retail units), accessibility, zoned land, landscape and heritage considerations.

This Settlement Hierarchy recognises that there are different categories of settlements throughout Galway, all with a complementary role to play in the future prosperity of the County. In this regard it has identified over 100 settlements in the County ranging from small crossroad settlements, to larger villages and main towns such as Ballinasloe and Tuam. It also recognises that the rural area must be catered for within the Settlement Hierarchy as it plays an essential role in the overall settlement structure by developing sustainable rural communities.



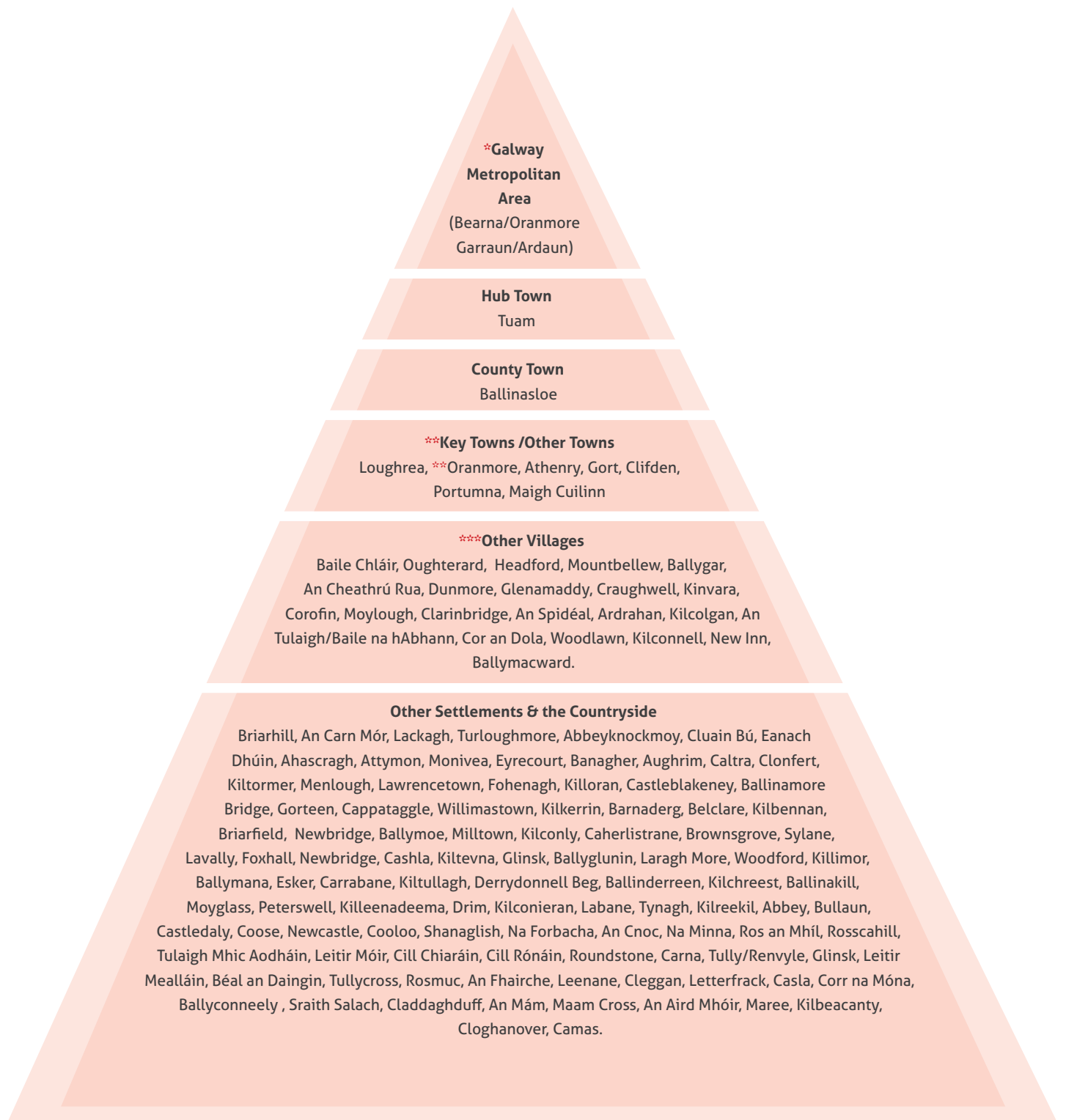
The County Development Plan has adopted a six tiered system which is set out below.

Tier	Description
<p>1. Galway Metropolitan Area</p>	<p>Galway City is the identified Gateway and vital economic driver for the entire West Region. The types of services provided by the city reach beyond the city/county boundary. Significant employers include large public service and industrial organisations that draw employees from the network of satellite towns surrounding the City. The Galway Metropolitan Area includes the Gateway and a number of electoral divisions adjacent to the City which are inextricably linked to and function as part of a greater Galway City and includes the thriving satellite settlements of Oranmore and Bearna. The longer term plans to develop the Ardaun and Garraun areas will also contribute to strengthening the Galway Metropolitan Area.</p>
<p>2. Hub Town</p>	<p>Tuam is the only major hub town identified in the <i>National Spatial Strategy</i> for County Galway and has witnessed a steady growth in population over the last number of Census periods. It is envisaged that Tuam will develop as a strong Hub Town complementing the Gateway and catering for a large catchment within the County and Region.</p>
<p>3. County Town</p>	<p>Ballinasloe as a County town is one of the largest towns in Galway and performs an important role, in particular as a commercial/industrial centre for the eastern area of the County. The town has important transport connections and provides ease of access to other major regional centres including Dublin, Galway and Athlone.</p>
<p>4. Key Towns (Other Towns) (>1500 Pop.)</p>	<p>These towns provide an extensive range of services including health, community, financial, employment and retail. Many have a strong historical identity as market towns and in most cases have a relatively well-developed infrastructure. Sustained growth in these settlements is required to achieve their potential as self-sustaining towns in their own right.</p>
<p>5. Other Villages (<1500 Pop.)</p>	<p>These settlements have a population of less than 1500 persons and provide a more limited range of services to smaller hinterlands than the key towns. Service provision often includes a range of retail and educational services but limited financial, health and community services.</p>
<p>6. Other Settlements & the Countryside</p>	<p>These smaller settlements provide basic services to their community, such as convenience goods and primary education and religious services. They are distinguished from rural housing by the presence of these services which provide an important community purpose and the basis for further future development.</p> <p>The countryside refers to those parts of County Galway that are outside of recognised settlements.</p>

The tiers set out in the hierarchy allow the relationships between different types of towns, villages and settlements within the County to be visualised. The position of a settlement within the hierarchy sets out an indication of the potential scale of population growth permissible within the lifetime of the plan and therefore aligns closely with the Core Strategy population allocations. The underlying aims of the Settlement Strategy are linked with and supported by the relevant policies and objectives elsewhere in the plan, to ensure that settlements deliver on their roles as service and employment centres for the existing and targeted population. The *Galway County Development Plan* does not have any land use zonings other than those set out for the purpose of the *County Galway Wind Energy Strategy*, therefore, the settlements with a population of over 1,500 persons shall have a Local Area Plan in place, as statutorily required. The zoning provisions in the various Local Area Plans will give effect to development and future growth of the towns and villages.

Local Area Plan	Timeframe	Status
Tuam	2011-2017	Live
Ballinasloe (Development Plan)	2009-2015	A new LAP under preparation
Loughrea	2012-2018	Live
Oranmore	2012-2018	Live
Athenry	2012-2018	Live
Clifden	2009-2015	Extended to 2020
Bearna	2007-2013	Extended to 2017
Portumna	2005-2011	Under Preparation
Maigh Cuilinn	2013-2019	Live
Baile Chláir	2005-2011	To Be Commenced
Ardaun		Under Consideration
Oughterard	2006-2012	To Be Commenced
Headford	2005-2011	Under Preparation
An Ghaeltacht	2008-2014	Extended to 2018
Craughwell	2009-2015	Live

Table 2.6: Schedule of Status of Local Area Plans for County Galway



*Galway Metropolitan Area includes Galway City and the DEs of Galway Rural, Ballintemple, Oranmore and Bearna (also the Bearna LAP Area) and includes the areas of Ardaun and Garraun.

**Oranmore is listed here again, as the GMA only encompasses part of the LAP area of Oranmore.

***Note: Not all of the towns listed in this tier have or previously had Local Area Plans prepared for them, therefore only the towns with LAPs or previously prepared LAPs are listed in the corresponding tier of the Core Strategy Table.

2.6.2 Galway Metropolitan Area (GMA)

The Galway Metropolitan Area is located at the top of the settlement hierarchy and this includes the Gateway of Galway City. It is recognised that the Galway Gateway is located outside the jurisdiction of Galway County Council; however given the County DED areas within the GMA are so inextricably linked to same, it is considered an appropriate location within the Settlement Hierarchy. The envisaged role in the NSS of Galway City and the role of the GMA as set out in the RPGs including the plan led growth of the Ardaun and Garraun area, are crucial to the future of the County and the wider region. The future prosperity of towns and villages near the City and the quality of life of people living within the commuter band around Galway City depend on the Gateway and GMA retaining its dynamic growth character. Given it attracts significant inward investment and is a provider of regional services and facilities it is essential that the regional settlement strategy provides for the sustainable, dynamic development of the Galway Gateway and Galway Metropolitan Area to support the economic growth of the region.

2.6.3 The Tuam Hub

The National Spatial Strategy designated Tuam as a Hub in Ireland's future spatial structure. Its role as a Hub is to interact with and complement the Gateway of Galway City and drive development in rural north-east Galway. The *Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region 2010 - 2022* underpin this role and describe the town as an important industrial and agricultural centre for mid-Connacht. *The Tuam Local Area Plan 2011-2017* makes provision for the development needs of Tuam to reach its minimum residential targets as set by the Regional Planning Guidelines 2010 and to cater for the commercial, industrial, social and leisure requirements of this growing population. There is adequate capacity in the town's water supply and effluent treatment systems, and its location on the Western Rail Corridor will, when this facility is restored, provide a sustainable transport link between the western gateways and hubs. There are opportunities to expand and consolidate the town centre and business/enterprise districts of Tuam to capture and encourage sustainable economic growth and accommodate new residents. It is a key element of the Spatial and Settlement Strategy of the County Development Plan to promote and facilitate the development of Tuam as a town in which people can live and work in a quality and distinctive environment, and which will serve as a dynamic town for the social and economic progress of north and east Galway and the wider region.

2.6.4 Ballinasloe - The County Town

Ballinasloe is the County town, playing an important role in particular for east Galway and in the delivery of Local Government services. This Development Plan commits to continue and enhance the delivery of Local Government services in the County town, Béal Átha na Sluaighe. It is a key commercial centre and a large employer for the residents of the town and surrounding hinterland. It provides higher order important services such as Portiuncula Hospital and St. Brigid's Hospital which serve a regional population. Ballinasloe is easily accessible by road and rail with direct links to Galway and Dublin. It is an important town with great potential that can facilitate growth and should be targeted in this regard.

2.6.5 The Key Towns/Other Towns (Population >1,500)

For the purpose of this Development Plan, the towns in this tier refer to key towns with a population greater than 1,500 persons and they include Loughrea, Oranmore, Athenry, Gort, Clifden, Portumna and Maigh Cuilinn which hold important positions within the County as key service centres and drivers of growth for their immediate and surrounding areas. The key towns have a high degree of self-sufficiency, reduce the demand for travel and provide a good quality of life for residents. Self-sufficiency refers to where a large proportion of the population, living in the town or surrounding area, are able to live, work, shop, go to school and enjoy recreation without the need for constant travel.

2.6.6 Other Villages (Population <1,500)

The villages in this tier of the hierarchy include Headford, Mountbellew, Baile Chláir, Ballygar, An Cheathrú Rua, Dunmore, Glenamaddy, Craughwell, Corofin, Moylough, Kinvara, Clarinbridge, An Spidéal, Ardahan and Kilcolgan. They have strong settlement structures and have the potential to support additional growth, offering an alternative living option for those people who do not wish to reside in the larger key towns and do not meet the housing need requirements for the rural area. The wastewater treatment facilities in some of these towns/villages require investment and therefore it is considered that their inclusion at this level in the hierarchy will provide a plan-led approach to securing this investment in the future.

2.6.7 Small Settlements and the Countryside/Rural Areas

The remainder of the population targets are directed towards the small settlements and the rural areas. There are numerous small settlements in the County, which are considered predominantly rural in nature. They provide an important, albeit limited service to the local community through their existing facilities such as national schools or a post office and it is important to support the growth and development of these small centres to facilitate the needs of local communities. In addition to the small settlements, it is important to support viable rural communities in order to seek balanced growth in the different areas of the County and in this regard, the settlement hierarchy takes account of housing in the countryside or the rural area. However, development in the un-served countryside requires careful management, in order to balance the need to revitalise and support communities, while ensuring the overall sustainable development of these areas. In this regard, and in accordance with the national guidance document *Sustainable Rural Housing-Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2005) development of single rural housing, for rural generated housing needs for people who have intrinsic links to the rural area in which they seek to reside, shall be considered positively, however planning applications for such developments shall also be assessed in accordance with the relevant policies and objective set out within the plan.

The rural area of the County has been divided into two different categories, which fit very broadly in to the categories of rural areas as set out in the *National Spatial Strategy* and the *Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines*.

These rural area categories are:

1. Rural Areas Under Strong Urban Influence

These areas exhibit characteristics such as proximity to the immediate environs or close commuting catchment of Galway City, rising population, evidence of considerable planning pressure for development of housing due to proximity to such urban areas or to major transport corridors with ready access to the urban area, and pressures on infrastructure such as the local road network.

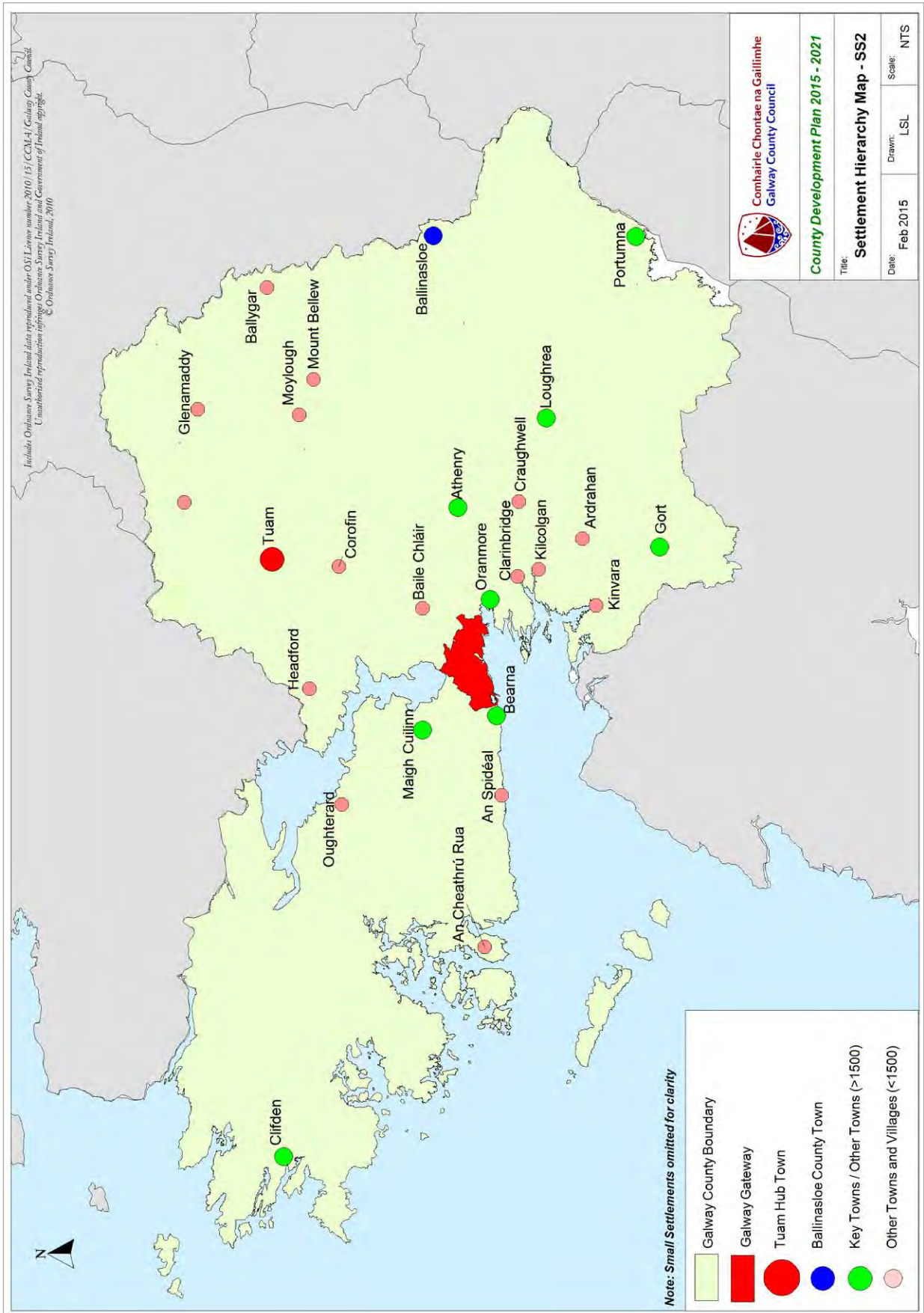
2. Structurally Weaker Rural Areas

These areas exhibit characteristics such as persistent and significant population decline as well as a weaker economic structure based on indices of income, employment and economic growth. In addition to the two broad rural areas listed above, there are a number of additional specific planning considerations that need to be taken into account when assessing rural housing in the countryside.

These include rural housing within:

- Landscape Sensitivity Areas 3, 4 and 5
- Areas where access is required on to restricted regional routes and national routes
- Gaeltacht areas.

The above distinctions between the rural area is necessary in order to be able to facilitate the housing requirements of persons with roots or links in rural areas as appropriate, and also to be able to respond to local circumstances whether these relate to areas experiencing economic and population decline or to areas under substantial pressure for development.



2.7 Settlement Strategy Objectives

Settlement Strategy Objectives

Objective SS 1 – Galway Metropolitan Area

Galway County Council shall support the important role of Galway City and the Galway Metropolitan Area (which includes the City area and the Electoral Divisions of Oranmore, Bearna, Galway Rural and Ballintemple which are inextricably linked to and function as part of a greater Galway City), as key drivers of social and economic growth in the County and in the wider Western Region and will support the sustainable growth of the strategic settlements, including the future development of Ardaun and Garraun, within the Galway Metropolitan Area.

Objective SS 2 – Ardaun

Facilitate and support the development of Ardaun in conjunction with Galway City Council.

Objective SS 3 – Hub Town: Tuam

Galway County Council shall promote and secure the development of Tuam, to enable it to fulfil its potential as a Hub town, so that it obtains the critical mass necessary to sustain strong levels of economic growth and prosperity, while supporting improvements in connectivity between the Gateway and the Hub, enhancing their complementary status.

Objective SS 4 – County Town: Ballinasloe

Recognise the County town of Ballinasloe as an important driver of growth in the County and support its sustainable development in line with the Core Strategy, in order to sustain its commercial core, retain its population and accommodate additional population and commercial growth.

Objective SS 5 – Development of Key Towns

Support the development of the key towns of the County as outlined in the Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy in order to sustain strong, vibrant urban centres which act as important drivers for the local economies, reduces travel demand and supports a large rural hinterland, while providing a complementary role to the hub town of Tuam and the smaller towns and villages in the County.

Objective SS 6 – Development of Other Villages

Protect and strengthen the economic diversity of the smaller towns, villages and small settlements throughout the County, enabling them to perform important retail, service, amenity, residential and community functions for the local population and rural hinterlands.

Objective SS 7 – Development of Small Settlements

In the case of smaller settlements for which no specific plans are available, development shall be considered on the basis of its connectivity, capacity (including social, cultural, and economic, infrastructural and environmental capacity) and compliance with the Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy, good design, community gain and proper planning and sustainable development.

Objective SS 8 – Development of Rural Communities

Galway County Council shall recognise the important role of rural communities to the sustainable development of County Galway and shall ensure the careful management of development in these areas, having due regard to the relevant policies and objectives set out elsewhere in the plan.

Core Strategy Table: February 2015

1.	2.Core Strategy Population Allocation 2015-2021	3.Housing Land Requirement (Ha)	4.Housing Land Requirement (Ha) (Includes Over Zoning)	5.Existing Undeveloped Residential Zoned Land	6. Proposed Zoning	7.Housing Units Yield on Residential Land 100% Zoning & Indicative Density Specifications	8.***Housing Units Yield on Other Lands	9.Shortfall/ Excess Using 50% Overzoning
County (Including Tuam)		(Zoned Land Excluding Other Settlements & Countryside)	(Zoned Land Excluding Other Settlements & Countryside)					
Gateway	13,160	196.45	294.67	570.60	0	3,189	0	275.93
Hub Town Tuam	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
County Town Ballinascloe	2,080	34.93	52.39	52.00	0	699	20	-0.39
Other Towns (>1500)	1,540	23.87	35.81	35.81	0	477	20	0
Loughrea	1,133	21.95	32.93	32.89	0	351	16	-0.04
*Oranmore/Garraun	1,170	22.67	34.00	33.97	0	363	16	-0.03
Athenry	1,122	21.74	32.61	32.17	0	348	16	-0.44
Gort	820	15.89	23.85	23.65	0	254	16	-0.18
Clifden	250	8.61	12.92	12.19	0	78	9	-0.73
*Bearna	420	8.14	12.21	12.10	0	130	16	-0.11
Portumna	230	6.48	9.72	56.11	0	71	11	+46.39
Maigh Cuillean	408	7.91	11.86	11.47	0	126	16	-0.39
***Other Villages (<1500)								
Baile Chiar	245	4.75	7.12	45.80	0	76	16	+38.68
*Ardaun	100	1.94	2.91	0.00	0	31	16	-2.91
Oughterard	131	3.69	5.54	88.90	0	41	11	+83.36
Headford	251	7.07	10.61	78.55	0	78	11	+67.94
An Cheathrú Rua	105	3.62	5.43	5.03	0	33	9	-0.39
Craughwell	83	2.34	3.51	48.77	0	26	11	+45.26
An Spidéal	25	0.86	1.29	1.19	0	8	9	-0.10
**Subtotal:	10,113	196.45	294.67	570.60	0	3,189	0	275.93
Other Settlements & Countryside	3,047	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	13,160	196.45	294.67	570.60	0	3,189	0	275.93

*These settlements form part of the Galway Metropolitan Area.

**Individual figures within each tier may not calculate exactly to the subtotal figures due to rounding of numbers.

***The Settlement Hierarchy includes additional villages in this tier-only villages with LAPs prepared or proposed to be prepared are included in the Core Strategy Table.

****See paragraph 2.4.10 in Chapter 2.

LAPs for Portumna, Headford, Baile Chiar and Oughterard will be progressed as a priority. See proposed Table 2.6 with list of LAPs and their status in Chapter 2.



Urban & Rural Housing

3.1 Introduction

Galway County Council has a dual role in relation to housing in the County. Through its statutory powers and under the provisions of the *Planning and Development Act, 2000* (as amended), the Planning Authority must ensure that sufficient land is zoned to meet the County's projected housing requirement and through the Development Management function, it regulates and manages private housing development. The Council in its role provides residential units for households in need of accommodation who cannot provide such accommodation through their own resources, using the functions and powers available to it as the Housing Authority.

Chapter 2 of this plan outlines the Core Strategy which includes the quantum of land required for residential use. From examining the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government House Completion Figures, there has been a significant fall in house completion rates at national level. In recent years, this fell from a peak of 4,512 units in 2006 to 467 units in 2012. Although there has been a decrease in the number of residential units completed, it is a strategic objective of the Council to plan appropriately and to facilitate housing provision by ensuring that sufficient land is zoned in line with the Core Strategy and through the implementation of sustainable rural housing policy. Appropriate policies and objectives have been formulated to ensure the delivery of quality homes within urban and rural areas of the County.

3.2 Strategic Aims

The strategy for achieving quality housing is based on the following strategic aims:

- Ensure that sufficient land is zoned to meet the projected population in line with the Core Strategy;
- Promote mixed housing developments and minimise the extent of further social housing especially where there is a high concentration of social housing in a particular area;
- Provide for changing household size and promote an appropriate mix of dwelling types, sizes and tenures to facilitate the creation of balanced communities;
- Promote residential densities to ensure the efficient use of land at appropriate locations. The efficient use of lands for residential purposes shall not compromise the need for social inclusion and shall provide for an appropriate mix of housing types;
- Support the implementation of the Council's Housing Strategy and Traveller Accommodation Programme;
- Provide for changing housing needs and promote the provision of social and specialist housing and housing for groups with particular needs;
- Promote the consolidation of existing built-up areas by facilitating good quality appropriate infill development, whilst protecting essential amenities; and
- Support and maintain the rural population.

The demand for housing is as a result of the formation of new households. This can be either fuelled by indigenous growth (e.g. young adults moving out of the family home and buying/building their first property), or the movement of new households into the County. The housing allocation has been outlined in the Core Strategy which is contained in Chapter 2 of this plan.

While the strategy is to achieve a balanced approach to the County's housing requirements there are a number of distinctly different housing categories that need to be accommodated to ensure that this balanced approach is achieved.

3.2.1 Housing Strategy

The Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) requires that each Planning Authority shall include a strategy for housing of the existing and future population of the area. The Housing Strategy must include an analysis of demand and supply for the different sectors of the housing market, forecasting future needs and shortfalls and propose objectives to balance demand with supply in a sustainable manner. In accordance with Section 94(1) (e) of the Act, a Housing Strategy shall be prepared as a joint strategy between a County Council and a Town Council. Notwithstanding this, since the commencement of the review of the *Galway County Development Plan 2009-2015*, the *Local Government Reform Act 2014* abolished all second tier Town Councils with effect from the 2014 local elections. Having regard to this and the related transfer of Town Council functions to County Councils, the Housing Strategy has been prepared by Galway County Council as a Housing Strategy for County Galway (including Ballinasloe).

The procedures for the preparation of a Housing Strategy are as follows:

- Estimate the existing and likely future need for housing in the area, and ensure that sufficient zoned and serviced land is made available to meet such needs;
- Ensure that housing is available for persons who have different levels of income;
- Ensure that a mixture of house types and sizes are developed to reasonably match the requirements of the different categories of households, including the special requirements of older persons and persons with disabilities;
- Counteract undue segregation between persons of different social backgrounds;
- Provide as a general policy, that a specific percentage (maximum 20%) of the land zoned for residential use, or for a mixture of residential and other uses, shall be reserved for those in need of social or specialist housing in the area.

In June 2011, the Government published a 'Housing Policy Statement' which has outlined a new framework to address short to medium term issues in the housing market. While the policy statement has reaffirmed the Government's commitment to addressing social housing needs, this statement outlines their intention to stand down all existing affordable housing programmes to reflect current affordability conditions. It is considered that if a household is capable of *'renting a high quality home in a vibrant community but lacks the resources necessary to purchase an equivalent home, then that household does not need assistance from the State, particularly where available resources must be focussed on responses to the most acute housing needs'* (*Housing Policy Statement, June 2011*).

3.2.2 Voluntary Housing, Social Housing and Co-Operative Sector

Voluntary bodies and housing associations have a major role to play in developing social and specialist housing in the County. Approved-non profit housing bodies/voluntary housing bodies are established by a voluntary management board to benefit the community in which they are based, and are approved and funded by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government. Voluntary bodies provide accommodation to meet the needs of the older persons, persons with disabilities and other persons who require supportive housing responses. The impact of the voluntary sector has become increasingly important in recent years. The voluntary housing sector has greatly increased its capacity to deliver social housing through the utilisation of the Capital Advance Leasing Facility, Payment and Availability Agreements and private finance over the past three years. The Irish Council for Social Housing estimates that housing

associations have the capacity to develop a total of 4,860 new homes in the period 2014-2016. Many of the larger voluntary housing bodies have approval to borrow funds from the Housing Finance Agency and it would be advantageous for the Local Authority to benefit from this opportunity with a view to partnering with Voluntary Housing Bodies in the provision of social housing.

Examples of such voluntary housing and co-operative sectors include Cluid, Respond, Peter Triest, Tuath Associations and Tearmann Eanna Teo.

Galway County Council will strive to be the lead provider of social housing which will provide quality housing for the citizens of our County who qualify and that we recognise the need for the state to ensure adequate resources are afforded to the Council to ensure that social housing need is delivered without applicants being on the housing list for extended periods.

3.2.3 Special Needs Housing

Planning for the provision of housing for the overall population of the County includes provision for individuals with special needs, such as physical and learning disabilities. The importance of access to public transport, local community services and facilities is a significant factor for a mobility-impaired person in improving their quality of life. House design and compliance with Part M of the Building Regulations has expanded the range of options available to people with a disability.

The Council will endeavour to work in partnership with relevant community and voluntary organisations to address particular identified needs, through the provision of alterations to social housing stock as required, to better accommodate identified needs.

3.2.4 Homelessness

The Council will continue to provide an important role alongside voluntary groups and other agencies in the provision of accommodation for the homeless and for those in need of crisis accommodation facilities. Funding is now implemented on a regional basis and Galway City Council is the lead agency for the Western Region.

3.2.5 Older Persons

The 2011 Census highlighted a notable increase in the age cohort of 65 and over in the County¹. The changing nature of the age profile of the County requires greater consideration of the housing needs of older persons. Specific needs must be considered relating to access, public transport, and provision of local services, medical care, security and personal safety among other issues. In this regard, dwellings and other residential facilities catering specifically for older people should generally be located in close proximity to convenience shops, community facilities and public transport nodes. It is important for those who wish to remain in their community and live independently that there is an opportunity to trade down or downsize in the area in which they live (for example to a smaller or single storey dwelling or apartment unit). In Chapter 10 of the plan *Cultural, Social and Community Development* a more detailed policy in relation to older persons is outlined.

1. In the period 2006-2011 the population of the 65-69 age cohort increased by 23%, the population of the 70-74 age group by 8.1%, the population of the 75-79 age group by 10.4%, the population of the 80-84 age cohort by 4.9% and the 85 years and over age group by 17%.

3.2.6 Traveller Accommodation

According to the Census 2011, there were a total of 2,476 Travellers in County Galway. This was an increase of more than 555 Travellers in County Galway since the last Census of 2006. The Council recognises the long tradition of the Traveller Community within the County and has regard to the special needs arising from its indigenous culture. The Council will implement measures, as required by law and national policy, in accordance with the Housing Strategy and the Traveller Accommodation Programme, to provide accommodation for members of the Travelling Community. The Council's stated policy is "to provide for the accommodation needs of the Travellers as far as reasonable and practicable using the full range of housing options available to the Council". This will be done in consultation with the Travelling Community, and with a number of statutory and voluntary agencies concerned with the needs of Travellers.

3.3 Housing Location/Design and Density in Urban Areas

3.3.1 Introduction

The Core Strategy contained in Chapter 2 of this plan recognises the importance of the larger and smaller town and village structures within the County. The DoEHLG's Guidelines for Planning Authorities on *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas* (2009) outlines sustainable approaches to the development of urban areas. Appropriate locations for new residential development schemes are:

- Large towns: populations of 5,000 or more people;
- Small towns and villages: population ranging from 2,000 to 5,000 persons;
- Towns and villages; population ranging from 400 to 2000 persons.

In accordance with the Guidelines, areas suitable for residential development are identified in urban areas. There are a number of villages within the County that do not have Local Area Plans and therefore it is important that the County Development Plan addresses the main facets of urban housing/design.

3.3.2 Layout and Design

The guidelines on *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas* published by the DoEHLG, identify sustainable neighbourhoods as areas where an efficient use of land, high quality urban design and effective integration in the provision of physical and social infrastructure, combine to create places people want to live in. The Council's primary aim in relation to residential development is to deliver high quality, sustainable living environments which are attractive, safe and vibrant and meet the needs of the residents and the community. In planning for future development and in assessing future development proposals, the Council will seek to ensure that:

- The overall design approach is to create a community rather than a new housing development;
- While residentially zoned areas are intended primarily for housing development, a range of other uses, particularly those that have the potential to foster the development of new residential communities may be considered e.g. crèches, schools, nursing homes or homes for older persons, open space, recreation and amenity uses;
- To create high standards of layout, design, and landscaping, and to achieve a general segregation from roads used by through traffic from the outset;
- Appropriate provision is made for amenity and public open space as an integral part of new development proposals;

- The physical design of a proposed development should accord with the policies and objectives set out in the development standards contained in Chapter 13 (Development Management Standards and Guidelines) of this plan;
- Proposed developments must also have regard to the policies and objectives for architectural and archaeological heritage set out in Chapter 9 (Heritage, Landscape and Environmental Management) of this plan.

3.3.3 Housing Types/Design Mix

As outlined in Chapter 2 of the plan, average household size is continuing to decline, therefore there will be a greater requirement for units to serve smaller family units. The *Housing Strategy 2015-2021* identified a decline in the average household size and an increase in older persons, dependant and single parent household population. The Core Strategy assesses a household size of 2.4 and 2.6 as per the Regional Planning Guidelines.

The mix of house types proposed in an area should therefore be influenced by a range of factors including:

- Consideration of the nature of the existing housing stock and existing social mix in the area;
- The desirability of providing for mixed communities;
- Provision of a range of housing types and tenures to meet demand;
- The need to provide a choice of housing, suitable to all age groups and persons.

It is important when developing a scheme for a particular area that the end result is a neighbourhood with a good mix of unit types. Mixed communities can be created by providing a range of unit types and tenures.

3.3.4 Housing Density

The DoEHLG Guidelines for *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas* (2009), promotes increased densities in appropriate locations where there is adequate capacity in infrastructure, compliance with open and private space requirements, no undue impact on amenities, is in keeping with the character of the area and is in line with the principles set out in the *Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets*. In line with the Department's Guidelines, higher densities will be encouraged at appropriate locations. However, in order to attract development back into towns/villages, lower densities will be permitted, in instances where it is demonstrated that development can provide an attractive living environment especially in town centres and areas comprehensively serviced by public transport, subject to appropriate design and amenity standards, while safeguarding residential amenity, internal space standards, private and public open spaces, car parking and other requirements.

3.3.5 Public and Private Open Space

Open space is one of the key elements in defining the quality of a residential environment. It provides passive as well as active amenity and can have important ecological and environmental aspects. The provision of open space to serve new residential developments should be on a hierarchical basis varying in size from large regional parks to passive recreation spaces close to people's homes. The quality of the open space will take precedence over quantity in open space provision. In order to facilitate community interaction and create a sense of place, public open space must be designed and treated as important nodes that perform a specific function in the creation of sustainable communities, regardless of scale and type. They should be overlooked and if feasible, have a south facing aspect. The Council will not consider incidental spaces left over after the site layout has been designed, as suitable to meeting open space requirements. The requirements for provision of private, semi-private and communal open spaces for houses and apartments are outlined in Chapter 13 (Development Management Standards and Guidelines).

3.4 Locations Appropriate for New Residential Development in Urban Areas

3.4.1 Town Centre and Brownfield Sites

Large towns often contain central sites of strategic importance, some of which may be brownfield in nature. These sites have the greatest potential for the creation of sustainable patterns of development. They can also assist in regeneration, make more intensive use of existing infrastructure, support local services and employment, encourage affordable housing provision and sustain alternative modes of travel such as walking, cycling and public transport.

3.4.2 Public Transport Corridors

It is important that land use planning underpins the efficiency of public transport services by sustainable settlement patterns including higher densities. Therefore, it is considered appropriate that new residential developments are located in close proximity to existing or proposed planned transport corridors. Walking distances from public transport nodes (e.g. stations/halts/bus stops) should be used in defining such corridors. It is recommended that increased densities should be promoted within 400 metres walking distances of a bus stop, or within 1km of a light rail stop or a railway station. The capacity of public transport should also be taken into consideration when densities are being considered for specific sites.

3.4.3 Infill/Sub Division of Individual Sites

The existing built fabric of large towns often contain residential areas where additional dwellings can be accommodated without compromising the existing residential amenity or residential character of the area. The provision of additional dwellings within inner suburban areas of towns can be provided either by infill or by sub-division. Infill residential development may range from small gap infill, unused or derelict land and backland areas, up to larger residual sites or sites assembled from a multiplicity of ownership. Sub-division of individual sites can be achieved where large houses on relatively extensive sites can accommodate new residential development without a dramatic alteration in the character of the area or a negative impact on existing residential amenities. Subdivision shall be considered subject to safeguards regarding residential amenity, internal space standards, private and public open space, car parking and maintenance of the public character of the area.

3.4.4 Centrally Located Sites Within Small Towns/Villages

The emphasis in designing and considering new proposals should be on achieving a good mix and quality development that reinforces the existing urban form, makes effective use of premium, centrally located land and contributes to a sense of place by strengthening, for example, the street pattern or creating new streets. Innovation and flexibility will be essential in the interpretation of standards so that they do not become inflexible obstacles to the achievement of an attractive village and small town character in new developments.



3.4.5 Edge of Centre Sites Within Small Towns/Villages

The emphasis is on achieving successful transition from central areas to areas at the edge of the smaller towns and villages. Development of such sites tends to be predominantly residential in character and given the transitional nature of such sites, the density range will be assessed depending on the characteristics of the small town/village, and the subject site, on a case by case basis. There will also be an encouragement of appropriate housing types with a high standard of design. This form of development needs to ensure the definition of a strong urban edge and design that creates a clear distinction between the urban area and the open countryside while discouraging ribbon development on the approaches to towns and villages.

3.5 Location for Residential Development in Built-Up Urban Areas

The development of new residential areas must achieve a balance in terms of design and scale, in order to be acceptable within existing built-up areas. The development of new housing which respects the amenity and character of the existing residential area and is coherent and well-designed, can contribute to enhancing the vibrancy and character of an existing area, while also contributing to the efficient, sustainable use of serviced lands.

3.5.1 Infill Development in Residential Areas

Infill developments are of limited scale. They often comprise of small gap infill sites, unused or derelict land, larger residual sites or sites assembled from multiple owners. A balance has to be struck between protection of amenities, privacy and established character and the need to provide residential infill. Innovative and contemporary design solutions will be encouraged to maximise the potential of these sites, subject to the protection and enhancement of residential amenity.

3.5.2 Backland Development

The development of backland sites in a coherent and well-designed manner can contribute to enhancing the vibrancy and character of an existing settlement while also contributing to the efficient use of serviced lands. The development of backland sites on an individual basis (i.e. rear garden areas/ individual backlands with no frontage) can sometimes conflict with the established pattern and character of development in an area. Backland development will generally only be considered where the proposed development forms part of a comprehensive plan for development of the entire backland area.

3.5.3 Extension to a Dwelling House

The construction of extensions to existing houses will be encouraged generally as it usually provides a less resource intensive method of expanding living space than building a new structure. Primarily the design and layout of extensions should have regard to the amenities of adjoining properties, particularly as regards sunlight, daylight, overshadowing and privacy.

3.5.4 Sub-Division of a Dwelling

In established areas of predominantly single family homes, the subdivision of a dwelling into apartments or bedsits will generally not be permitted, except in exceptional circumstances. The sub-division of dwellings will generally only be considered for exceptionally large houses on relatively extensive sites in urban areas that are well served by public transport.

3.6 Urban Housing Policies and Objectives

Urban Housing Policies

Policy UHO 1 – Land Use Availability

Ensure that sufficient and suitably located land is zoned for residential development to satisfy development needs within the period of this plan and in accordance with the Core Strategy/Settlement Strategy.

Policy UHO 2 – Housing Strategy

Ensure, in accordance with Part V of the *Planning & Development Act, 2000* (as amended) that arrangements for the provision of Housing are made in accordance with the current Housing Strategy 2015-2021. Secure the provision of social and specialist housing accommodation where possible, to meet the needs of all households and the disadvantaged sectors in the County, including older persons, first time buyers, those building their first homes, single person households on modest incomes, people with disabilities, special needs, Travellers etc.

Urban Housing Objectives

Objective UHO 1 – Housing Strategy

Secure the implementation of the *Housing Strategy 2015-2021*, including the implementation of its policies and objectives and requirement to reserve a minimum of 12% of residential development for social and specialist housing.

Objective UHO 2 – Social and Specialist Housing

Implement Part V provisions as per the *Planning and Development Act, 2000* (as amended) and any subsequent amendments to the Part V provision to reflect Government policy.

Objective UHO 3 – Special Needs

Facilitate the provision of suitable accommodation for those with special needs through existing and new Local Authority and voluntary housing as well as the upgrade of existing residences.

Objective UHO 4 – Homelessness

Facilitate the provision of suitable accommodation for the homeless and for those in need of emergency accommodation.

Objective UHO 5 – Traveller Accommodation

Support and implement the *Draft Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014-2018 for County Galway* (or any updated/superseding document).

Objective UHO 6 – Older Persons Accommodation

Promote and support the development of housing for older people and those with disabilities, including the concept of independent living and the development of "life cycle housing" i.e. housing that is adaptable for people's needs as they change over their lifetime.

Objective UHO 7 – High Quality/Mix and Sensitive Design

Ensure that new developments are responsive to their site context and in keeping with the character, amenity, heritage, environment and landscape of the area. New development proposals will be required to complement the existing character of the town centre/area in terms of scale, height, massing, building line, housing mix, urban grain and definition and through high quality design and layout proposals for buildings and structures.

Objective UHO 8 – Urban Design

Promote the use of sustainable urban design principles and approaches that will help to create high quality built and natural environments appropriate to the context and landscape setting of the specific area, having regard to the guidance contained in the *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines 2009*, the accompanying *Urban Design Manual 2009* (or any updated version) and the *Design Manual for Urban Roads & Streets (2013)* (including any superseding document).

Objective UHO 9 – Vacant Properties/Unfinished Housing

Promoters of significant residential developments in urban areas where there are large numbers of vacant or unfinished houses will be required to substantiate the requirement for same, based on the individual circumstances of the area.

Objective UHO 10 – Sequential Development

Endeavour to promote the orderly and phased development of residential development in accordance with the principles of the sequential approach and as set out in the *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (Cities, Towns & Villages) Guidelines 2009* (or as updated). This shall include a positive presumption in favour of the sequential development of suitably serviced Residential (Phase 1) lands in zoned towns and villages. In un-zoned towns and villages, the presumption shall be in favour of sequential development emanating from the town/village core outwards, subject to compliance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development and the County Development Plan. This objective will not refer to single house build. Regarding the phasing of undeveloped residential zoned land, development on Residential – Phase 2 lands will normally only be considered where 50% of the lands in Residential Phase 1 are committed to development.

Objective UHO 11 – Development Densities

Galway County Council shall ensure that the density of new development is appropriate to the particular land use zone and/or site context, is in keeping with the existing development pattern of the area, does not unduly impact on the amenities of the area and results in a positive relationship between existing development and any adjoining public spaces. The development of higher density development shall be promoted in appropriate locations, such as suitable sites within the town/village centre and adjacent to public transport facilities, where such development is compatible with heritage and urban design objectives, infrastructure capacity and environmental considerations. New development shall also have regard to the '*Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas*' Guidelines (or any updated/superseding document).

Objective UHO 12 – Linguistic Impact Statements

Galway County Council shall require the submission of a Linguistic Impact Statement for housing proposals for two or more houses in the Gaeltacht area in order to protect and strengthen the Irish language and cultural heritage of the Galway Gaeltacht areas. A Language Enurement Clause of 15 years duration shall apply to approved developments, of two or more units.

Objective UHO 13 – Urban Housing in Gaeltacht Settlements

Development of multiple residential units (2 or more) in An Ghaeltacht settlements shall be subject to Galway County Council's linguistic and occupancy requirements in order to protect the linguistic and cultural heritage of An Ghaeltacht including the promotion of Irish as the community language.

3.7 Single Housing in the Countryside

3.7.1 Introduction

This section sets out how the development of single houses will take place in rural areas outside the confines of the towns and settlements. While there is a need to recognise the genuine needs of people living and/or working in rural areas and the contribution they make to rural community life, there is also a need to strike a reasonable balance between the need to support sustainable development, the diversification of the rural economy and the promotion of economic development while restricting urban generated development. The *National Spatial Strategy (NSS)* recognises the long tradition of people living in rural parts of Ireland and promotes sustainable rural settlements as key components of delivering more balanced regional development. The Strategy recognises that urban and rural areas are intrinsically interdependent and that policies for a strong spatially balanced urban structure must be matched by sustainable policies for rural areas. The Strategy recognises the importance of strengthening the rural economy in order to maintain population levels and communities in the long term.

3.7.2 Sustainable Rural Housing

Galway's growth as a commercial and employment centre coupled with the growth in population has led to considerable pressure for housing in the open countryside. Therefore, it is considered pertinent to include measures to control rural housing with a presumption against unnecessary rural dwellings and urban generated rural housing. This approach is supported by the *Sustainable Rural Housing-Guidelines for Planning Authorities*² which provides that:

- People who are part of the rural community should be facilitated by the planning system in all rural areas, including those under strong urban-based pressures;
- Anyone wishing to build a house in rural areas suffering persistent and substantial population decline should be accommodated;
- The development of the rural environs of major urban areas, including the Gateways and Hubs; identified in the NSS and other larger towns over 5,000 in population needs to be managed in order to ensure their orderly development.

It is important to distinguish between rural generated housing and urban generated housing demand. Rural generated housing is defined by the NSS, as housing needed in rural areas within the established rural community by people living and working in rural areas or nearby urban areas. Urban generated housing demand is defined as housing in rural locations sought by people living and working in urban areas, including second homes. With regard to urban generated housing demand in the open countryside, the NSS indicates that development driven by urban areas should take place, as a general principle, within the built up areas and on lands zoned through the Local Area Plan process, for integrated, serviced and sustainable development.

² These Guidelines constitute Ministerial Guidelines under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended). Section 28 provides that Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála shall have regard to Ministerial Guidelines in the performance of their functions.

The NSS also acknowledges that some persons from urban areas seek a rural lifestyle with the option of working in or travelling to and from, nearby larger cities and towns. Smaller towns and villages are seen as having a key role in catering for these types of housing demand in a more sustainable manner. These distinctions are necessary to ensure that first and foremost the housing requirements of persons with roots or links in rural areas are facilitated and that objectives respond to local circumstances whether these relate to areas experiencing economic and population decline or to areas under substantial urban generated pressure for housing. *The Galway Transportation and Planning Study (GTPS)* was adopted in 1999 and later updated in 2003. This strategy sets out the spatial planning and transportation strategy for the future of the GTPS area. The Galway County Development Plan requires applicants in the GTPS area to submit housing and local need criteria. In addition to this, the County Development Plan requires additional criteria for the Urban Fringe of Gort, Loughrea, Athenry and Tuam.

3.8 Identifying Rural Area Types

The National Spatial Strategy and the subsequent *Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines (2005)* call for settlement policies in development plans and their implementation to take into account the differing circumstances and demands facing rural areas and varying rural development. The documents identify the different types of rural areas and call for different policy responses to each category. From the review of the plan, the Planning Authority has carried out an assessment in accordance with the approach outlined in these Guidelines:

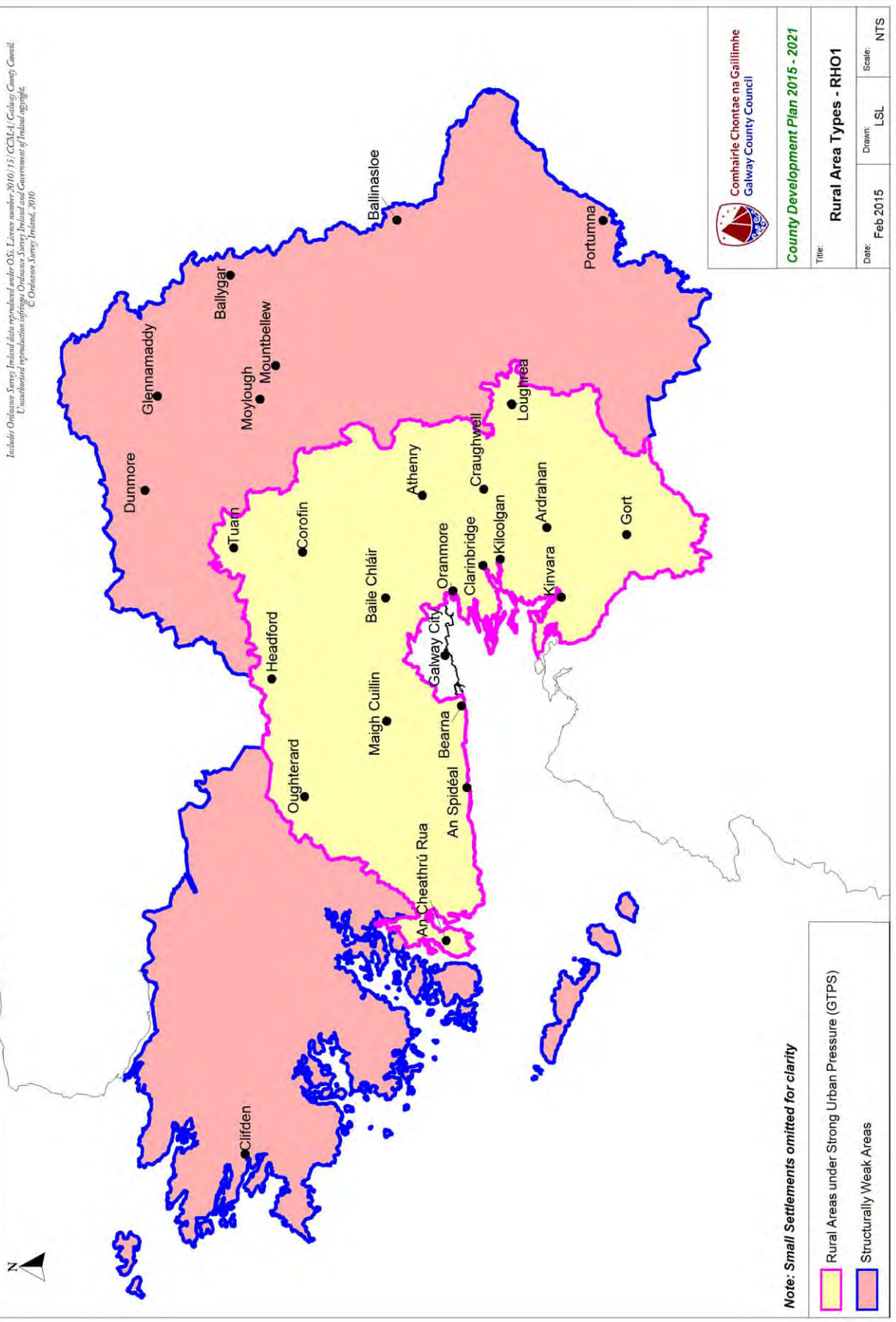
- Analysis and mapping of the data on planning applications for housing submitted since the adoption of the *Galway County Development Plan 2009-2015*;
- Analysis of housing development using the An Post Geo Directory;
- Analysis of Census data 2006 and 2011 on population and household trends.

The main findings of this analysis are as follows:

- The pace of activity within the existing GTPS has increased steadily in all of the DEDs, the level of developments granted in the GTPS is higher than that to the east of the GTPS;
- The population variation between the 2006 and 2011 Census is significant:
 - (a) In the GTPS area, the population has increased by approximately 12,000 people;
 - (b) In areas of the County to the east of the GTPS, the population has increased by approximately 2,497 people, the level of growth in these DEDs is substantially smaller than the growth in the GTPS;
 - (c) Areas of the County to the west of the GTPS have also witnessed a rise in population numbers of approximately 1,110 people, however there has been a slower rate in housing construction.

It is considered that the existing GTPS boundary can be regarded as Rural Areas Under Strong Urban Pressure due to the growth in population and its proximity to Galway City. It is considered that the areas west of the GTPS and to the east of the GTPS can be regarded as Structurally Weak Areas.

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Note: Small Settlements omitted for clarity

- Rural Areas under Strong Urban Pressure (GTPS)
- Structurally Weak Areas

 Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe Galway County Council	
County Development Plan 2015 - 2021	
Title: Rural Area Types - RHO1	
Date: Feb 2015	Scale: NTS
Drawn: LSL	Scale: NTS

3.8.1 Rural Areas under Strong Urban Pressure - GTPS

From the analysis carried out in Section 3.8 it was determined that the areas within the GTPS boundary reflect closely the characteristics of rural areas under strong urban pressure. These areas exhibit characteristics of growth in population at locations in close proximity to the larger towns and to which the residents of these rural areas commute to in large numbers. It is also evident from the analysis undertaken that there was pressure for development for housing due to the proximity to Galway City. The objective of these areas is to maintain a stable population base in rural areas within a strong network of small towns and villages.

The key objectives of the Council are:

- To facilitate the genuine housing requirements of the local rural community (rural generated housing), subject to satisfactory site suitability and technical considerations;
- To direct urban generated development to areas for new housing development in the adjoining urban centres, town and villages as identified in the County Settlement/Core Strategies;
- To accommodate residential development proposals in accordance with Chapter 13 (Development Management Standards and Guidelines).

In accordance with the *Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines*, it is a generally accepted in principle that urban generated housing should take place within the built up areas or on lands identified, through the Local Area Plan process. It is therefore considered that the principles of proper planning and sustainable development dictate that the erosion of the urban fringe around Gort, Loughrea, Athenry and Tuam should be discouraged. Applicants whose family home is within the urban fringe of these towns will be requested to establish a Substantiated Rural Housing Need and only this category of persons will be allowed to construct a dwelling in these areas.

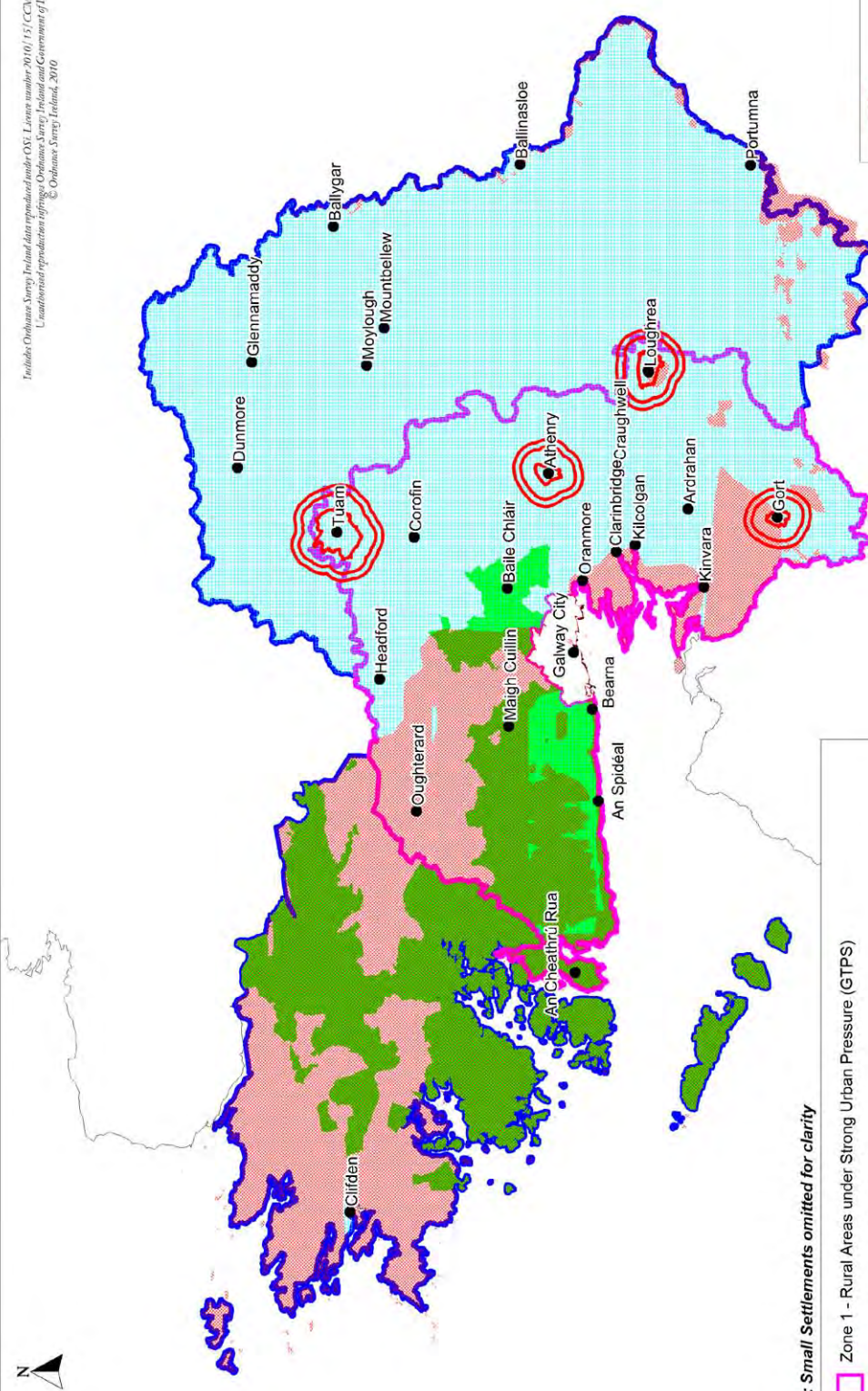
3.8.2 Structurally Weak Rural Areas (East and West of GTPS)

From the analysis carried out in Section 3.8, it was determined that the areas west and east of the GTPS can be categorised as Structurally Weak Rural Areas. This rural area can be categorised as the rural area to the west and east of the GTPS as illustrated on Map RHO1. These areas consist mainly of a low population base and have not experienced the same level of growth in population as the areas within the GTPS. There are areas that have declined in population, while a number of areas have experienced an increase in population between the 2006 and 2011 Census. There are reduced services and infrastructure available in these areas due to the low population base.







In this rural area type, the key objectives of the Council are:

- To accommodate residential development proposals as they arise subject to satisfactory site suitability and technical considerations;
- To accommodate residential development proposals in accordance with Chapter 13 (Development Management Standards and Guidelines);
- To maintain and strengthen existing towns and villages and to direct urban generated housing demand into these areas;
- To protect areas located in Landscape Category 3, 4 and 5.


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Note: Small Settlements omitted for clarity

-  Zone 1 - Rural Areas under Strong Urban Pressure (GTPS)
-  Zone 2 - Structurally Weak Areas
-  Landscape Category 1 & 2 (No visual impact assessment required)
-  Zone 3 - Landscape Category 3 - 5
-  Zone 4 - An Ghaeltacht
-  Urban Fringes

This map should be read in conjunction with objectives RHO1, RHO2, RHO3 & RHO4

 Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe Galway County Council		
County Development Plan 2015 - 2021		
Title: Rural Housing Policy - RHO2		
Date: Feb 2015	Drawn: LSL	Scale: NTS

3.8.3 Development Strategy 2015-2021

In order to incorporate the requirements of the *National Spatial Strategy* and the *Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines* (2005) it is considered necessary that the following specific policy responses are incorporated into the plan to ensure that the provision of rural housing in the open countryside is managed efficiently and appropriately. In addition to the two areas identified above, it is considered necessary to include the areas affected by Landscape Classifications 3-5 and also the areas located within the Gaeltacht. In areas which are classified in the Landscape Classification 3, 4 and 5, an applicant seeking to construct a rural house in the open countryside is required to demonstrate Substantiated Rural Housing Need and their Rural Links.

The specific policies for rural housing in the open countryside are as follows:

- Rural Housing Zone1: Rural Area Under Strong Urban Pressure-GTPS
- Rural Housing Zone 2: Structurally Weak Areas
- Rural Housing Zone 3: Landscape Category 3, 4 and 5
- Rural Housing Zone 4: An Gaeltacht



3.9 Rural Housing Policies and Objectives

Rural Housing Policies

Policy RHO 1 - Management of New Single Houses in the Countryside

It is a policy of the Council to facilitate the management of new single houses in the countryside in accordance with the Rural Housing Zones 1, 2, 3 and 4 and to support the sustainable re-use of existing housing stock within the County.

Policy RHO 2 - Adherence to the Statutory Guidelines & County Development Plan

It is a policy of the Council to ensure that future housing in rural areas complies with the *Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2005* (DOEHLG), the Core/Settlement Strategies for County Galway, Rural Housing Objectives and the Development Management Standards and Guidelines of this plan.

Rural Housing Objectives

Objective RHO 1 - Rural Housing Zone 1 (Rural Area Under Strong Urban Pressure-GTPS)

It is an objective of the Council to facilitate Rural Housing in the open countryside subject to the following criteria:

1.(a) Those applicants with Rural Links* to the area through long standing existing and immediate family ties seeking to develop their first home on existing family farm holdings. Documentary evidence shall be submitted to the Planning Authority to justify the proposed development and will be assessed on a case by case basis.

OR

1.(b) Those applicants who have no family lands but who wish to build their first home within the community in which they have long standing Rural links* and where they have spent a substantial, continuous part of their lives i.e. have grown up in the area, schooled in the area and have immediate family connections in the area e.g. son or daughter of longstanding residents of the area. Consideration shall be given to special circumstances where a landowner has no immediate family and wishes to accommodate a niece or nephew on family lands. Having established a Substantiated Rural Housing Need*, such persons making an application on a site within a 8km radius of their original family home will be accommodated, subject to normal development management criteria and provided the site does not encroach into the Urban Fringe* of the towns of Gort, Loughrea, Athenry or Tuam. Documentary evidence shall be submitted to the Planning Authority to justify the proposed development and will be assessed on a case by case basis.

OR

1.(c) Those applicants who can satisfy to the Planning Authority that they are functionally dependent on the immediate rural areas in which they are seeking to develop a single house as their principal family residence in the countryside. Documentary evidence shall be submitted to the Planning Authority to justify the proposed development and will be assessed on a case by case basis.

OR

1.(d) Where applicants can supply land registry or folio details that demonstrate that the lands on which they are seeking to build their first home, as their permanent residence, in the area have been in family ownership for a period of 20 years or more, their eligibility will be considered. Where this has been established to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority, additional intrinsic links will not have to be demonstrated.

OR

1.(e) In cases where all sites on the family lands are in a designated area, family members will be considered subject to the requirements of the Habitat's Directive and normal planning considerations

2.(a) Those applicants who lived for substantial periods of their lives in the rural area, then moved away and who now wish to return and build their first house as their permanent residence, in this local area. Special consideration will be given to one member of the immediate family of emigrants returning to this local area to live near their immediate family. Documentary evidence shall be submitted to the Planning Authority to illustrate their links to the area in order to justify the proposed development and it will be assessed on a case by case basis.

2.(b) To recognise that exceptional health circumstances, supported by relevant documentation from a registered medical practitioner and disability organisation, may require a person to live in a particular environment or close to family support. Documentary evidence shall be submitted to the Planning Authority to justify the proposed development and will be assessed on a case by case basis.

3. An Enurement condition shall apply for a period of 7 years, after the date that the house is first occupied by the person or persons to whom the enurement clause applies.

**See Definitions on Page 64*

Objective RHO 2 - Rural Housing Zone 2 (Structurally Weak Area)

It is an objective of the Council to facilitate the development of individual houses in the open countryside in "Structurally Weak Areas" subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental criteria and the Development Management Standards and Guidelines outlined in Chapter 13 and other applicable standards with the exception of those lands contained in Landscape Categories 3, 4 and 5 where objective RHO3 applies.

Objective RHO 3 - Rural Housing Zone 3 (Landscape Category 3, 4 and 5)

Those applicants seeking to construct individual houses in the open countryside in areas located in Landscape Categories 3, 4 and 5 are required to demonstrate their Rural Links* to the area and are required to submit a Substantiated Rural Housing Need*. In addition an Applicant may be required to submit a visual impact assessment of their development, where the proposal is located in an area identified as "Focal Points/Views" in the Landscape Character Assessment of the County or in Class 4 and 5 designated landscape areas. Documentary evidence shall be submitted to the Planning Authority to justify the proposed development and will be assessed on a case by case basis. An Enurement condition shall apply for a period of 7 years, after the date that the house is first occupied by the person or persons to whom the enurement clause applies.

**See Definitions on Page 64*

Objective RHO 4 - Rural Housing Zone 4 (An Gaeltacht)

It is an objective of the Council to facilitate Rural Housing in the open countryside subject to the following criteria:

(a) Those applicants within An Gaeltacht which are located in Zone 1 (Rural Area Under Strong Urban Pressure-GTPS) and Zone 3 (Landscape Category 3, 4 and 5) shall comply with the objectives contained in RHO1 and RHO3 as appropriate. Applicants, whose original family home is located on the coastal strip west of An Spidéal, will be permitted to move closer to the city but not more than 8 km from the original family home.

OR

(b) It is an objective of the Council that consideration will be given to Irish speakers who can prove their competence to speak Irish in accordance with Galway County Council's requirements and who can demonstrate their ability to be a long term asset to the traditional, cultural and language networks of vibrant Gaeltacht communities. This consideration will apply to applicants seeking to provide their principal permanent residence, in landscape designations Class 1, 2 and 3. It will also extend to Class 4 areas that are not in prominent scenic locations. A Language Enurement Clause of 15 years duration will apply to approved developments in this category.

Objective RHO 5 - Building Conversions in Gaeltacht Areas

It is an objective of the Council that building conversions in Gaeltacht areas will be considered for the purposes of advancing Gaeltacht Tourism and Gaeltacht Colleges provided the need is substantiated and the development complies with the requirements of the *EPA Code of Practice Manual 2009* or any superseding wastewater manual. Documentary evidence shall be submitted to the Planning Authority to justify the proposed development and will be assessed on a case by case basis.

Objective RHO 6 - Replacement Dwelling

It is an objective of the Council that the refurbishment of existing habitable dwelling houses would be encouraged, as a more sustainable option than the demolition and construction of a new dwelling house, unless a conclusive case for demolition based on technical evidence is made for the Planning Authority's consideration on a case by case basis. It will be a requirement that any new dwelling house be designed in accordance with Galway County Council's *Design Guidelines for Rural Housing* in the countryside. Applicants, who require the demolition of an existing dwelling house shall be accommodated without the requirement to establish a Housing Need or proof of residence and will not be subject to an enurement clause.

Objective RHO 7 - Renovation of Existing Derelict Dwelling/Semi Ruinous Dwelling

It is an objective of the Council that proposals to renovate, restore or modify existing derelict or semi-derelict dwellings in the County are generally dealt with on their merits on a case by case basis, having regard to the relevant policies and objectives of this plan, the specific location and the condition of the structure and the scale of any works required to upgrade the structure to modern standards. The derelict/semi ruinous dwelling must be structurally sound, have the capacity to be renovated and/or extended and have the majority of its original features/walls in place. A structural report will be required to illustrate that the structure can be brought back into habitable use, without compromising the original character of the dwelling. Where the total demolition of the existing dwelling is proposed an Enurement Clause for seven years duration will apply.

Objective RHO 8 - Substantially Completed Single Dwelling

Where planning permission has elapsed on a previously permitted development that has been substantially completed and the dwelling remains unfinished it will not be a requirement to establish a Rural Housing Need if it were not a condition of the previously granted planning permission.

Objective RHO 9 - Design Guidelines

It is an objective of the Council to have regard to Galway County Council's *Design Guidelines for the Single Rural House* with specific reference to the following:

- a) It is an objective to encourage new dwelling house design that respects the character, pattern and tradition of existing places, materials and built forms and that fit appropriately into the landscape;
- b) It is an objective to promote sustainable approaches to dwelling house design and encouraging proposals to be energy efficient in their design and layout;
- c) It is an objective to require the appropriate landscaping and screen planting of proposed developments by using predominately indigenous/local species and groupings.

Objective RHO 10 - Vacant/Unfinished Housing

Applicants for rural housing on lands other than family lands shall be encouraged to consider the option to avail of existing or permitted housing in areas where there are high levels of such stock available. A statement relating to same should be submitted as part of the application indicating that an examination of such stock was carried out and clear reasons for the unsuitability of any developments considered.

Objective RHO 11 - Urban/Rural Demarcation

It is an objective of the Council to preserve and protect the open character of transitional lands outside of settlements in order to maintain a clear demarcation and distinction between urban areas and the countryside.

Objective RHO 12 - Waste Water Treatment Associated with Development in Un-Serviced Areas

Permit development in un-serviced areas only where it is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority that the proposed wastewater treatment system is in accordance with the *Code of Practice Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses EPA (2009)/ EPA Wastewater Treatment Manuals – Treatment Systems for Small Communities, Business, Leisure Centres and Hotels (1999) (or any superseding documents)* and subject to complying with the provisions and objectives of the EU Water Framework Directive.

Objective RHO 13-Lifetime Enurement Clause

Lifetime enurement clauses will be considered to have expired after a period of seven years of full time occupancy by the applicant. Actual removal of the enurement clause will have to be established by a planning application.

Definitions applied above:***Rural Links:**

For the purpose of the above is defined as a person who has strong links to the rural area and wishes to build a dwelling generally within an 8km radius of where the applicant has lived for a substantial continuous part of their life.

***Substantiated Rural Housing Need:**

Is defined as supportive evidence for a person to live in this particular area and who does not or has not ever owned a house/received planning permission for a single rural house or built a house (except in exceptional circumstances) in the area concerned and has a need for a dwelling for their own permanent occupation. In addition the applicants will also have to demonstrate their rural links as outlined above.

***Urban Fringe:**

Urban Fringe of Gort, Loughrea, Athenry and Tuam. Applicants whose family home is within the urban fringe will be requested to establish a substantiated Rural Housing Need and only this category of persons will be allowed to construct a dwelling in this area.

Economic, Tourism & Retail Development

4.1 Introduction

Sustainable economic development requires balance in terms of location and diversity of economic activity as well as the protection of the environment and people's quality of life. In this regard, the first section of the chapter sets out constructive economic and tourism policies and objectives that are envisaged will enable the County to prosper over the lifetime of the plan. There is an emphasis placed on developing partnerships with other key stakeholders to achieve a position of ongoing stability followed by sustainable economic growth. The larger towns in the County need to be equipped appropriately to enable them to compete within the region whereas the smaller towns and villages need to be primed to cater for the micro economy.

Furthermore, it acknowledges that there are certain scenarios where it is practical and sustainable to facilitate the provision of rural orientated enterprises in the open countryside. Finally, it focuses on the tourism sector and the emergence of food and craft and creative sectors in the County. It supports greater economic development based on the sustainable harnessing of the natural resources that are abundant in the County both on land and at sea. The second section of the Chapter outlines the objectives for the provision of retailing in the County for the duration of the plan. This section is cognisant of the *Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2012* and the *Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region 2010 – 2022*. These guidelines provide a framework for formulating a retail hierarchy and an overall strategy for retailing in the County. Objectives in this section provide strategic guidance in relation to the positioning of retail development that is considered appropriate in the aforementioned settlements and the smaller towns and villages of the County.

4.2 Strategic Aims

- To seek to ensure that economic recovery is tangible and that economic growth is experienced in every part of the County and is shared amongst all inhabitants;
- To safeguard and augment County Galway's extensive economic, tourism and employment base;
- To facilitate large scale enterprise and development at strategic locations in the County;
- To facilitate economic growth in the rural economy of the County in the form of appropriate farm diversification, green tourism and sustainable micro rural enterprise;
- To ensure that the retail needs of the County's population are provided for, insofar as is possible, within County Galway;
- To support the role of towns as critical drivers of economic growth in County Galway and identify town centres that require assistance and intervention, in order to attempt to address any commercial decline or stagnation and to strive to enable their retail cores to flourish;
- To ensure that the public realm associated with towns and villages in the County are sufficiently pleasant, safe, accessible and vibrant to entice the public to live, work, shop and socialise there;
- To be proactive in exploring methods to identify town centre sites including derelict/disused buildings that may be suitable for retail development and business or commercial purposes.

The following table illustrates the strengths and economic opportunities for County Galway.

Strengths of County Galway	Economic Opportunities for County Galway
<p>Strong Presence of Multi-Nationals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment opportunities and employment generating industry clusters. • Potential for spin off enterprises. • Potential for Research and Development collaboration with research institutes in NUIG and GMIT. • Influence of foreign business cultures within FDI on local enterprise. • Establish Galway as an international location for business.
<p>Identified Economic Corridor</p> <p>Employment Lands</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large scale, serviced IDA Site with full planning permission available for immediate uptake. • C. 529 ha of undeveloped land zoned for Industry/ Business & Enterprise/Business & Technology available within the larger towns throughout the County.
<p>Improving Transport Infrastructure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imminent construction of the Gort to Tuam Motorway to improve travel times and reduce congestion within the County. • Faster and improved access and movement and transport of goods. • Reduces transport costs, improves competitiveness. • Recent opening of a number of rail stations and part of the Western Rail Corridor providing alternative sustainable transport options and improving rail linkages within the County. • Potential of Galway Airport Site.
<p>Improving Infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Water & Wastewater - Telecommunications - Gas - Energy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving water and wastewater services for industries and sectors. • National broadband scheme roll out is complete within 111 EDs in Galway having access to high quality, cost efficient broadband services, providing improved opportunities for urban areas and greater economic opportunities for more rural areas, with particular benefit to start up companies. • MANS available in five towns in the County (Athenry, Ballinasloe, Clifden, Gort & Loughrea). • Improving gas networks providing alternative energy supplies. • Cheaper energy costs. • Tynagh Powerstation provides an economic asset within the County.

<p>Natural Assets for Renewable Energy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Green economy development opportunities through the spin-off of green related industries. • R&D in third level institutions. • Presence of natural resources creates opportunities for the renewable energy sector. • Potential for the County to be self sustaining in terms of green energy. Potential attraction for certain industries.
<p>Strong and Established Agriculture, Aquaculture & Mariculture Industries</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food industry development & diversification potential. • Growing farmer's markets and crafts industries, attracting increased footfall in towns. • Presence of Ros an Mhíl deep water port facility - one of largest fishing ports in the country. • Opportunities to further develop the aquaculture, mariculture and agriculture sectors.
<p>Proximity to Galway Gateway & Presence of Galway Metropolitan Area</p> <p>Designated Hub town of Tuam within the County</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits from the Galway Gateway economic driver and Galway Metropolitan Area within the County area, which also provides ease of access to a full range of regional services. • The Galway Gateway provides a potential market for many micro enterprises located in County Galway. • The Tuam Hub designation builds links and interactions between Tuam and the nearby Galway & Sligo Gateways, while energising its own substantial catchment area in the County. This is achieved through Tuam's strategic location on the national/regional road networks as well as its strong energy/communication links, infrastructural capacity, its substantial investment prospects and capacity for development, local employment and service functions.
<p>Balanced Geographical Spread of Key Towns</p> <p>Network of Attractive Small Towns and Villages</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key towns providing a wide range of employment, retail and other services to a wide catchment. • Potential for retail and commercial sectors through the widespread availability of 'ready to go' retail/commercial units already constructed and unoccupied throughout the towns and villages within the County.
<p>Third Level Institutional Linkages & Research Centres</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of significant direct and indirect employment. • Proximity to the University and GMIT. • GMIT Campus located in Letterfrack, Mountbellew Agriculture College, Teagasc Research Facility Athenry, Marine Institute in Renville, NUI Atmospheric Research Centre - Carna. • Research and development opportunities providing support to enterprises and innovative industries.

High Level of Educational Attainment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available skilled and educated workforce. • Access to a population with entrepreneurial potential.
Increasing Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing population base to attract and retain investment and services into the towns. • Immigration adding to the multicultural nature of the population of Galway.
Reducing Numbers on the Live Register	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing job creation, training and entrepreneurship. • Increased numbers in employment, creates domestic demand for goods and services amongst local businesses.
Unique Landscape & Attractions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abundance of coastline and off-shore islands, mountains and lakes along with national attractions such as Conamara National Park, Dun Aengus, Kylemore Abbey, Portumna Forest Park, Coole Park, Alcock & Browne Landing Site etc. providing a unique tourism product and economic driver for the more rural areas. • Potential for marine tourism and exploitation of the Blueway, kayak trails, sub aqua tourism, port fishing and the Wild Atlantic Way.
Recreation & Outdoor Amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the recreation and amenity base to increase tourism potential and position Galway as the Outdoor and Recreational Capital of Ireland. • Market and develop the Conamara Greenway and other walking and cycling routes within the County to maximise the economic gain.
High Quality of Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attractive to the workforce in terms of work-life balance and to entrepreneurs, FDI and highly skilled individuals. • Shorter travel times to work. • Lower cost of living and house prices in comparison to the east of Ireland. • Distinctive, varied local culture. • Clean air quality. • Strong network of local clubs, groups with strong community spirit. • Good health services. • Good educational services. • Ample recreational space and recreational facilities.
Built and Cultural Heritage Gaeltacht	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of tourism, visitor and linguistic attractions and associated economies. • Strong Arts presence and association with the County.
Moderate Climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate climate suitable for the location of data centres/cloud computing warehousing.

Table 4.1: Strengths and Opportunities of County Galway

4.3 Context

According to the OECD in the *Economic Survey of Ireland 2013* report, the country is showing signs of gradual recovery after a severe banking and fiscal crisis. The aftermath of this crisis has left a legacy of unemployment and debts, amongst the highest in the OECD¹. This recently published report acknowledges that significant recovery hinges on reducing unemployment but stresses that decisive labour market policy interventions are required to trigger same. In the opinion of the OECD, skill mismatches need to be addressed by better aligning the content of education and training schemes.

The Irish economy is moving away from labour intensive industries towards knowledge-based services. People therefore who previously worked in the construction industry, many of whom are young, require retraining, if they are to participate in a more knowledge-based economy. Furthermore, the OECD recognises that innovation in Irish firms needs to be boosted and states that this can be achieved by building greater linkages between enterprise and the higher education sector. Galway County Council therefore needs to be mindful of the fragile nature of the national and local economy and where possible be of assistance in empowering the entrepreneurial spirit amongst the populace.

There is a realisation by Government in the document '*Putting People First – An Action Plan for Effective Local Government*' (2012) that Local Government needs to contribute to the national recovery effort by capitalising fully on its potential to help promote economic development, enterprise and job creation locally. A rationale for this approach being that Local Authorities are well placed to identify local strengths and opportunities, weaknesses and deficiencies relevant to economic performance. Furthermore, the Government decision to establish Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) within Local Authorities (LA) will provide a strong platform for the LA in its new economic role and will boost significantly the ability of local government to facilitate economic development.

Having regard to the aforementioned, the importance of the retail sector to the wider economy as a whole cannot be underestimated. Nationally, the Irish retail sector employs a quarter of a million people and there are forty four thousand retail and wholesale businesses in the country². At a local level, 11% of the total labour force in County Galway is attributed to the retail and wholesale trade sector³. According to the *Retail Planning Guidelines* (2012), five key policy objectives need to be progressed by Planning Authorities in planning for and addressing the development requirements of the retail sector. These include the following as outlined in Table 4.2:

To secure plan-led development in alignment with the settlement strategy.

To promote greater vitality in city and town centres by promoting a sequential approach to retail development.

To ensure that the planning system continues to play its part in ensuring an effective range of choice for the consumer.

To secure a general shift towards sustainable travel modes through careful location and design of new retail development.

To ensure that retail development plays its part in realising quality outcomes in relation to urban design.

Table 4.2: Five Key Policy Objectives for the Retail Sector

¹ <http://www.oecd.org/economy/ireland-2013.htm>

² http://www.retailireland.ie/Sectors/RI/RI.nsf/vPages/Retail_in_Ireland-retail-at-a-glance?OpenDocument

³ Social Inclusion Unit Galway County Council, *Census 2011 – Results for County Galway*

4.4 Employment, Economy and Enterprise – Development and Promotion

Planning is a mechanism for formulating employment, economic and enterprise objectives with a view to enhancing the day to day lives of people living, working and doing business in the County. The overall goal in this regard is to facilitate the creation of sustainable commuting patterns and strengthening community bases by way of continued investment in the infrastructure and workforce of the County. Map EDT 1 illustrates the contextual framework of the economic engines/corridors of the County.

Central to achieving the above is setting the County apart and emphasising its economic competitiveness in a regional, national and worldwide context. Galway County Council in conjunction with the relevant economic and employment stakeholders at both local and national level are trusted with maintaining and promoting employment, economic and enterprise development in the County.

Furthermore, in order to continue to facilitate an environment for businesses and communities to prosper, Galway County Council is committed to preparing an Economic Strategy for the County. Galway County Council is also fully supportive of government initiatives such as the *National Broadband Plan for Ireland: Delivering a Connected Society (2012)*, *Food Harvest 2020*, *Harnessing our Oceans Wealth*, *Strategy for Renewable Energy 2012-2020* and the *Annual National Action Plan for Jobs* which, amongst others, are considered as key facilitators in enabling such an economic environment to materialise.



4.5 Third Level Institutions and the Knowledge Economy

The presence of the National University of Ireland Galway, Galway Mayo Institute of Technology, the Marine Institute and Teagasc Research Centre in the West of Ireland are widely recognised as significant academic assets to the region and these institutions are acknowledged as instrumental catalysts for economic activity in County Galway. Strategic partnerships between these higher educational and research institutions and wider industry whereby knowledge and resources are shared can assist in addressing social challenges and drive economic growth. Having this academic expertise and resources at our disposal, the economic vision for the future of the County should be focused on developing strong linkages between both sectors and thereby enhancing the credentials of the workforce in the County.

4.6 Provision of Serviced Land and Infrastructure

There is an obligation in the Irish planning process for Local Authorities to provide an appropriate amount of land at strategic locations for the purposes of economic development. This is primarily provided for in the local context through the Local Area Plans, which facilitate the future economic expansion of County Galway in a structured and incremental fashion by way of designating sites for business and enterprise and industrial uses. Moreover, it is vital to invest on a continual basis in essential transport, water, wastewater, energy, communications and social infrastructure in order to initially attract and in the long term secure the services of multiple employers.

4.7 Strategic Economic Corridor

Galway County Council in consultation with relevant stakeholders identified a strategic corridor to the east of Galway City which is endowed with a high concentration of valuable infrastructure. The lands concerned are located approximately two kilometres to the north and the south of the Dublin Galway rail line between Attymon station and the N18 level crossing at Oranmore (See Map CSM in Chapter 2). The designation of the Strategic Economic Corridor was based on a framework plan which was commissioned to address the need to accommodate Regionally Strategic Industrial sites. This framework plan is indicative only and should not be relied upon as an indicator of land uses within the defined corridor.

4.8 Former Galway Regional Airport Site

The recent joint purchase of the former Galway Airport site comprising of 115 acres (terminal building, two hangars and 1,300 metre runway) at An Carn Mór by Galway County and City Councils, presents both Councils with the opportunity to develop an excellent brown-field site on the outskirts of the city for the betterment of the County, city and region. The rationale behind its purchase is to avail of the opportunity to stimulate and support economic development in the Galway region. Furthermore, the purchase was mindful of the new responsibilities that Local Authorities have in relation to economic development. This airport site has the potential to be a significant economic asset to the region but any decision on the future use of the lands for economic use will necessitate the agreement of both councils prior to proceeding further with a definitive plan.

4.9 Rural Enterprise

There are over one hundred rural villages and settlements dispersed throughout the County, many of which are devoid of enterprise and suffering from economic and population decline. It is therefore desirable that small scale enterprises and community services are channelled into these locations where possible. Notwithstanding this, rural enterprises can be defined as business or small scale industrial projects or services which are related to normal rural activities and cater for the needs of a predominantly rural client base. It therefore may be practical to facilitate certain developments relating to agriculture, forestry, tourism, recreation and food production at rural locations outside of established towns and villages.

4.10 Farm Diversification

Subsidiary farm shops/businesses utilising existing farmyard buildings for the purposes of selling farm products/services that are produced within the same farm holding can provide new services to local rural communities. Furthermore, animal pet farms/horse riding schools with an element of retail activity in the form of a tea room/coffee shop can create new sources of local rural employment. Sustainable farm/rural based initiatives similar to the aforementioned are to be encouraged, subject to traffic, water and environmental requirements and provided that they remain ancillary to and fully incorporated within an operational farm practice.

4.11 Major Accidents and Seveso Sites

The Seveso II Directive is aimed at preventing major accidents involving dangerous substances and limiting the consequences for humans and the environment in the event of such an occurrence. There are two Seveso II sites in the functional area of Galway County Council consisting of one Upper Tier site and a Lower Tier site and both are listed below in Table 4.3. The Upper Tier Seveso II site is the Chemoran facility at Deerpark Industrial Estate in Oranmore. This Upper Tier site requires a 'Seveso External Emergency Plan' to be prepared as per the requirements of Seveso II and same is being formulated at present.

Galway County Council has a *Major Emergency Plan for the County 2013 - 2014* and is also an integral partner along with An Garda Síochána, the Health Service Executive, the Galway Harbour Company and Galway City Council in respect of the Seveso External Emergency Plan for Galway Harbour Enterprise Park/Topaz site in Galway City. Moreover, all development proposals involving existing or proposed facilities classified under the Seveso II Directive will be referred to the Health and Safety Authority whose technical advice shall be taken into account in addition to any normal planning considerations.

Seveso	Upper Tier	Chemoran: Manufacture and Storage of Chemicals
Seveso	Lower Tier	Tynagh Energy Ltd.

Table 4.3: List of the Seveso Sites in County Galway

4.12 Tourism

4.12.1 Introduction

The importance of the tourism industry to the local economy of Galway is significant. Recently published figures put the number of overseas tourists who visited Galway City and County in 2012 at 968,000 persons⁴. The revenue generated by these overseas visitors alone is estimated to be worth €253 million euro⁵ to the local economy. Furthermore, some 272 events were organised in Galway as part of 'The Gathering Ireland 2013' which brought many new visitors to the County and opened up many new horizons. The success of 'The Gathering Ireland 2013' campaign at national level is testament to what can be achieved around a good tourism product and it is against this backdrop that tourism in County Galway must build going forward. Galway County Council shall create strong geographical regions to try and maximise economic return to the County from tourist and recreational activities.

4.12.2 Conamara Tourism

Tourism infrastructure and facilities in the County need to be constantly maintained and improved in order to sustain the industry locally and attract new and repeat visitors. The tourist experience of County Galway is strongly influenced by the availability of things to see and do. Therefore access to existing tourist attractions needs to be safeguarded and continued efforts made to strengthen tourist resources in the County. Fáilte Ireland is committed in this regard having recently delivered the Derroura Mountain Bike Trail Capital Investment Project near Oughterard. Fáilte Ireland is also currently spearheading a tourism initiative for County Galway in conjunction with Galway County Council through the *Connemara Infrastructure and Interpretation Plan 2012*. Galway County Council supports the development of a Geo Park in the Clonbur area. Furthermore, Galway County Council is fully supportive of the initiative to develop the Pearse Commemorative Centre in Rosmuc and realises the historical significance associated with it, especially in the lead up to the centenary celebrations of the 1916 Rising. Galway County Council is also supportive of the Emigrants and Diaspora Commemorative Centre in Carna and realises the symbolic and historic significance of this project in the West Conamara Gaeltacht.

4.12.3 Conamara Greenway

The route of the Conamara greenway extends from Clifden to Galway City spanning an overall distance of approximately 84 kilometres. This greenway will for the most part utilise the old disused Clifden to Galway rail line which closed in 1935. Galway County Council has progressed the planning of the first stage of the route from Clifden to Oughterard covering a distance of 52 kilometres. A substantial stretch of stage 1 of the project (approximately 45 km) will be provided off road with the remainder being incorporated alongside the newly re-aligned N59. These stage 1 construction works are expected to start in 2014 and will entail the replacement or repair of seven bridges along the route. Funding for the provision of the first stage of the greenway from Clifden to Oughterard is being provided by Fáilte Ireland.

4.12.4 The Wild Atlantic Way

The Wild Atlantic Way is an important gateway through Co. Galway. One of the major aspirations of the *Connemara Infrastructure & Interpretation Plan 2012* is to integrate the Galway coastline which runs from Leenane to Kinvara into the wider Wild Atlantic Way project. In addition the N18 Kilcolgan to Gort road through Ardahan – Labane could be listed as a loop route off the Wild Atlantic Route and can link back to the Wild Atlantic Way at Kinvara by Tierneevan – Kilmacduagh. It is envisaged as part of this project that there will be a host of discovery points at various intervals around the coastline of the County. These discovery points will be appropriately equipped to provide tourists with the opportunity to intimately explore the history, culture and wildlife of each locality.

⁴ Fáilte Ireland July 2013

⁵ Fáilte Ireland July 2013

4.12.5 East Galway Tourism

Galway County Council is dedicated to developing the tourism resource in the east of the County. A demonstration of this is where Galway County Council in partnership with Clare County Council, Tipperary County Council and the Heritage Council recently produced a heritage trail for Lough Derg on the Shannon. This trail currently consists of a smart phone app, brochure and DVD and plans are in place to develop further heritage tourism products for the lake and other niche heritage tourism products such as town trails and ecclesiastical heritage trails of East Galway. A similar app has also been developed by the Western Regional Authority for the Hymany Way from Portumna to Ballinasloe.

The Battle of Aughrim Interpretative Centre, the Irish Workhouse Centre/Portumna Castle, Coole Park, Athenry medieval town and walls, Clonfert Cathedral and Dunguaire Castle are some of the other important tourism assets in the east of the County. Galway County Council is also currently working with local stakeholders and Fáilte Ireland to explore how the facilities at Thoor Ballylee can be reinstated as an additional tourist attraction.

4.12.6 The Burren

The Burren is a major tourism, landscape, heritage and cultural asset in south County Galway and north County Clare and is on the tentative list of sites for Unesco World Heritage Site status. Its unique character which has evolved over many millennia, owing to the complex interaction of geology and physical landscape, natural beauty, wildlife, monuments and culture, makes it one of Europe's most cherished landscapes. The Burren Charter, which is a community led charter supported by the two Local Authorities is actively promoting the tourism, cultural and landscape assets of the Burren. Galway County Council will support the development of a Burren Lowlands Geopark which would support people and organisations in South/East Galway to ensure a cared for landscape and better understood heritage and sustainable tourism.

4.12.7 Islands and An Ghaeltacht

The off shore Islands and the Gaeltacht region are quintessential representations of traditional life and culture in County Galway. The stone forts of the Islands are on the tentative list of sites for Unesco World Heritage Site status. The intrigue associated with the beauty of and way of life on the Islands and the linguistic distinctiveness of the Galway Gaeltacht contribute significantly to their uniqueness. They are also particularly attractive as destinations for cultural tourists, interested in Irish linguistic and vernacular heritage, and for students of Irish. These characteristics combine to make the Islands and the Gaeltacht popular tourist destinations and tourism assets in the context of the overall County, which Galway County Council is committed to protecting, promoting and enhancing.



4.13 Food and Craft, Arts, Culture and Heritage Tourism

There is a burgeoning speciality food and craft sector in the County, with many small producers and manufacturers contributing niche foods and crafts to the domestic and international markets. Foreign trade expeditions and promotional initiatives such as the 'Made in Galway' campaign are integral components in championing their emergence, as they provide a platform to exhibit an array of indigenous foods and local artisan industries to a wider audience. Domestically, examples of standard bearers for the sector include GMIT Letterfrack, the National Centre for Furniture Design and Technology which has gained international recognition for its excellence, the world renowned Clarinbridge Oyster Festival and the emerging Conamara Mussel Festival. Institutions and events such as these and others are an invaluable asset to the local economy and contribute to showcasing some of the finest food and crafts on offer in the County. A revival in the tradition of farmer's markets and a proliferation in this type of regularised casual trading throughout the County can contribute to augmenting the wider food and craft industry of the County. Arts, culture, heritage and the unique linguistic heritage of Galway also augment the tourism industry in the County. It is important to recognise the economic contribution that such niche assets and activities generate and therefore it is important to promote and safeguard these valuable sectors.



4.14 Economic Development and Tourism Policies and Objectives

Economic Development and Tourism Policies

Policy EDT 1 – Economic Development

Support sustainable economic development and employment creation in the County, while simultaneously having regard to relevant planning legislation and guidance in order to ensure protection of the built and natural heritage, landscape/townscape/streetscape character of settlements and the rural countryside and general amenity.

Policy EDT 2 – Employment, Economy and Enterprise Promotion & Partnership

Proactively pursue economic growth, enterprise and employment in the County in conjunction with the relevant state agencies and government departments in a manner that synchronises with the policies and objectives as set out in national, regional and local strategies.

Policy EDT 3 – Regional Synergy

Forge partnerships with bordering Local Authorities and other local and regional agencies including the West Regional Authority to optimise the benefits of combined resources in order to realise the full sustainable economic potential of the County and Western Region.

Policy EDT 4 – Third Level/Research Institutions and the Knowledge Economy

Garner and develop strategic links with third level institutions and industries/businesses in order to create an enhanced local knowledge based economy and in order to strengthen education, training and skills development in the workforce.

Policy EDT 5 – County Tourism

Maintain the status of County Galway as a popular tourist destination, by striving to preserve the attributes and assets of the County that make it unique and by endeavouring to enrich the visitor experience by contributing to the fulfilment of appropriate additional tourist resources and facilities, throughout the County within the lifetime of the plan.

Policy EDT 6 – Tourism Product

Support the development of an integrated tourism product for the County involving all the relevant stakeholders and the marketing of tourism initiatives at local, regional, national and international level.

Policy EDT 7 – Arts, Culture, Heritage, Food and Crafts

Support the development and marketing of the Arts, culture, heritage, foods and crafts of the County through networking and developing trade links with regions, locally, nationally and internationally.

Policy EDT 8 – Cultural Tourism

Support the development of cultural tourism throughout the County and in particular in Irish speaking Gaeltacht areas.

Policy EDT 9 – Bearna Golf Club

Facilitate the development of an integrated tourism and recreational complex at Bearna Golf and Country Club, including the development of a hotel, leisure centre, conference centre, golf apartments, apart-hotel and associated residential units.

Policy EDT 10 – Tourism Developments

Tourism developments will be subject to Appropriate Assessment to safeguard the integrity of the Natura 2000 network of sites.

Economic Development and Tourism Objectives

Objective EDT 1 – Strategic Economic Corridor

The objectives for the Strategic Economic Corridor include:

- To upgrade, improve and maximise the infrastructural facilities available within the corridor;
- To seek to reserve lands to support nationally and regionally significant activities and to attract specialist enterprise development that is large scale or high value;
- To facilitate opportunities for science and technology based employment;
- To ensure development is compatible with the enhancement, preservation and protection of the environment and cultural resources recognised within the corridor;
- To identify sites of adequate size and location to accommodate necessary infrastructure or support activities which would not be appropriate in proximity to centres of population or sensitive environments or environmentally sensitive economic activities;
- To inform and to aid the preparation of Local Area Plans for strategic areas and those surrounding immediate environs within the corridor.

Objective EDT 2 – County Economic Development Strategy

Support the preparation of a County Economic Development Strategy and an Economic and Local Community Plan within the lifetime of the plan.

Objective EDT 3 – Research, Innovation, Incubation and Training

Support exploratory research, pioneering projects, new start up businesses/industries and retraining programmes in conjunction with the development agencies and educational/research institutions.

Objective EDT 4 – Provision of Land and Infrastructure

Dedicate a sufficient amount of strategically located and serviced lands for the purposes of targeting economic development and employment creation activities.

Objective EDT 5 – Infrastructural Investment

Assist in obtaining the maximum efficiency of zoned lands in the County through continued support for the installation, maintenance, upgrade and extension of key water, wastewater, communications, energy and transport infrastructural networks.

Objective EDT 6 – Optimise the Benefits of Serviced Lands

Safeguard lands that are designated for the creation of employment from inappropriate development that would stifle prospective economic activity.

Objective EDT 7 – Align Enterprise to Serviced Lands

Encourage industrial and enterprise development to operate from lands zoned for these purposes within the various Local Area Plans in the County, subject to an adequate consideration of the policies and objectives of this plan and the need to protect the vitality and amenities of the town or settlement.

Objective EDT 8 – Design Standards

Encourage the provision of high quality designs (including variations in design and scale), layout, boundary treatment and arrival views of development within Industrial, Business, Enterprise and Commercial/Mixed Use lands, in order to positively contribute to the character and visual amenity of the area.

Objective EDT 9 – Small Scale Enterprise and Community Services

Seek to provide a strategic economic balance countywide by encouraging the establishment of small scale enterprises and community services in the smaller rural villages and settlements of the County.

Objective EDT 10 – Former Galway Airport Site

Support the development of the former Galway airport site at An Carn Mór for the purposes of an economic hub/strategic development site or other strategic use.

Objective EDT 11 – Rural Enterprise

Consider the establishment of small scale rural orientated enterprises in unserved rural areas outside of town or village settings which can be accommodated in existing farm buildings or can be established on a brownfield site, subject to satisfying the following criteria:

- Compatibility and general suitability to an unserved rural area (primary consideration will be given to agriculture, renewable and marine resources, forestry, tourism, recreation or food production related enterprise activities and services);
- Scale of development (assimilate appropriately into a rural setting);
- Nature of development (raw materials sourced locally);
- Consideration of social and environmental impacts (enterprise must not have a significant adverse impact on the environment or rural amenity);
- The enterprise must not constitute a road safety hazard or have a major adverse impact on the road network, road capacity and traffic levels;
- Residential amenity (enterprise must not have a significant adverse impact on residential amenity).

Objective EDT 12 – Farm Diversification

Consider proposals for the integration of a retail/services use onto a farm where it can be demonstrated that the scale and extent of retailing proposed is ancillary and compatible with the ongoing agricultural use of the farm and will not compromise the vitality and viability of retail facilities in any nearby settlement or detract from the rural setting in which it is to operate.

Objective EDT 13 – Seveso II Directive

Refer planning applications concerning a proposed development within the buffer zone of an existing Seveso II site and any new proposal constituting a Seveso II designation to the Health & Safety Authority.

Objective EDT 14 – Tourism Infrastructure and Services

Provide where feasible, and support the provision of tourism infrastructure and services including greenway amenity and water based tourism infrastructure throughout the County in appropriate locations.

Objective EDT 15 – Connemara Infrastructure and Interpretation Plan

Support in the delivery of the vision as set out in the '*Connemara Infrastructure and Interpretation Plan 2012*', within the lifetime of the plan.

Objective EDT 16 – Teach an Phiarsaigh

Collaborate with relevant agencies and committees in the development of the Teach an Phiarsaigh project at Rosmuc and assist in the delivery of its tourist potential as a historical and cultural centre, within the lifetime of the plan.

Objective EDT 17 – Outdoor Pursuits

Support the provision of sporting, sailing, boating, kayaking and angling facilities, pier and marina development, pony trekking routes, golf courses, adventure and interpretative centres and associated ancillary uses throughout the County in appropriate locations including former quarry sites.

Objective EDT 18 – Holiday Accommodation in Serviced Settlements

Encourage the proportionate development of new stand alone holiday homes/independent guest accommodation and short-stay accommodation within existing adequately serviced town and village settlements.

Objective EDT 19 – Holiday Accommodation in Open Countryside

- (a) Consider the reuse of existing buildings for holiday homes/guest accommodation outside of settlements where it can be demonstrated that there is a justifiable tourist product/demand. Any renovation work shall be similar in scale and design to the existing building(s). In such cases, documentary evidence shall be submitted to substantiate the proposed development and each individual application will be assessed on its merits;
- (b) Consider the provision of short-stay accommodation (glamping/camping etc.) outside of settlements where it can be demonstrated that there is a justifiable tourist product/demand. The need to develop in a particular area must be balanced against environmental, social and cultural impacts of the development and benefits to the local community. In such cases, documentary evidence shall be submitted to substantiate the proposed development and each individual application will be assessed on its merits.

Objective EDT 20 – Rural Business

Bone fide applicants who are not considered eligible under the Rural Housing Categories in Chapter 3 may be considered as qualifying to build a permanent home in the rural areas, which are not subject to strong urban influence, subject to being able to satisfy the Planning Authority that they operate an existing established full time business which they now propose to operate from their proposed home in a rural area, as part of their planning application, in order, for example, to discourage commuting to towns or cities. Applicants must be able to submit evidence that:

- Their business will contribute to and enhance the rural community in which they seek to live; and
- They can satisfy the Planning Authority that the nature of their employment or business is compatible with those specified in the local needs criteria for rural areas ie. that they are serving a predominantly local rural business need.

Objective EDT 21 – Off Shore Island Tourism

Facilitate the development of sustainable and green tourism which draws on the cultural, linguistic, archaeological, marine/coastal and ecological wealth of the off shore islands of County Galway while simultaneously safeguarding their integrity.

Objective EDT 22 – Gaeltacht Tourism

Facilitate the sustainable development of the Gaeltacht areas of County Galway as cultural and linguistic tourist destinations while simultaneously safeguarding their integrity.

Objective EDT 23 – East Galway, Lough Derg and The Burren

- a) Facilitate the sustainable development of East Galway, Lough Derg and the Burren as cultural and tourist destinations while simultaneously safeguarding their integrity;
- b) Galway County Council to explore with Clare County Council, the proposal to add Burren Lowlands areas to the Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark;
- c) Promote active collaboration between all stakeholders both in Co.Galway and adjoining counties and region.

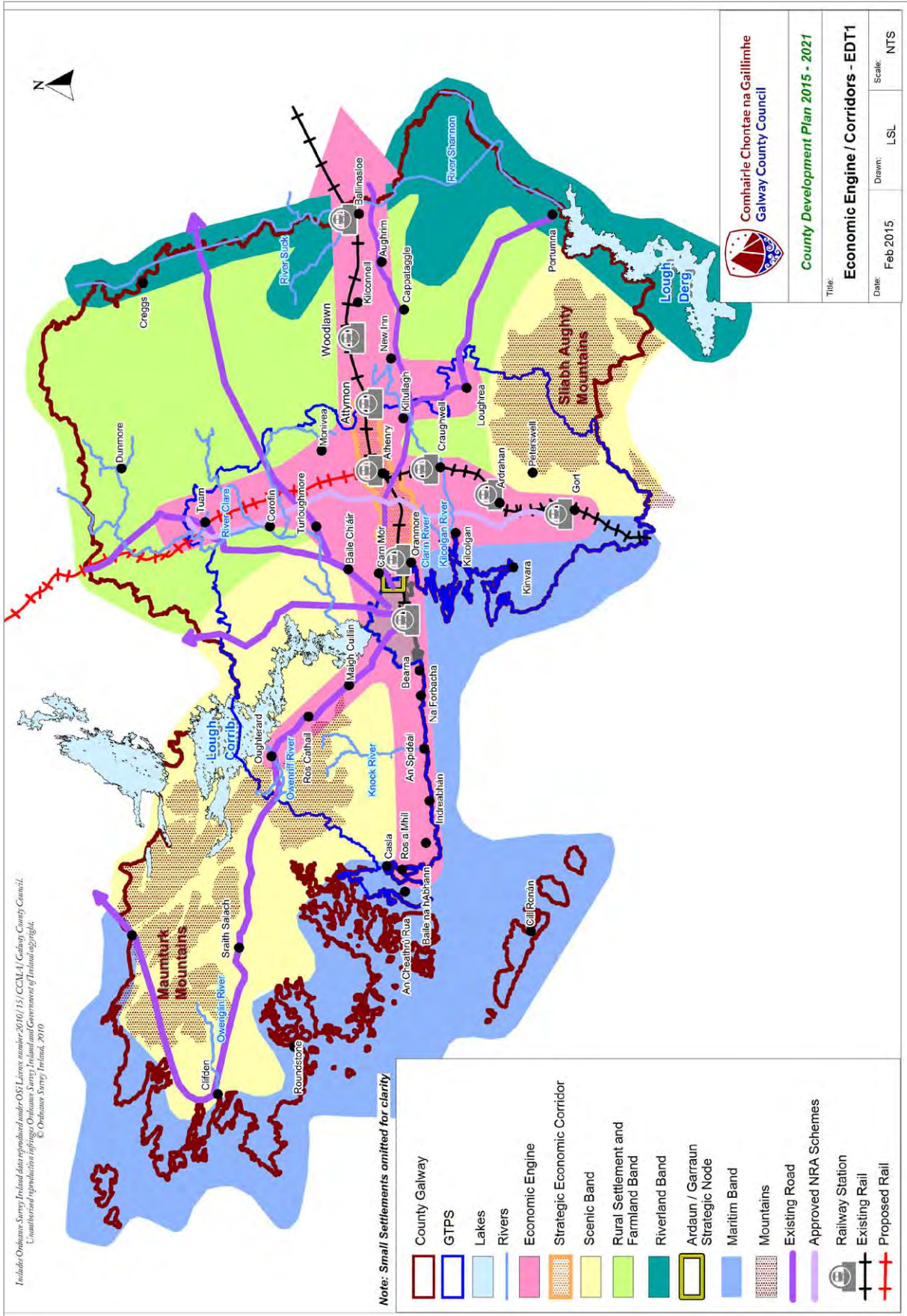
Objective EDT 24 – Arts, Culture, Heritage, Food and Crafts

Support and facilitate the development of the Food and Craft sector including the formation of regularised farmer’s markets and support the development of the Arts, culture, and heritage festivals at appropriate locations throughout the County.

Objective EDT 25 – The Wild Atlantic Way

Support and facilitate the Wild Atlantic Way project in conjunction with the relevant stakeholders and Galway County Council will actively encourage the creation of spurs to link in with the Wild Atlantic Way as was intended, taking into account environmental sensitivities.





4.15 Retail Planning Guidelines and Design Manual for Planning Authorities DoECLG (2012)

Consumers are enticed to visit and spend money along vibrant streets that have attractive shopping vistas and a diverse retail mix. As footfall increases in these shopping areas, retailers who do not have a presence there seek to enter the local market, resulting in new stores opening and the consumption of retail space that would otherwise be vacant. Conversely, rising vacancy rates in shopping districts leads to reduced footfall and a situation can manifest itself to a point whereby there is irreparable commercial decline. In order to avoid the latter, the *Galway County Development Plan 2015–2021* shall take cognisance of the *Retail Planning Guidelines & Design Manual for Planning Authorities DoEHLG 2012*.

4.16 Core Shopping Areas

Historically, the core shopping areas associated with towns in the County originated as a central Street and/or a Town Square and were confined broadly to same with proprietors living overhead. These core shopping areas gradually over the centuries emanated outwards to adjoining areas but have remained predominantly focused around a central Main Street and/or a Town Square and are generally compact in terms of their overall geographical extent. Notwithstanding this, an undesirable trend has emerged primarily inside the last decade or so, whereby retailers are increasingly opting to locate/relocate to peripheral settings and the tradition of living above the shop/business has all but disappeared. Accordingly, the *Retail Planning Guidelines (2012)* require that the boundaries of core shopping areas of town centres in the County be defined and encourage Planning Authorities to establish implementation teams to proactively engage with landlords, tenants, retailers, chambers of commerce etc. to bring forward/amalgamate sites for development which are identified as suitable for retailing needs.

4.17 Improvement of Town Centres

Following on from the core shopping areas, the *Retail Planning Guidelines (2012)* also recognise the importance of 'healthy' town centres in terms of retail performance. In this regard, regular assessment of the vitality and viability of town centres is recommended and Annex 2 of the guidelines sets out an evaluation approach which can be used by Local Authorities. The Forward Planning Section of Galway County Council recently commenced surveys of Tuam, Ballinasloe and Loughrea town centres focusing on two key Town Centre Health Check Indicators, those being diversity of use and vacancy. It is the intention of the Forward Planning Section of Galway County Council to complete surveys of all other key town centres in the County. Table 4.4 illustrates the results recorded to date as part of the research work.



Type of use	No. of outlets Tuam	% Tuam	No. of outlets Ballinasloe	% Ballinasloe	No. of outlets Loughrea	% Loughrea
Comparison	66	26	53	23	46	20
Convenience	14	6	12	5	14	6
Retail service	31	12	31	13	29	13
Leisure service	43	17	41	18	38	17
Business service	24	9	15	7	21	9
Health & medical	11	4	7	3	16	7
Public service	8	3	11	5	14	6
Religious service	1	0.5	7	3	2	1
Vacancy	53	21	48	21	40	18
Derelict/obsolete	4	1.5	5	2	7	3
Total	255	100	230	100	227	100

Table 4.4: Diversity of Retail Uses in Tuam, Ballinasloe & Loughrea Core Town Centres*

*Note: For the purposes of the above research, the town centre boundaries afforded to Tuam, Ballinalsoe & Loughrea were established based on desktop studies and on site observations and therefore do not correlate with town centre zonings in the Local Area Plans.

4.18 Retail Diversity

Variety in the services on offer is required in order to achieve and maintain a vibrant town or village centre. A proliferation of one particular use above all others can jeopardise this vibrancy.

4.19 Local Shops and Services

Demand can occur for the provision of essential day-to-day services beyond the retail core. It is important therefore to cater for the localised needs of people within close proximity to schools, places of work and concentrated residential areas.

4.20 Evening and Late Night Uses

Town centres that are all inclusive and truly vibrant are those with an adequate provision of evening and late night activities in the form of thriving restaurants, pubs, clubs, takeaways and associated uses. In order to achieve this type of environment, it is important to instil confidence in people that these are safe and exciting places to frequent at all times, while simultaneously being respectful of those who live there on a permanent basis.

4.21 Petrol Filling Stations

In Ireland, petrol stations and associated shops are largely interdependent on each other for their business survival. In the smaller towns and villages of the County they can often provide a valuable solitary retail service to local communities. In such instances it therefore may be acceptable to provide a wider range of products across a generous floor area. Conversely, a substantial number of petrol stations and associated shops are located on the outskirts of the larger towns of the County. Hence, in these cases, it may be necessary to limit the product range and amount of customer floor area provision in order to safeguard the health of existing retail services in the relevant town centres. Having regard to the aforementioned, the Council will consider proposals on an application-by-application basis. Furthermore, the *Retail Planning Guidelines (2012)* state that the floorspace of an associated shop should not exceed 100m² and that the sequential approach should be applicable to any proposal for floorspace in excess of this threshold.

4.22 Retail Signage

There should be continuity in scale and materials between the fabric of a building and its attached signage, with an overall goal of ensuring that signs blend seamlessly into their context while maintaining distinction. Signs should complement any architectural features of a building and refrain from cluttering streetscapes. Furthermore, signs should be designed to promote retail and business activity while enhancing the pedestrian experience. An emphasis should also be put on encouraging the use of traditional hand painted signage above all other forms of signage.

4.23 Retailing Policies and Objectives

Retailing Policies

Policy R1 – Retail Provision

Support and facilitate existing retail and promote and facilitate appropriate new retailing in the significant role that it plays in providing local employment, sustaining local economies and enhancing the attractiveness of the County for residential, business and additional complementary services.

Policy R2 – Retail Vacancy

It is the policy of the Council to have regard to the vacancy rate of similar units when considering the provision of new retail facilities.

Policy R3 – Large Scale Retail Proposals and National Roads/Interchanges

There shall be a general presumption against large scale retail proposals adjacent to existing, new or planned national roads and interchanges in accordance with the provisions of the DoECLG *Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2012* (and any updated/superseding document).

Retailing Objectives

Objective R1 – Retail Planning Guidelines and the Sequential Approach

Support and promote the retail sector in the County and to ensure compliance with the *Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities DoECLG (April 2012, including any updated/superseding document)*, including the need for a sequential approach to retail development, the policies and objectives of any future Retail Strategy for Galway and the guidance set out in the *Retail Design Manual DoECLG (April 2012)*.

Objective R2 – Retail Hierarchy

Actively promote a hierarchy of retail functions in the County that complements the settlement hierarchy of this plan:

- (a) To retain and further develop the higher order shopping functions in Tuam, Ballinasloe and Loughrea as the main retailing centres in the County;
- (b) To encourage appropriate retail provision in the other key towns of the County as per the settlement hierarchy in order for them to realise their potential;
- (c) To retain and further develop local shopping facilities in other towns, villages and settlements in the County and encourage appropriate new retail development in centrally located sites.

Objective R3 – Retail Survey and Strategy

- (a) To Engage with Galway City Council to produce a Retail Strategy within 3 years of the adoption of the Development Plan;
- (b) To commence and complete retail surveys of all major towns listed in the Core Strategy Settlement Table which will inform the retail strategy.

Objective R4 – Retail Site Assembly

To facilitate site assembly in the Tuam hub, the County town of Ballinasloe and all key town centres of the County (having regard to existing historical plot and street patterns) to address issues such as vacancy, dereliction/decay and urban sprawl.

Objective R5 – Living over the Shop

Preserve and promote the tradition of living over the shop in all town and village settlements throughout the County.

Objective R6 – Retail Diversity

Ensure that in the interests of vitality and viability, development proposals result in a balance of services and outlets thus avoiding an over-concentration of uses.

Objective R7 - Local Shops and Services

Facilitate the development of small shops and services at peripheral locations within town settlements only where it can be demonstrated that they are of a scale to serve only localised demand and will not impact negatively on the vitality and viability of the existing town centre.

Objective R8 – Late Night and Evening Uses

Support proposals for development involving off-peak evening and late night commercial, retail or leisure uses within or immediately adjacent to town centres, where it can be demonstrated that the development will enhance the character and function of the area and not detract from the residential and general amenity of the area.

Objective R9 – Regulation of Late Night and Evening Uses

Seek to uphold environmental quality standards through the application of good practice principles in the management of late night uses, in the form of stipulating litter prevention measures and regulating hours of operation.

Objective R10 – Retailing Associated with Petrol Stations

Consider development proposals for shop facilities accompanying petrol stations on their individual merits, having regard to the *Retail Planning Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2012) and subject to traffic implications.

Objective R11 – Strategic Town Centre Development

Be supportive of existing marts and co-ops in the County which seek to relocate from prime town centre locations to edge of town locations subject to adherence to normal planning requirements and development control standards, thus allowing for the expansion of a town centre/core area for retail and commercial purposes.

Objective R12 – High Quality Retail Environment

Support the development of appropriate types, scales and patterns of retail development in suitable locations within the settlements of the County and with high quality design that:

- Support the vitality and viability of the existing settlement centre and associated main streets and/or do not undermine their vibrancy;
- Protect investment in strategic roads and infrastructure and provide ease of accessibility to retail areas, particularly in terms of public transport;
- Contribute to the creation of a high quality retail environment.



Roads & Transportation

Subject to Variation No.1-See separate link(Adopted 24th April 2017)

5.1 Land Use Integration and Sustainable Transport Strategy

The integration of transport planning, access and land-use considerations strives to provide for sustainable forms of transport, helps create more sustainable communities and promotes balanced regional development. The timely provision of high quality transportation infrastructure within County Galway is critical to the County's socio-economic development and in the promotion of social and economic well-being.

One of the strategic aims of the *County Development Plan 2009-2015* was to move towards a more sustainable and integrated concept of development with regard to land use, transportation, water services and energy supply. The Spatial/Settlement Strategy focused development in Tuam Hub Town and key towns and villages along strategic development corridors, emerging along the new transportation infrastructure (road and rail) as recommended in the *Galway Transportation and Planning Study 1999, 2003 (GTPS)*. Many of the GTPS's initiatives are still relevant and have informed subsequent policy documents and national guidelines such as the *National Development Plan, the National Spatial Strategy, the Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region* and have also informed the spatial/settlement strategies and the transportation strategy of previous Galway County Development Plans. The integration of land use and transportation shall continue to be the overarching strategic aim of the *Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021*.

The Transportation Strategy for County Galway as set out within this Chapter will build on the priority access infrastructure noted within the *Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region 2010-2022* such as completion of the Atlantic Corridor M18/M17 and N17, the critical bypasses on National Secondary Routes such as the N59 Maigh Cuilinn and N17 Baile An Chláir By-Pass, the improvement /upgrade of the R336 between Galway and Scríb via Ros an Mhíl and the reclassification and upgrade of the N60/61 as a National Primary route.

The RPG's also support a review of the *Galway Transportation and Planning Study*, the opening of the entire Western Rail Corridor, improvement to bus services and accessibility including the rural transport services, upgrading of air transportation infrastructure including services, promotion of a sustainable and usable cycling network within the region and the sustainable development of listed ports and harbours.

Galway County Council will continue to support extensions and improvements to existing transport infrastructure within County Galway such as road, cycle, port and harbour networks and shall support in conjunction with other agencies improvements to rail, air and bus services including the Rural Transport Programme. It is acknowledged that the Council is a facilitator in the delivery of the public transport services and infrastructure as they are outside the jurisdiction of the Council. Galway County Council will collaborate with other agencies/service providers and will also work with Galway City Transportation Unit which has within its remit the implementation of the transportation recommendations of the GTPS and other relevant subsequent studies.

- **Table 5.1 Priority Transportation Infrastructure 2015-2021:** lists priority projects that have been identified within the Development Plan period;
- **Table 5.2 Regional/Local Projects Proposed for 2015-2021:** lists regional/local projects proposed within the Development Plan period;

National Roads

N17 Tuam to Claremorris Scheme, including Tuam Town By Pass;
M18/M17 Gort-Tuam Scheme, including the N17 Tuam By Pass;
N18 Gleannascaul Scheme;
**N59 Oughterard-Maam Cross Scheme;
**N59 Maam Cross-Clifden Scheme;
N84 Luimnagh Scheme;
N63 Leacht Seoirse-Ballygar Scheme;
N67 Kilcolgan-County Boundary Scheme (ongoing);
N83 Tuam-Dunmore;
N66 Kilchreest;
N65 Kilmeen-Portumna;
N84 Galway to County Boundary Scheme;
N18 at Carrowmoneash northwards towards the interchange with the M6;

Pavement Overlays

- N17
- N18
- N59
- N63
- N65
- N66
- N67
- N83
- N84

Critical Town By Passes

- N59 Maigh Cuilinn By-pass;
- N17 Baile Chláir By-pass;
- N59 Oughterard By-pass;

Other Roads

- R336 Bearna-Scríb via Ros an Mhíl;
- Athenry Relief Road & including M6 Link Road to the Cashla road (partially completed and ongoing);
- Link Road from R348 – IDA estate and LP3103;
- R340;
- R332;

Public Car Parks

- Loughrea Car Park;
- Portumna Car Park;
- Gort Car Park;
- Oughterard Car Park;
- Cleggan Car Park;
- Headford Car Park;

National and Local Cycle Networks

The development of a national and local cycle network is a project which is essential as part of the development of a sustainable tourism industry and also at the local level for the development of an alternative transport mode.

Cycleways/Greenways

- Galway/Clifden Greenway

Cycle Routes

- Support and develop the *National Cycle Route* between Dublin, Ballinasloe, Galway City and Clifden along a mostly off line route;
- Support and develop the *National Cycle Route* from Clifden to Leenane;
- Support and develop the *National Cycle Route* from Oranmore to Clarinbridge, Kilcolgan, Ballindereen, Kinvara and on to the County boundary;
- Support and develop walking and cycling routes in accordance with the *Galway County Walking and Cycling Strategy 2013*;
- Support and develop walking and cycling routes in accordance with the Active Travel Town Strategies for Tuam, Ballinasloe, Clifden, Oranmore, Athenry and Gort;
- Support and develop *Galway City & Environs Walking and Cycling Strategy* in consultation and co-operation with Galway City Council;

- Support, promote and implement walking and cycling strategies for other towns in County Galway such as: Oughterard, Maigh Cuilinn, Clarinbridge, Kinvara, Portumna, Headford, Leenane, Cleggan, An Cheathrú Rua, Ballyconneely, An Spidéal, Bearna, Mountbellew, Moylough, Aughrim, Glenamaddy, Ballymoe, Ballygar, Dunmore, Craughwell, Ardahan, Williamstown and Cill Chiaráin and Carna which will link in with the *National Cycle Network Scoping Study (2010)* and the *Galway County Walking and Cycling Strategy*;
- Examine the possibility of identifying a route linking Ballindine (in Co. Mayo) with Milltown, Tuam and its environs to the National Cycling Network and/or the Tuam/Athenry cycle route;
- Design and develop the provision of a coastal walkway/cycleway from Bearna to Oranmore in conjunction with Galway City Council.

Rail

- Dualing of rail line from Galway - Athenry - Ballinalsoe;
- Western Rail Corridor;

Other Transportation

- Implementation of Smarter Travel infrastructure projects;

Harbour, Piers & Slipways

- Inis Oírr, Inis Meáin, Clifden, Kinvara & Sruthán;

Table 5.1: Priority Transportation Infrastructure Projects for County Galway 2015-2021

(Source: Galway County Council Roads Section November 2013)

**** N59 National Secondary Route – Clifden to Oughterard:**

The N59 National Secondary Route in County Galway is the primary transportation link to North Conamara. The route is substandard from an alignment, pavement, capacity and safety viewpoint and requires substantial investment. It is proposed to develop a mostly on-line improvement to the route appropriate to the capacity, safety and economic needs of the Conamara area. The first phase of the improvement process has commenced planning (Maam Cross to Oughterard) and the Clifden to Oughterard section will follow.



Routes	Works to be Undertaken
R336, R446	Network improvement works, strengthening overlay and improvements.
N59 from Galway City to the Mayo boundary via Leenane.	Network improvements.
Oranhill Link Roads.	To complete link roads.
N6 at Carrowmoneash to link to Oranmore Industrial Area on N18.	Investigate and provide for a pedestrian crossing.
Tuam Road Quality Bus Corridor Consider creation of additional lanes or alteration of existing lanes for Quality Bus Corridors on the R446, N17, N59, N84 and linkage to the Western Rail Corridor.	In conjunction with Galway City complete the design of the Tuam Road quality bus corridor and reserve lands accordingly. Complete the design of Quality Bus Corridors and reserve lands accordingly.
N65 Kilmeen to Portumna	
Local and regional road networks within the County.	Continue strengthening and improvement works to these networks.

Table 5.2: Regional/Local Projects Proposed for 2015-2021

(Source: Galway County Council Roads Section November 2013)

Note: These lists are not exclusive. Improvements to the general road network shall continue to be undertaken as required and as resources permit.

5.1.1 Transportation – Strategic Aims

Galway County Council shall work with other agencies in the provision and maintenance of road, rail, aviation and marine based transport infrastructure that promotes a choice of transport modes, which contributes to a sustainable and integrated transport strategy, promotes economic investment and provides a high quality of life for the existing and future population of County Galway.

In accordance with the overall vision of this County Development Plan, EU environmental and national legislation and regulations, the Development Plan transportation objectives are based on the following strategic aims;

- To provide a safe and efficient network of transport to serve the needs of the people and the movement of goods and services to, from and within County Galway;
- Provide access for all in an integrated manner with an enhanced choice of transport options including the Rural Transport Programme;

- To promote and encourage the use of alternative sustainable modes of transport and to promote the use of transport energy from renewable resources;
- Promote development on serviced lands in towns and villages, particularly those located along public transport corridors in accordance with the *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines* (2009), having regard to existing settlement patterns;
- To safeguard the strategic transport function and carrying capacity of the motorway and national road network and associated junctions in order to provide for the safe and efficient movement of inter-urban and inter-regional traffic;
- To support the opening of the Western Rail Corridor route from Athenry, Tuam Hub Town, Claremorris to Collooney (4 Sections) as an option for passenger and cargo transportation;
- To support the upgrade of air transportation infrastructure within the County including improved access and air services in order to enhance air connectivity to domestic and foreign markets;
- Promote and enhance access (including ferry/cargo services) in a sustainable manner to and between the existing network of ports, harbours, piers, quays and slipways within the County and offshore islands in support of tourism and the local economy.

5.2 Land Use Integration and Sustainable Transportation Strategy Policies and Objectives

Land Use Integration and Sustainable Transportation Strategy Policies

Policy TI 1 – Transportation Strategy and Compliance with Legislation

It is the overarching policy of Galway County Council to comply with all relevant Irish and European planning and environmental legislation in implementing its Transportation Strategy.

Policy TI 2 – Development of an Integrated and Sustainable Transport System

It is the policy of the Council to promote the development of an integrated and sustainable high quality transport system that shall:

- a) Promote closer co-ordination between land use and sustainable transportation;
- b) Continue the provision of a range of transport options within the County in collaboration with other statutory agencies and transport providers, including a safe road network, a range of bus and rail services, adequate facilities for walking and cycling and opportunities for air and water-based travel.

Policy TI 3 – Sustainable Travel Measure

Support the Government's commitment under the *EU Renewable Energy Directive (2009/28/EC)* to achieve agreed national targets in relation to sustainable transport to include those for electric vehicles to constitute 10% of the Irish transport fleet by 2020 and a bio-fuel obligation, which will incrementally increase on a sustainable basis to 2020, to meet the renewable energy target of 10% in 2020.

Policy TI 4 – Land Use Integration and Transportation

Ensure that land use planning is integrated with transportation planning and reduces the need to travel, particularly by private transport, by;

- a) Promoting the consolidation of development through the implementation of the Core Strategy/ Settlement Strategy as outlined within this plan;
- b) Encouraging intensification and mixed use development at public transport hubs and nodes identified within the County;
- c) Prioritise walking, cycling and public transport alternatives within, and providing access to, new development proposals, as appropriate.

Land Use Integration and Sustainable Transportation Strategy Objectives**Objective TI 1 – Sustainable Transportation**

Support and facilitate any 'Smarter Travel' initiatives that will improve sustainable transportation within the County including public transport, electric and hybrid vehicles, car clubs, public bike schemes, park and ride/park and stride facilities, improved pedestrian and cycling facilities, as appropriate.

Objective TI 2 – Sustainable Travel Measures

In order to help meet the agreed national targets set for the transport sector under the *EU Renewable Energy Directive (2009/28/EC)*, Galway County Council shall:

- a) Facilitate improvements to existing public transport infrastructure and services through commuter rail and park and ride facilities;
- b) Collaborate with service providers in the improvement of fuel efficiency of motorised transport;
- c) Encourage the use of electric vehicles and bicycles, in line with Council and national policy;
- d) The Council shall continue to promote/implement the "Cycle to Work Scheme" for all employees;
- e) Support the provision of suitable infrastructure to encourage an increase in the use of electric vehicles including the piloting of charging points on-street at key areas subject to the availability of resources and the provision of charging points in non-residential developments.

Objective TI 3 – Mobility Management Plans

Require Mobility Management Plans for all large scale residential, commercial, mixed use, business/enterprise or industrial developments, as appropriate.

Objective TI 4 – Transportation Hub Development

Investigate the potential for the development of integrated transportation hubs at Tuam, Ballinasloe, Athenry, Gort, Clifden, Loughrea and at Garraun within the lifetime of this plan and as resources permit. Seek to maximise the strategic integration of transport and rational land uses within the emerging transportation and economic corridors. Over the lifetime of this plan, emphasis will be placed on the provision of bus facilities adjacent to rail stations, where appropriate.

5.3 Transport Infrastructure – Road and Transportation Networks

The National Road Network can be classified into:

- a) Strategic routes which include National Primary and National Secondary routes;
- b) Non-National roads including regional roads and local roads.

5.3.1 Strategic Routes: Motorway, National Primary and National Secondary Roads

Ireland's inter-urban motorway and dual carriageway networks provide vital, strategic transport links between our major cities, markets, ports and airports. The National Roads Authority's (NRA) primary concern, in considering consent applications relating to these sections of the network, is to ensure that the roads concerned continue to fulfil their strategic objective and to protect the major investment that has been made by Government in the development of these roads.

Galway, due to its peripheral location relies heavily on its public road network for transportation. The NSS identifies the M6 national primary route as a strategic linking corridor and the N17/N18 as a strategic radial corridor. *The Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region* designates the N/M6 and N17/18 as the main access routes in the region and the N59, N63, N83 and N84 as important inter-regional routes as well as the important inter-regional role of the N60, N65, N66 and N67 national secondary roads within County Galway.

5.3.2 Non-National Routes

There are approximately 771kms of regional roads and 5,331kms of local roads in the County. Regional and local roads support the economy by providing links between national roads. Regional roads link towns and villages within the County and region and connect them to the national routes. They are intended to provide for traffic movement without the introduction of unnecessary traffic into residential or amenity areas. Development along these roads should not diminish their capacity to fulfil this role or prejudice their future development. Local roads are primarily service roads of greatest benefit to the immediate community served. They serve as part of the distribution network but their primary purpose is as service roads.

5.3.3 Galway Gateway Traffic and Transportation issues

In response to the judgment of the European Court of Justice in relation to the Galway City Outer By-Pass Scheme and the ongoing issues of traffic congestion and transportation issues in the Galway Gateway area, Galway County Council and Galway City Council are examining the transportation issues in Galway City and environs. Preliminary examinations of these issues have shown that the following are worthy of further analysis:

- Congestion on major routes around the city;
- Unreliable journey time due to uncertain quantum of delay;
- Journey time variability throughout the day;
- Peak hour traffic delays;

- Through traffic in conflict with internal traffic;
- Inadequate transport links to access markets within the city and transport outwards;
- Inadequate transport connections to the rest of the County, particularly westwards;
- Lack of accessibility to the Western Region as a whole.

It is acknowledged that solutions to address these problems are required to encourage balanced local, regional and national sustainable development and to maintain and increase safety for all road users. All feasible alternatives to address these issues must be assessed, including non-road alternatives, multi-modal options, new infrastructure and/or upgrades of existing networks. However, any such transportation solutions must be cognisant of the high environmental status of the area and the high level of environmental protection afforded to designated European Sites in the study area.

5.3.4 Road Safety

Galway County Council will work with relevant bodies and authorities to encourage, develop and improve existing entrances and junctions to restricted routes.

5.4 Roads and Transportation Policies and Objectives

Roads and Transportation Policies

Policy TI 5 – Roads, Streets and Parking

It is the policy of Galway County Council in conjunction with all relevant statutory agencies and infrastructure providers to provide road and street networks that are safe and convenient, that have adequate capacity to accommodate motorised traffic and non-motorised movements, that have a high environmental quality with appropriate adjacent development and built form, particularly in the case of urban streets and streetscapes, and that adequate parking facilities are provided to serve the needs of towns and villages within the County. In this regard, the principles, approaches, and standards set out in the *Design Manual for Urban Roads & Streets* (2013) (including any superseding document) shall be applied to new development as appropriate.

Policy TI 6 – Protection of Strategic Transportation Infrastructure

Seek to protect and safeguard the significant investment made in strategic transportation infrastructure, in particular the network of national roads, the existing rail lines and the Western Rail Corridor.

Policy TI 7 – Protection of National Road Network

Protect the motorway and national road network and national road junctions in line with Government policies. Safeguard the carrying capacity, operational efficiency, safety and significant investment made in the motorway and national road network within the County including the M6 Dublin to Galway Motorway, the M18 Gort to Crusheen Motorway and the M17/M18 Galway to Tuam when completed.

Policy TI 8 –Transportation Infrastructure Requirements for the Gateway and West of the County

It is the policy of Galway County Council to work with Galway City Council and all relevant statutory bodies to develop an appropriate infrastructural response to the transportation needs of the Galway Gateway, its environs and the west of the County, with a view to relieving congestion, improving travel times, increased safety of all road users and enhancing connectivity and access within the region and enhanced accessibility of the western region in a national and international context. Any such solution shall have due regard to the necessity to protect the environment and will comply fully with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.

Policy TI 9 – Road Network Improvements and Western Rail Corridor/Greenway

It shall be the policy of Galway County Council to ensure that any works to be carried out by Galway County Council or other statutory authority to any part of the road network which may affect the delivery of either the Western Rail corridor or any Greenway proposal shall be carried out in such a way so as not to compromise the longer term delivery of such alternative transportation proposals or any interim objectives to use the railway as a greenway.

Policy TI 10 - Reclassification of Restricted Routes

It is a policy of Galway County Council to liaise with the National Roads Authority on the re-classification of Restricted Routes as a result of the construction of motorways.

Policy TI 11 - Signage

It is a policy of Galway County Council to liaise with the National Roads Authority in relation to increased signage for rural towns adjacent to motorways in order to promote service availability.

Roads and Transportation Objectives

Objective TI 5 – Roads and Transportation Network Improvements

Facilitate the progression of and implement improvements to the existing National and Regional/Local Road networks including the priority transportation schemes, listed in **Table 5.1: Priority Transportation Infrastructure Projects for Co. Galway 2015-2021** and those listed within **Table 5.2: Regional/Local Projects Proposed 2015-2021** subject to relevant Irish planning and European environmental legislation including Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and/or other environmental assessment, where appropriate.

Objective TI 6 – Protection of National Routes and Strategically Important Regional Road Networks

It is an objective of the Council to protect the capacity and safety of the National Road Network and Strategically Important Regional Road network (listed in DM Standards and Guidelines in Chapter 13) in the County and ensure compliance with the *Spatial Planning and National Roads Planning Guidelines (2012)*. Galway County Council will not normally permit development proposals for future development that include direct access or intensification of traffic from existing accesses onto any national primary or secondary road outside of the 50-60 kph speed limit zone of towns and villages.

Objective TI 7 – Service/Rest Areas and Scenic Viewpoints

- a) Support the National Roads Authority in the provision of service and rest area facilities that may be proposed by the NRA and have regard to the provisions of Section 2.8 of the DoECLG *Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines* and the *NRA Service Policy (August 2014)* with regard to any other proposals for roadside service facilities or off-line service facilities along National Roads and junctions that may be promoted by private developers;
- b) Support the development of scenic viewpoints on existing road infrastructure where appropriate, minimising environmental impact and having full regard to the DoECLG guidance documents on development along national roads.

Objective TI 8 – Traffic Management Plans

Consider the review of Traffic Management Plans in Ballinasloe, Portumna, Gort, Athenry, Oranmore, Loughrea, Cill Rónain, Oughterard, Tuam and Cleggan. Carry out Traffic Management Plans for Craughwell, Headford, Kinvara, Bearna, Baile Chláir, Maigh Cuilinn, Leenane and Dunmore.

Objective TI 9 – Car Parking

Provide/improve parking facilities in towns and villages as development and traffic demand. The requirements for car parking shall be in accordance with the standards and guidelines as set out within Chapter 13 (Development Management Standards and Guidelines) of this plan under Guidelines for Transportation, Roads, Parking, Loading and Storage.

Objective TI 10 – Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA) and Road Safety Audits (RSA)

Require all proposed new significant development proposals to be accompanied by a TTA and RSA, carried out by suitably competent consultants, which are assessed in association with their cumulative impact with neighbouring developments on the road network, in accordance with the requirements contained within the NRA's *Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines*, having regard and with respect to *RSA in NRA DMRB HD19/12 Road Safety Audit* (including any updated superseding document).

Objective TI 11 – Urban Street Network and the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets

Support the treatment of the route network within the built areas of towns as urban streets that prioritise the needs of pedestrians, that facilitate cyclists wherever possible and that support public and private transport movements, stopping and parking, as appropriate. In this regard, the principles approaches, and standards set out in the *Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets 2013* (including any updated/superseding document) shall be applied to new development as appropriate.

Objective TI 12 – Noise

Require all new proposed development, which is considered to be noise sensitive within 300m of existing, new or planned national roads, or roadways with traffic volumes greater than 8,200AADT, to include a noise assessment and mitigation measures if necessary with their planning application documentation. The cost of mitigation measures shall be borne by the developer. Mitigation measures in order to protect the noise environment of existing residential development will be facilitated or enforced as necessary.

Objective TI 13 – Signage On or Visible from all Roads

Avoid the proliferation of non-road traffic signage on and adjacent to all roads in the interest of traffic safety and visual amenity, in accordance with the *Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2012)*. The NRA document *Policy and Provision of Tourist and Leisure Signage on National Roads March 2011* (including any updated/superseding document) shall also be considered in the assessment of relevant developments.

Objective TI 14 – Road Safety Schemes

Provide a safe road system throughout the County through Road Safety Schemes, which will include the continuation of the low cost safety measure programme, signage and delineation, traffic calming, and liaison with the school authorities to ensure that the schools provide safety features as required.

Objective TI 15 - Transportation Infrastructure Requirements for the Gateway and West of the County

It is an objective of Galway County Council to work with all other relevant bodies to deliver the necessary improvements to transportation infrastructure, including new infrastructure if necessary, to help secure the medium and long term economic and social development of Galway Gateway and the west of the County. Any such investment or project shall be carried out with due regard to the necessity to protect the environment and in full compliance with the provision of relevant legislation, including the Habitats Directive.

Public Transport Objectives

Objective TI 16 – The Sustainable Development of the Western Rail Corridor

Maintain the Western Rail Corridor as an option for passenger train and cargo transportation and support the opening of the remainder of the Western Rail Corridor route from Athenry to Collooney.

Objective TI 17 – Bus Services and the Rural Transport Programme (RTP)

- a) Support the provision of public and private bus services and ancillary infrastructure including bus shelters, park and ride facilities at appropriate locations;
- b) Support and help implement the Rural Transport Initiative including any revisions to same. Work with the HSE/local communities including the Galway Transport Co-ordination Unit (TCU) in order to encourage and promote a sustainable community-based public transport scheme;
- c) Ensure that all bus services and ancillary infrastructure including bus shelters, park and ride facilities at appropriate locations have appropriate regard to the needs of the disabled in line with regulatory requirements. Galway County Council supports shall be subject to there being prior compliance before being provided.

Objective TI 18 – Public Transport Plan

The Council shall prepare a Public Transport Plan in consultation and co-operation with the National Transport Authority, the Galway Transportation Co-Ordination Unit (TCU) and other relevant agencies.

Objective TI 19 – Galway County Walking and Cycling Strategy

Implement the recommendations and proposals within the *The National Cycle Network Scoping Study (2010)* and the *Galway County Walking and Cycling Strategy 2013* as outlined within Table 5.1: Priority Transportation Infrastructure Projects for Co. Galway 2015.

Objective TI 20 - Dualing of Rail Tracks

Support the proposal for the dualing of the rail line from Galway-Athenry-Ballinasloe, subject to relevant Irish planning and European environmental legislation including Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and/or other environmental assessment.

Air Transport Objectives

The following objectives are written with the provision of airstrips for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area in mind.

Objective TI 21 – Local Airstrips

The Council shall safeguard the current and future operational, safety, technical and development requirements of local airstrips within its functional area by having regard to the advice of the Irish Aviation Authority with regard to the effects of any development proposals in the vicinity of local air strips.

Objective TI 22 – Helipad Facilities

The Council shall facilitate the provision of helipad facilities in industrial/commercial areas, strategic development sites or in areas in close proximity to hospitals, medical services facilities or emergency facilities where feasible and appropriate.

Ports, Harbours, Piers and Slipways Objectives**Objective TI 23 – Sustainable Development of Ros an Mhíl Sea Port and Galway Harbour**

Galway County Council shall continue to recognise the strategic importance of Ros an Mhíl and Galway Harbour and shall promote and facilitate their continued sustainable development including the following:

- a) The Council shall undertake the improvement works to the existing road infrastructure servicing Ros an Mhíl as resources permit;
- b) Collaborate with Galway City Council and with the Galway Harbour Company in the promotion of interconnectivity between Galway Harbour and Ros an Mhíl.

Objective TI 24 – Sustainable Development of Ports, Harbours, Piers and Slipways

- a) Support the development of Ros an Mhíl Harbour as a deep water port and support and facilitate improvements and maintenance to other harbours including Inis Oirr and Inis Meáin, piers and slipways and consider any new marine infrastructure where appropriate;
- b) Facilitate the safe and convenient access to the water for the purpose of public transport, industry, commerce, sea rescue, tourism, aquaculture and recreation where appropriate and as resources allow.

Objective TI 25 – Harbour Bye-Laws



Facilitate the implementation of harbour bye-laws for the regulation and control of harbour activities.

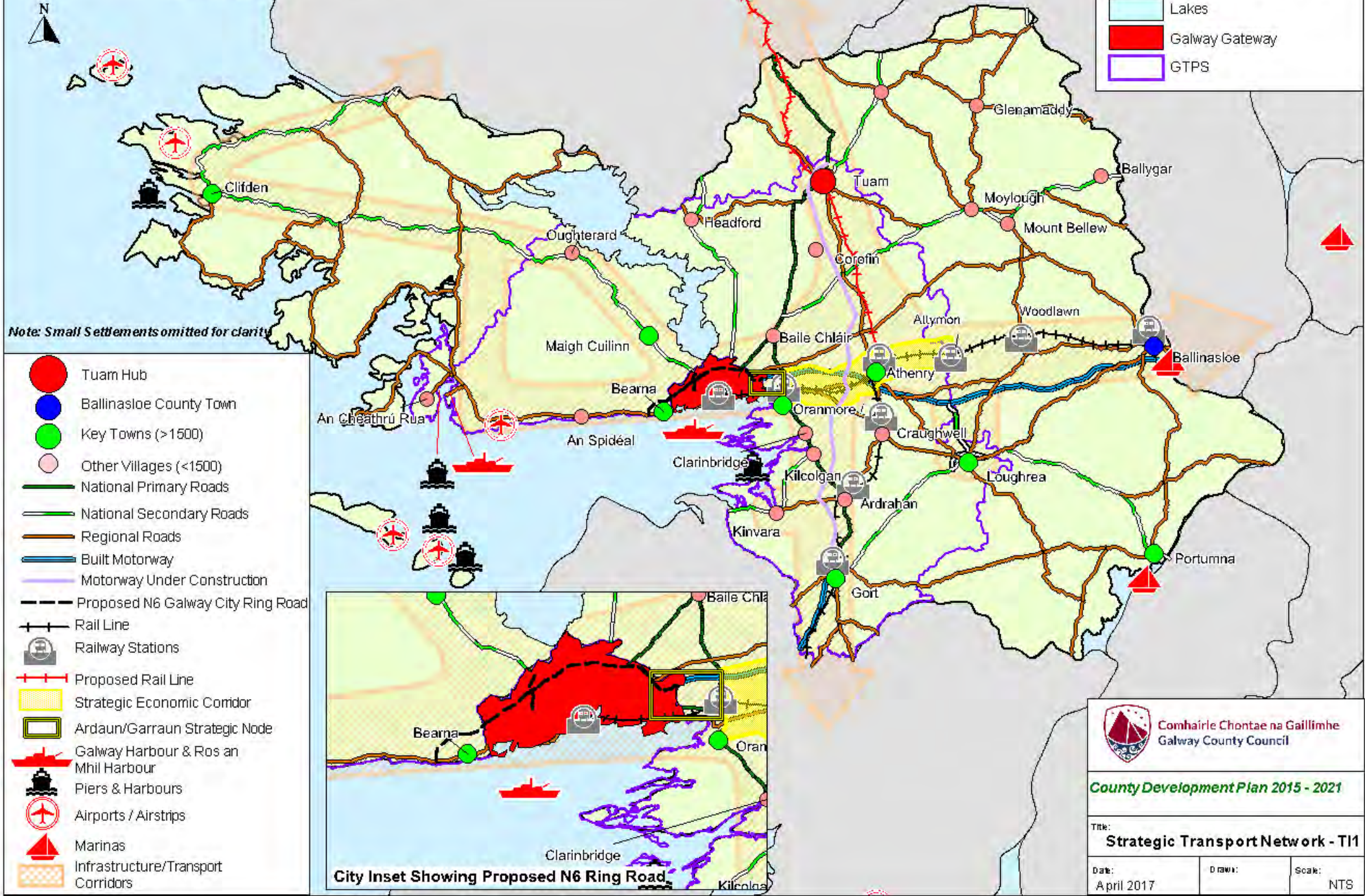
Objective TI 26 – Water Bourne Transport

Support and facilitate the operation of ferry/cargo services between the mainland and the offshore islands within County Galway and those serving Galway Gateway and County Clare. Facilitate the sustainable expansion of such services/facilities over the lifetime of the plan in collaboration with service providers and other Local Authorities as appropriate, minimising environmental impact. Land use proposals that would prejudice the sustainable operation of these services will not normally be permitted.

See TI 1 Strategic Transport Network Map at the End of the Chapter.




-  Galway County Boundary
-  Lakes
-  Galway Gateway
-  GTPS



Note: Small Settlements omitted for clarity

-  Tuam Hub
-  Ballinasloe County Town
-  Key Towns (>1500)
-  Other Villages (<1500)
-  National Primary Roads
-  National Secondary Roads
-  Regional Roads
-  Built Motorway
-  Motorway Under Construction
-  Proposed N6 Galway City Ring Road
-  Rail Line
-  Railway Stations
-  Proposed Rail Line
-  Strategic Economic Corridor
-  Ardaun/Garraun Strategic Node
-  Galway Harbour & Ros an Mhíl Harbour
-  Piers & Harbours
-  Airports / Airstrips
- Marinas
- Infrastructure/Transport Corridors





Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council

County Development Plan 2015 - 2021

Title: **Strategic Transport Network - T11**

Date: April 2017	Drawn:	Scale: NTS
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Water, Wastewater, Waste Management & Extractive Industry

6.1 Introduction

The sustainable growth of County Galway is dependent on the satisfactory provision of services infrastructure, utilities and communication networks. A plan led approach, in accordance with the County's Core and Settlement Strategy is required in the provision of such services, in order to ensure that there is adequate availability to support future development. Furthermore, these infrastructure provisions need to be implemented in a manner that protects public health and are environmentally appropriate and economically effective.

6.2 Strategic Aims

- To protect, preserve and conserve the County's water resources and comply with the standards of the *Western River Basin Management Plan* and the *Shannon International River Basin Management Plan*;
- To facilitate in a sustainable manner the provision of necessary water and waste water infrastructure;
- To minimise the amount of waste creation within the County and promote a practice of reduce, reuse and recycle where possible;
- To safeguard the environment of the County by seeking to ensure that residual waste is disposed of in an appropriate and environmentally friendly fashion;
- To ensure that aggregate material is appropriately managed and sustainably developed in the County.

6.3 Water Service Investment Programme

The *Water Services Investment Programme 2010 – 2012* was extended to 2013 by the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government under Circular L 4/12 dated 30th March 2012 (referred to forthwith as the *Water Services Investment Programme 2010 – 2013*), to permit procurement, planning and delivery to continue for contracts not likely to have commenced in 2012. Table 6.1 provides a listing of all the water and sewerage projects that have been completed to date in County Galway under the *Water Services Investment Programme 2010 - 2013*.

Scheme Name	Contract Name	Water(W)/Sewerage(S)
Barna Sewerage Scheme	Contract 1 (Civil Works) Contract 2 (M&E Works)	Sewerage
Gort Water Supply Scheme	Water Treatment Plant Upgrade	Water
Inis Mór Water Supply Scheme	Water Treatment Plant Upgrade	Water
Mountbellew Water Supply Scheme	Water Treatment Plant Upgrade	Water
Water Conservation Stages 1 & 2	Water Conservation	Water
Baile Chláir & Milltown Sewerage	Network	Sewerage
Dunmore/Glenamaddy Water Supply	Water Treatment Plant Upgrade	Water
Galway City Western Environs	New Reservoir	Water
Inishboffin Water Supply Scheme	Water Treatment Plant Upgrade	Water
Tuam Water & Sewerage Scheme	Network	Water & Sewerage

Table 6.1: Works Completed in County Galway Under the WSIP 2010 - 2013

(Source: Galway County Council, Water Services Section (November 2013))

6.4 Irish Water and The Proposed Capital Investment Plan 2014-2016

In April 2012, the Irish Government decided to establish Irish Water as an independent state owned subsidiary within the Bord Gáis Éireann Group. Irish Water is Ireland's new national water utility, bringing the water services of the 34 Irish Local Authorities together into one national service provider, with the aim of providing a secure, high quality and sustainable service to the Irish public. Irish Water since the 1st January 2014 is responsible for the operation of public water and waste water services and provision of these services to over 1.5 million households across Ireland. This involves an expenditure of circa €1.1 billion per annum in the management of national water and waste water assets, maintenance of the water and waste water systems, investment and planning, managing capital projects and customer care and billing. In May 2014, Irish Water produced the *Proposed Capital Investment Plan 2014-2016*, which

represents the transition between the capital programmes previously overseen and largely funded by the DECLG, and Irish Water's full price control period investment plans to be regulated by the Commission for Energy Regulation (CER). The transfer of the DECLG Water Services Investment Programme (WSIP) to Irish Water includes projects that are under construction, projects completed but not commercially closed-out and a number of projects tendered in 2013, which were approved to proceed to contract by the DECLG.

6.5 Water Services

Having regard to the aforementioned, the Water Services Section of Galway County Council will operate in conjunction with Irish Water to provide and maintain an adequate public water supply and waste water infrastructure network throughout the County for the plan period. In order to maintain continuity of service, Irish Water has entered into Service Level Agreements (SLA) with Galway County Council for the operation of Irish Water's assets for the next twelve years. Furthermore, the Water Services Section of Galway County Council will seek to ensure that there is continued investment in and improvements made to this critical infrastructure over the lifetime period of the plan. This will be deliverable through initially implementing the Proposed Capital Investment Plan 2014-2016.

6.6 Water Supply

Drinking water in the County is drawn from a variety of sources as can be seen from Figure 6.1. There are 38 no. public water supply schemes dispersed throughout the County and approximately 80% of the treated water supplied through this infrastructure network is abstracted from surface water sources. Private supplies provide the alternative for those areas that are not served by a public water supply and comprise mainly of wells for single dwellings and certain private group water schemes for rural settlements.

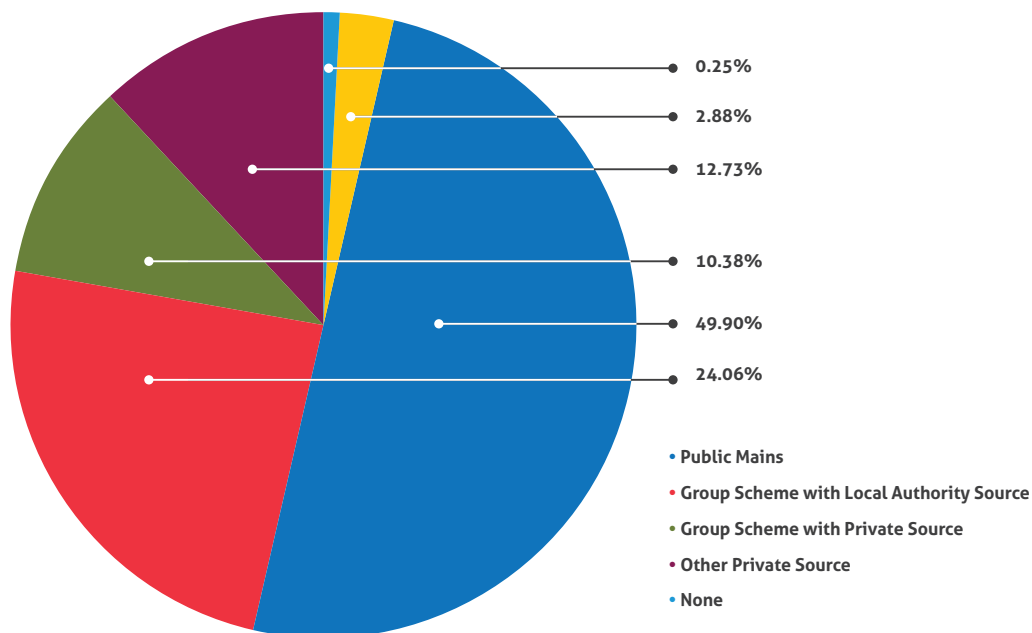


Figure 6.1: Types of Water Supplies in County Galway

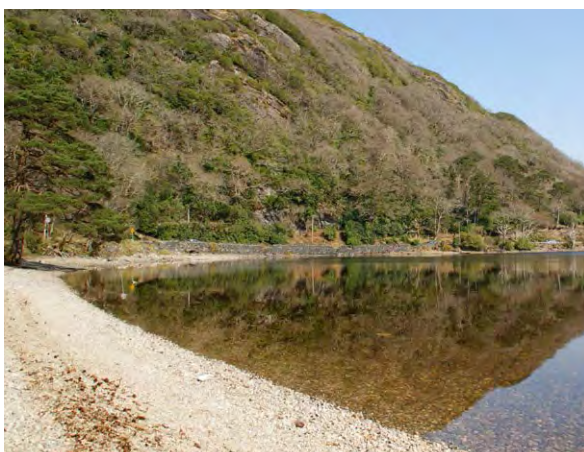
(Source: CSO 2011)

Table 6.2 contains a list of the other public water supply schemes which are included and approved in the *Water Services Investment Programme (WSIP) 2010 – 2013* for County Galway. These projects entail improvements/upgrading works and are envisaged to be completed during the lifetime of the *Galway County Development Plan 2015 – 2021*.

Ballinasloe Regional Water Supply Scheme	Network (Ahascragh, Ballinasloe, Kilconnell Advance Works) <i>Under Review by Irish Water</i>
Clifden Regional Water Supply Scheme	Contract Name <i>Under Review by Irish Water</i>
Costello Regional Water Supply	Water Treatment Plant Upgrade <i>Irish Water to appoint a consultant to review this upgrade and an alternative option to supply this area from Terryland WTW in Galway City</i>
Loughrea Water Treatment Plant	Emergency Works at Water Treatment Plant <i>Under review by Irish Water with possibility of extending the Tuam RWSS to supply Loughrea.</i>
Loughrea Water Treatment Plant	Contract Name TBC <i>Under review by Irish Water with possibility of extending the Tuam RWSS to supply Loughrea.</i>
Loughrea Regional Water Supply Scheme	Contract 1 – Network <i>Under review by Irish Water with possibility of extending the Tuam RWSS to supply Loughrea.</i>

Table 6.2: Water Supply Projects Proposed to be Completed in County Galway under the *Proposed Capital Investment Plan 2014 - 2016*

(Source: Galway County Council, Water Services Section June 2014)



6.7 Water Quality and Ground Water Protection Scheme

The EU Water Framework Directive 2000 (WFD) sets out a new approach to the protection and enhancement of the Country's water resources. The fundamental objective of the Water Framework Directive is to maintain the high quality status of all waters where it exists, preventing any deterioration in the existing status of waters and achieving at least "good status" in relation to all waters by 2015. In this regard groundwater bodies underlying the western, north eastern and south eastern parts of the County are classified as being either *not at significant risk* or *probably not at significant risk*. Groundwater bodies underlying most of the other areas in the County are classified as being *probably at significant risk*. The Water Framework Directive is complemented by Directive (2006/118/EC) on the protection of groundwater against pollution and deterioration and Directive (2008/105/EC) on environmental quality standards in the field of water policy. For the purposes of the Water Framework Directive most of Galway lies within the Western River Basin District, but a section of the County to the east lies within the Shannon International River Basin District.

Groundwater is an important natural resource, which supplies some 20-25% of drinking water in Ireland and is important in maintaining wetlands and river flows through dry periods. Groundwater and aquifers in Ireland are protected under EU and national legislation, and Local Authorities and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are responsible for enforcing this legislation. A practical and effective means of protecting groundwater and preventing pollution is through the use of a Groundwater Protection Scheme. A Groundwater Protection Scheme provides guidelines to assist planning and licensing authorities in carrying out their functions, and a framework to assist in decision making on the location, nature and control of developments and activities in order to protect groundwater. The Groundwater Protection Scheme has been incorporated into the *Shannon International and Western River Basin Management Plans*.

6.8 Conservation of Water Supply

Galway County Councils Water Management Strategy is focused around the conservation of water even where adequate supplies exist, to ensure optimal use of this precious commodity. Conservation measures include not only the monitoring of usage of water and early detection of leaks but also an awareness programme for consumers. Works under the Water Conservation Programme for the County have been progressed and continue to progress under the three stages as outlined in Table 6.3.

Stage 1	The 38 no. public water supply schemes in the County had water management systems installed.
Stage 2	Defects and leaks in the water mains network were identified and repaired.
Stage 3	Works are constantly ongoing in the rehabilitation of water mains throughout the County.

Table 6.3: Details Pertaining to Galway County Council Water Conservation Programme

(Source: Galway County Council, Water Services Section November 2013)

6.9 Domestic Metering

Installation of meters on domestic water connections has already commenced nationally and same is expected to be rolled out in County Galway. Billing of water charges for domestic consumers is expected to be introduced thereafter in 2015. The CER will be the national body acting as a water regulator with power to set the water charges.

6.10 Water Policies and Objectives

Water Policies

Policy WS 1 – Irish Water

Galway County Council will work in close co-operation with Irish Water in its new role as the lead authority for water services.

Policy WS 2 – Irish Water and Rural Towns and Villages

Galway County Council will work with Irish Water to provide appropriate water and waste water facilities in rural towns and villages.

Policy WS 3 – Irish Water’s Proposed Capital Investment Plan

Support Irish Water in the implementation of their *Proposed Capital Investment Plan 2014-2016* and any subsequent Investment Programmes.

Policy WS 4 – Water Conservation

Continue the commitment to water conservation and leakage reduction within the County and promote water conservation campaigns.

Policy WS 5 – Water Quality

Promote public awareness of water quality issues and the measures required to protect all waters including all surface water and groundwater bodies.

Policy WS 6 – Water Supply on the Islands

That Galway County Council work with Irish Water to address the existing inadequacy of water supply on Oileáin Árann.

Water Objectives

Objective WS 1 – Protection of Ground Waters

Support the protection of groundwater resources and dependent wildlife/habitats in accordance with the *Groundwater Directive 2006/118/EC*, the *European Communities Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations, 2010 (S.I. No. 9 of 2010)* or any updated legislation and the *Groundwater Protection Scheme* and source protection plans for water supplies.

Objective WS 2 – EU Policies and Directives

Protect, conserve and enhance all existing and potential water resources in the County, in accordance with the EU Water Framework Directive, the River Basin Management Plans, the *European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 (S.I. No.272 of 2009)*, the EU Bathing Water Directive (Directive 2006/7/EC) implemented by the *Bathing Water Quality Regulations 2008 (S.I. No. 79) of 2008* and implement the *European Communities (Drinking Water) Regulations (No. 2) 2007* and ensure that water supplies comply with the parameters in these regulations.

Objective WS 3 – Irish Water

Liaise with and advise Irish Water in identifying, prioritising and progressing the implementation of water projects throughout County Galway over the lifetime of the plan.

Objective WS 4 – Provision of Water Services in Unserviced Towns and Villages

Support the provision of water services infrastructure in unserviced towns and villages to assist in the proper planning and sustainable development of the County.

Objective WS 5 – Water Safety Plan

Support the preparation of water safety plans for the protection of the major public water supply schemes in County Galway within the lifetime of the plan.

Objective WS 6 – Regional Water Supply Networks

Develop in conjunction with Irish Water the supply of water through the Regional Water Supply Networks including the interlinking of networks to ensure continuity and security of supply throughout the expanded network.

Objective WS 7 – Source Management and Protection Zones

Liaise with Irish Water and seek to establish source management and protection zones around drinking water supply (ground and surface) sources and develop appropriate management and maintenance for same.

Objective WS 8 – Water Conservation

Support efficiency in the operation and demand management of the water supply infrastructure, promote water conservation and reduce the overall level of water loss in the public water supply.

Objective WS 9 – River Basin Management Plans 2009 - 2015

Support the implementation of the relevant recommendations and measures as outlined in the *Shannon International & Western River Basin Management Plans 2009 – 2015*, and associated Programmes of Measures, or any such plans that may supersede same during the lifetime of this County Development Plan. Development shall only be permitted where it can be clearly demonstrated that the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on the water environment, including surface waters, groundwater quality and quantity, river corridors and associated wetlands, estuarine waters and coastal waters. Cognisance shall be taken where relevant of the EU's *Common Implementation Strategy Guidance Document No. 20* which provides guidance on exemptions to the environmental objectives of the *Water Framework Directive*.

Objective WS 10 – Investment in Water Services Infrastructure

Support the extension or upgrading of existing water infrastructure facilities in the County through the implementation of Irish Water's *Proposed Capital Investment Plan 2014-2016* and any subsequent Investment Programmes.

Objective WS 11 – Regionally and Locally Important Aquifers

Protect the regionally and locally important aquifers within the County from risk of pollution and ensure the satisfactory implementation of the groundwater protection schemes and groundwater source protection zones, where data has been made available by the Geological Survey of Ireland.

Objective WS 12 – Adequate Provision & Supply of Drinking Water

Ensure that new developments are adequately serviced with a suitable quantity and quality of drinking water supply and require that all new developments intending to connect to a public water supply liaise with Irish Water with regard to the water (and waste water) infrastructure required.

Objective WS 13 – Private Water Supply

It is an objective of the Council that where there is no public water supply, the existing supply does not have sufficient capacity, or where the property owner wishes not to consume the water from the public supply, then the provision of a private water supply will be permitted, only where it can be demonstrated that the proposed water supply meets the standards set out in the EU and national legislation and guidance including adherence to *Article 6 of the EU Habitats Directive*, and would not be prejudicial to public health or would not significantly impact negatively on the source or yield of an existing supply.

Objective WS 14 – Provision and Quality of Drinking Water

Have regard to the EPA (2013) publication *The Provision and Quality of Drinking Water in Ireland – A Report for the year 2012* (and any subsequent update) in the establishment and maintenance of water sources in the County.

Objective WS 15 – Water Services Plan

Support the preparation and implementation of a Water Services Plan in accordance with *Section 36 of the Water Service Act 2007*.

6.11 Wastewater

The provision and maintenance of quality waste water treatment infrastructure is essential for sustainable development and the protection of the environment and public health. Irish Water is currently responsible for the treatment and disposal of waste water in towns and villages where public waste water treatment facilities are in place. The Environmental Protection Agency is the statutory body tasked with ensuring that appropriate standards are put in place in the provision of waste water infrastructure.

In the case of single house developments, these requirements are set out in the *EPA Code of Practice for Waste Water Treatment Systems and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (2009)*. In the case of larger developments, *the EPA Wastewater Treatment Manuals – Treatment Systems for Small Communities, Business, Leisure Centres and Hotels (1999)* is the relevant document that needs to be taken cognisance of and referenced.



6.12 Types of Wastewater Systems in County Galway

In County Galway there are a number of different types of waste water systems, from public schemes, individual septic tanks and individual proprietary treatment systems (not septic tanks). The actual types of the waste water treatment facilities are detailed in Figure 6.2.

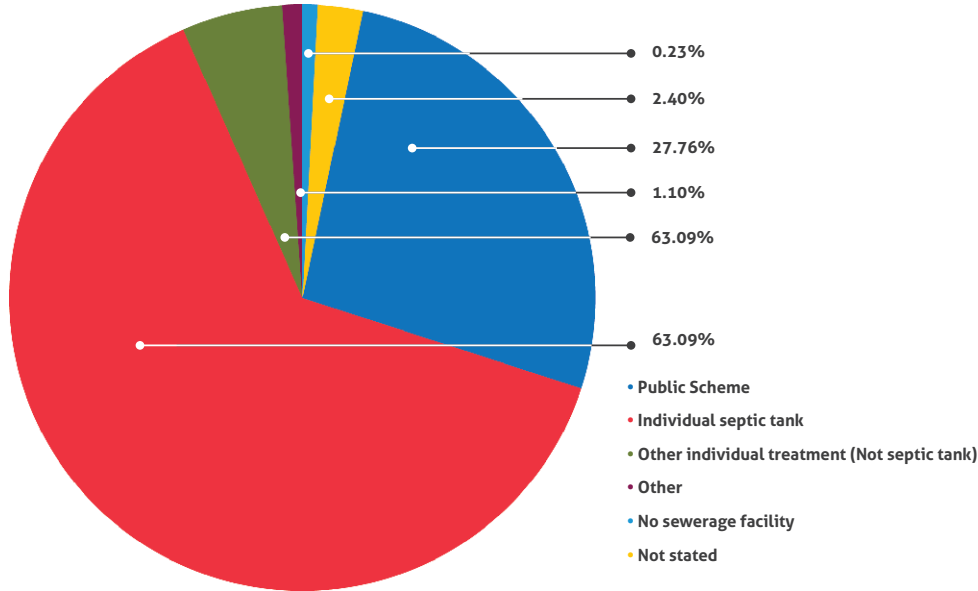


Figure 6.2: Types of Waste Water Systems in County Galway

(Source: CSO 2011)

Table 6.4 contains a list of the public waste water schemes which are included in Irish Water’s *Proposed Capital Investment Plan 2014-2016* for County Galway. These projects entail improvements/upgrading works and new infrastructure provision and are envisaged to be completed during the lifetime of the *Galway County Development Plan 2015 – 2021*.

Athenry Sewerage Scheme	Network & Waste Water Treatment Plant Upgrade – <i>Under Review by Irish Water</i>
Baile Chláir & Milltown Sewerage	Contract 3 WWTP & Pumping Stations – <i>Tender awarded-will proceed to construction</i>
Clifden Sewerage Scheme Phase 1	Network & Waste Water Treatment Plant – <i>Under Construction</i>
Kinvara Sewerage Scheme	Network & Waste Water Treatment Upgrade – <i>Approved. To be tendered in 2015.</i>
Mountbellew Sewerage Scheme	Contract Name TBC – <i>Under review by Irish Water</i>
Oughterard Sewerage Scheme	Network & Waste Water Treatment – <i>Under review by Irish Water</i>

Glenamaddy Sewerage Scheme	Review Scope & Commence Construction – <i>Under review by Irish Water. Compliance issues. Priority Status</i>
Ballygar Sewerage Scheme	Contract Name TBC / Review Scope & Commence Construction – <i>Early Stages of design</i>
Galway Sewerage Scheme Phase 3 – Vol E (Galway East Infrastructure)	Scheme at Planning – <i>Not currently on CIP but Irish Water is aware of the importance Galway County Council attaches to the scheme</i>
An Spidéal Sewerage Scheme	1,000 PE WWTP (DBO) & Collection Network Upgrade (Phase 1) – <i>Under review by Irish Water</i>

Table 6.4: Wastewater Projects to be Completed in County Galway Under Irish Water’s Proposed Capital Investment Plan 2014-2016

(Source: Irish Water’s Proposed Capital Investment Plan 2014-2016 Galway County Council, Water Services Section June 2014)

6.13 Public Waste Water Schemes in County Galway

Irish Water currently provides public waste water schemes in the form of collection, treatment and disposal facilities in many of the settlements throughout the County. Infrastructure of this nature is currently operational in varying capacities in the towns and villages of the County outlined in the Table 6.5:

Tuam	Portumna	An Fhairche	Ballymoe
Ballinasloe	Dunmore	Mountbellew	Williamstown
Loughrea	Headford	Moylough	Woodford
Oranmore	Bearna	Leenane	Glenamaddy
Athenry	Clifden	Ballygar	Eyrecourt
Gort	Killimor	Kilkerrin	Ahascragh
Maigh Cuilinn	Letterfrack	Oughterard	Newbridge
An Spidéal	An Cheathrú Rua	Kinvara	

Table 6.5: Waste Water Schemes in County Galway

(Source: Galway County Council, Water Services Section November 2013/February 2014)

6.14 East Galway Main Drainage Scheme

The East Galway Main Drainage Scheme, Phase 3 is considered to be an infrastructural project of strategic importance. Its delivery within the timeframe of this plan could be a potential catalyst for the future development and expansion of the County as identified in the County Spatial Strategy and County Settlement Strategy.

6.15 Sludge Management Plan

The *Galway City Council & County Council Operational Sludge Management Plan* was adopted in January, 2011. The objectives of the plan are to:

- Identify sources of sludge;
- Estimate rates for sludge production and final destinations for sludge;
- Recommend sustainable options for the management of non-hazardous sludge.

The provision of all new sewerage treatment plants will include works for dealing with any sludge arising from treatment, in accordance with the Sludge Management Plan.

6.16 Surface and Storm Water/Sustainable Drainage Systems

All new development throughout the County will be required to minimise surface water discharge through on-site systems such as Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs). Proposals for SuDs will be in accordance with the recommendations as contained within the EPA document entitled *Guidance on Authorisation of Discharges to Groundwater 2011* (or any updated/superseding document).

6.17 Wastewater Policies and Objectives

Wastewater Policies

Policy WW 1 – Collaborative Provision of Wastewater Collection and Treatment Systems

Co-operate with Irish Water in the delivery of the *Proposed Capital Investment Plan 2014-2016* (or updated plan) and to increase capacity to service settlements, to jointly investigate proposals for future upgrades of treatment plants; and participate in the provision of a long term solution for waste water treatment in the West Region.

Wastewater Objectives

Objective WW 1 – EU Policies and Directives

Ensure that all waste water generated is collected, treated and discharged after treatment in a safe and sustainable manner, having regard to the standards and requirements set out in EU and national legislation and guidance and subject to compliance with the provisions and objectives of the *EU Water Framework Directive*, relevant *River Basin Management Plans*, *Urban Waste Water Directive* and the *EU Habitats Directive*.

Objective WW 2 – Provision of Wastewater Collection and Treatment Systems

Support, in conjunction with Irish Water, during the lifetime of the plan the provision, extension and upgrading of waste water collection and treatment systems in all towns and villages of the County to serve existing and planned future populations, including Clarinbridge, Corofin and Lackagh.

Objective WW 3 – East Galway Main Drainage Scheme

Seek to accelerate progress on delivery of the East Galway Main Drainage Scheme, in particular Phase 3 as a key piece of strategic infrastructure, in conjunction with the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government, Irish Water and Galway City Council.

Objective WW 4 – Sludge Management Plan

Implement the objectives as outlined in the *Galway City Council & County Council Operational Sludge Management Plan* (January 2011) throughout the lifetime of the plan.

Objective WW 5 – Waste Water Treatment Associated with Development in Un-Serviced Areas

Permit development in un-serviced areas only where it is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority that the proposed waste water treatment system is in accordance with the *Code of Practice Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single House EPA (2009)/ EPA Wastewater Treatment Manuals – Treatment Systems for Small Communities, Business, Leisure Centres and Hotels (1999)* (or any superseding documents) and subject to complying with the provisions and objectives of the *EU Water Framework Directive*.

Objective WW 6 – Adherence to Environmental Standards

Promote the provision of safe and secure waste water infrastructure to ensure that the public is protected and that permitted development, is within the environmental carrying capacity and does not negatively impact on habitat quality or species diversity.

Objective WW 7 – Surface Water Drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

Maintain and enhance, as appropriate, existing surface water drainage systems in the County, ensure that new developments are adequately serviced with surface water drainage infrastructure and promote the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems in all new developments.

Objective WW 8 – Substandard Wastewater Treatment Plants

Support and facilitate as appropriate the upgrading of substandard public waste water treatment plants in order to comply with the provisions of the *Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations 2001 and 2004*, the *Waste Water Discharge (Authorisation) Regulations 2007* and implement the relevant recommendations set out in the EPA document *Focus on Urban Waste Water Discharges in Ireland* (and any subsequent updates).

Objective WW9 – Integrated Constructed Wetlands

Galway County Council shall support the use of Integrated Constructed Wetlands (ICW) as a low cost and environmentally sustainable alternative having regard to the *Integrated Constructed Wetlands-Guidance Document for Farmyard Soiled Water and Domestic Wastewater Applications* as appropriate.

Objective WW10 – Connection to the Public Wastewater Services

Where public waste water services are available new developments shall be required to connect to same.

Table 6.6: Indicative Infrastructure Capacity for Core Strategy Settlements

Core Strategy Settlement	Wastewater Capacity	Water Capacity	Water Service Investment Programme 2010-2012
Tuam	Adequate Capacity	Adequate Capacity	Contracts to Start: Tuam Water & Sewerage Scheme – Network Contract completed in 2012.
Ballinasloe	Adequate Capacity	Limited Capacity	Scheme at Planning Stage: Ballinasloe Sewerage Scheme Contracts to Start: Ballinasloe Regional Water Supply Scheme-Network.
Oranmore/ Garraun	Limited Capacity	Adequate Capacity	When developed this area will be served by either the Galway City East Waste Water Treatment Plant or Mutton Island. Schemes at Planning: Galway Sewerage Scheme Phase 3 - Vol E (Galway East infrastructure).
Ardaun	No Scheme	No Scheme	When developed this area will be served by either the Galway City East Waste Water Treatment Plant or Mutton Island. Schemes at Planning: Galway Sewerage Scheme Phase 3 - Vol E (Galway East infrastructure).
Bearna	Limited Capacity	Limited Capacity Design review with DOE	Contracts to Start: Galway City Western Environs Water Supply Scheme Phase 1 - Network. Phase 1 of contract completed 2013 – provision of additional reservoir. Does not increase capacity on scheme, but does provide greater security of supply.
Loughrea	Adequate Capacity	Limited Capacity	Contracts to Start: Loughrea Water Treatment Plant.
Athenry	No Capacity	Adequate Capacity	Contracts to Start: Athenry Sewerage Scheme-Network & Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade.
Gort	No Capacity	Limited Capacity	Contracts at Construction: Gort Water Supply Scheme-Water Treatment Plant Upgrade Completed.

Maigh Cuilinn	Adequate Capacity	Limited Capacity Design review with DOE	Contracts to Start: Galway City Western Environs Water Supply Scheme Phase 1 - Network. Phase 1 of contract completed 2013 – provision of additional reservoir. Does not increase capacity on scheme, but does provide greater security of supply.
Baile Chláir	No Scheme	Adequate Capacity	Contracts to Start: Claregalway & Milltown Sewerage Scheme - Network & Wastewater Treatment Plant DBO Network completed. Approval to commence construction of treatment plant awaited from Irish Water.
Headford	Adequate Capacity	Adequate Capacity	
Clifden	No Capacity	No Capacity	Contracts to Start: Clifden Sewerage Scheme Phase 1: Network and Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade. Under construction. Contracts to Start: Clifden Water Supply Scheme: Water Treatment Plant Upgrade Contract signed. Due to commence construction shortly. Schemes at Planning: Clifden Regional Water Supply Scheme.
Portumna	No Capacity	Limited Capacity	
An Cheathrú Rua	Sea Outfall- No Treatment	Adequate Capacity Short-Term	Contracts to Start: Costello Regional Water Supply Scheme Network & Water Treatment Plant Upgrade Network under construction. Tenders due end of May for Treatment Plant – unlikely to start construction before end of 2014.
An Spidéal	Sea Outfall- No Treatment	Adequate Capacity	Schemes at Planning: Spiddal Sewerage Scheme.
Oughterard	No Capacity	Adequate Capacity Short Term	Contracts to Start: Oughterard Sewerage Scheme-Network & Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade.

Table 6.6: Indicative Infrastructure Capacity for Core Strategy Settlements

6.18 Waste Management

The Government recently adopted a new approach to waste management through a document called *A Resource Opportunity – Waste Management Policy in Ireland* published in July 2012. This policy provides a roadmap on how Ireland will move away from an over dependence on landfill, by putting in place the most appropriate technologies and approaches to reduce waste, while at the same time maximising the resources that we can recover from waste.

The policy is predicated on five principles those being prevention and minimisation, reuse, recycling, recovery and disposal. According to the Minister for Environment, Community & Local Government *this*

policy statement is not just important in achieving sound environmental objectives, but it is also a critical component in protecting and enhancing one of our vital assets, namely our 'green' image, which is essential for our tourism and food industries, and in attracting inward investment'.

Galway County Council will be cognisant of the ideology as outlined above and will continue to work in tandem with Connacht Waste Management and the Environmental Protection Agency in the implementation and execution of its waste management responsibilities and duties throughout the duration of the life time of the plan.

6.19 Waste Management Policies and Objectives

Waste Management Policies

Policy WM 1 – Waste Prevention and Reduction

Promote campaigns to meet the long-term challenge of waste prevention and minimisation at household and business level.

Policy WM 2 – Polluter Pays Principle

Implement the application of the polluter pays principle to the provision of all waste management services.

Waste Management Objectives

Objective WM 1 – Replacement Connacht Waste Management Plan 2006 – 2011

Implement the *Replacement Connacht Waste Management Plan 2006 – 2011* or any updated version of this document within the lifetime of the plan.

Objective WM 2 – National Hazardous Waste Management Plan 2008 – 2012

Implement the provisions of the *National Hazardous Waste Management Plan 2008 – 2012* or any updated version of this document within the lifetime of the plan.

Objective WM 3 – Provision of Recycling Centres

Strive to provide and maintain an equitable distribution of recycling centres throughout the County and support the provision of additional recycling centres in the south Conamara and south Galway areas of the County.

Objective WM 4 – User Friendly Waste Management Services

Seek to provide a high standard of customer service provision in regard to waste management and maintain user friendly opening hours at recycling centres throughout the County.

Objective WM 5 – Bring Bank Facilities

Support the provision of additional bring bank facilities at appropriate and strategic locations throughout the County in an effort to reach the overall regional ratio per head of population target for such infrastructure as set out in the *Evaluation Report 2012 of the Replacement Connacht Waste Management Plan for the Connacht Region 2006 – 2011*.

Objective WM 6 – Provision of Voluntary Waste Management Infrastructure

Encourage and support community and voluntary groups in the establishment of waste services and facilities on the off shore islands and in sparsely populated areas of the County.

Objective WM7 – On Site Provision for Waste Storage and Segregation

Seek to ensure on-site provision for waste storage and segregation (bio-waste/dry recyclables/residual waste) pending collection at all new domestic and non domestic premises, in order to comply with the *Replacement Waste Management Plan for the Connacht Region* (or updated document).

6.20 Mineral Extraction and Quarries

Extractive industries by their nature are resource based and result in the removal of soil and rock. Quarrying and other extractive industries are recognised as important to the local rural economic development of the County in terms of generating employment and providing raw material to the construction industry. The geology of the County produces aggregate resources in terms of sand, limestone and gravel, which are currently exploited at quarries throughout the County and the Council recognises this resource as a significant economic asset. Extractive industries can also give rise to detrimental environmental and residential amenity effects including increased traffic, dust, noise, water pollution, visual intrusion and the effects on local road networks may also be significant.

The Council will facilitate harnessing the potential of the area’s natural resources while ensuring that the environment and rural and residential amenities are appropriately protected. In considering development applications relating to existing or proposed quarries, the Council will take full account of the following DECLG guidelines *Quarries and Ancillary Activities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2004* (including any updated/superseding document) and have regard to the protection of residential and natural amenities, the prevention of pollution and the safeguarding of aquifers and groundwater. The development of new quarries will be strictly controlled in areas of high landscape value, in areas of significant archaeological potential, on European Sites, Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs), Nature Reserves or other areas of importance for the conservation of flora and fauna and development shall also have regard to the requirements of the EU guidance document *Undertaking Non-Energy Extractive Activities in Accordance with Natura 2000 Requirements*.



6.21 Mineral Extraction and Quarry Policies and Objectives

Mineral Extraction and Quarry Policies

Policy EQ 1 – Environmental Management Practice

Have regard to evolving best environmental management practice as set out in Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Guidelines *Environmental Management in the Extractive Industry: Non Scheduled Minerals* and to the recommendations of the EU guidance document *Undertaking Non-Energy Extractive Activities in Accordance with Natura 2000 Requirements*.

Policy EQ 2 – Adequate Supply of Aggregate Resources

Ensure adequate supplies of aggregate resources to meet future growth needs within County Galway, facilitate the exploitation of such resources where there is a proven need and market opportunity for such minerals or aggregates, and ensure that this exploitation of resources does not adversely affect the environment or adjoining existing land uses.

Mineral Extraction and Quarry Objectives

Objective EQ1 – Protection of Natural Assets

Protect areas of geo-morphological interest, groundwater and important aquifers, important archaeological features Natural Heritage Areas and European Sites from inappropriate development.

Objective EQ 2 – Management of Aggregate Extraction

The Council shall require the following in relation to the management of authorised aggregate extraction -

- (a) All quarries shall comply with the requirements of the *EU Habitats Directive*, the *Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010* and by the guidance as contained within the DoEHLG *Quarries and Ancillary Facilities Guidelines 2004*, the EPA Guidelines *Environmental Management in the Extractive Industry: Non Scheduled Minerals 2006* (including any updated/superseding documents) and to DM Standard 37 of this Development Plan;
- (b) Require development proposals on or in the proximity of quarry sites, to carry out appropriate investigations into the nature and extent of old quarries (where applicable). Such proposals shall also investigate the nature and extent of soil and groundwater contamination and the risks associated with site development works together with appropriate mitigation;
- (c) Have regard to the *Landscape Character Assessment of the County* and its recommendations including the provision of special recognition to the Esker areas as referenced in Galway County Council *Galway's Living Landscapes – Part 1: Eskers*;
- (d) Ensure that any quarry activity has minimal adverse impact on the road network;
- (e) Ensure that the extraction of minerals or aggregates does not adversely impact on residential or environmental amenity;
- (f) Protect all known un-worked deposits from development that might limit their scope for extraction.

Objective EQ 3 – Sustainable Reuse of Quarries

Encourage the use of quarries and pits for sustainable management of post recovery stage construction and demolition waste, as an alternative to using agricultural land, subject to normal planning and environmental considerations.

Objective EQ 4 – Compliance with Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive

Ensure that all projects associated with the mineral extractive industry carry out screening for Appropriate Assessment in accordance with *Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive*, where required.



Energy/Renewable Energies & Communications Technology

7.1 Introduction

This chapter recognises the necessity of having high quality energy and communication infrastructure in order for County Galway to progress in the context of social and economic development. This Chapter also outlines the importance of supporting the development of renewable energy sources in the interest of delivering on the *National Climate Change Strategy* and the *National Climate Adaptation Framework*.

7.2 Strategic Aims

The objectives contained within this chapter of the plan in relation to energy/renewable energies and information and communications technology (ICT) are based on the following strategic aims:

- To reduce County Galway's dependency on imported fossil fuels and to provide alternative energy sources by harnessing the County's potential for renewable energy sources;
- To ensure security of energy supply throughout the County and to collaborate with relevant sectors in strengthening the grid transmission networks for the provision of the energy sector including renewable energy;
- To reduce the County's CO₂ emissions by achieving national, regional and any potential County targets for achieving a low carbon economy by 2020; and increase energy efficiency in Local Authority activities through its development management functions;
- To promote and facilitate the provision and continued development of broadband and ICT infrastructure within the County in order to further enhance economic/social development, particularly in the more peripheral and coastal areas of the County.



7.3 Energy and Renewable Energies

Energy consumption is responsible for 80% of total EU Green House Gas (GHG) emissions. To address these challenges the EU promotes the use of renewable energies and energy efficiency as one of the key targets within the *Europe 2020 Strategy A European Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth COM(2010) 2020* including:

- A reduction of GHG by at least 20% compared to 1990 levels or by 30% if the conditions are right;
- Increase the share of renewable energy sources in the final energy consumption to 20%;
- A 20% increase in energy efficiency.

7.3.1 EU and National Targets

The figures below summarises the energy targets for Ireland as set out under national and international commitments:

National and EU Targets

- Renewable sources to contribute 16% of final energy consumption (electricity, heat and transport) in 2020;
- 15% of electricity generation from renewable sources by 2010; 40% by 2020.

Related National Targets

- 20% increase in energy efficiency by 2020;
- 30% biomass co-firing at peat plants in Ireland by 2020;
- 10% renewable energy in transport by 2020.

(Source: WRA (2010) *Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region 2010-2022*)

The national target for renewable energy was increased in October 2008 to 40% of gross electricity production by 2020 (this had reached 18% by 2011) and same is estimated to require an installed capacity of around 6,000 MW in Ireland by 2020.

7.3.2 Energy Balance for the West Region

The West Regional Authority (WRA) has also prepared regional figures for Regional Energy Balance for 2013 as part of the RPG Regional Indicators project which is currently ongoing. The WRA have estimated that –

- The total Regional Energy Balance (from coal, peat, oil, natural gas, renewable, non-renewable and electricity) indicated for the West Region was 1306 Ktoe in 2013 which was a tenth of the national figure of 13,450 Ktoe for 2012.

Note: (A tonne of oil equivalent (toe) is a unit of energy roughly equivalent to the energy content of one tonne of crude oil or the energy obtained from burning 1,000 metric tonnes of oil).

The Energy White Paper *Delivering a Sustainable Energy Future for Ireland, Energy Policy Framework 2007-2012* sets out the means of meeting Ireland's future energy requirements and energy efficiencies in an environmentally sensitive and sustainable manner. The *National Energy Efficiency Action Plan 2009-2020*

identifies policies and measures aimed at contributing towards achieving a 20% reduction in energy demand across the whole of the economy, through energy efficiency measures by 2020.

Galway County Council recognises that the availability of clean and reliable energy is an essential requirement for the sustainable economic development of the County and is committed to assisting in achieving 40% of Ireland's energy demand from renewable resources and to develop County Galway as a low carbon economy by making provision for renewable energies.

7.4 Renewable Energy

Renewable energy is increasingly seen as a means to address climate change challenges, reduce carbon dioxide emissions and increase national energy security. The term renewable energy generally refers to electricity supplied from renewable energy sources or natural resources that are continuously being replenished by nature. This contrasts with fossil fuels that are considered finite resources. The main sources of renewable energy are wind, sun (solar), water (hydropower, wave and tidal energy), heat below the surface of the earth (geo-thermal) and biomass (wood, biodegradable waste and energy crops or bio-fuels such as rapeseed and lupines). The Government's *Action Plan for Jobs Strategy 2012* identifies that renewable energy, smart grid development, energy efficiency products and services as key sub sectors of the 'green economy' and in the creation of jobs. In acknowledging this national approach, the Council shall promote energy hubs at Tuam, Athenry and Gort (including their environs) to take account of opportunities to develop sustainable enterprises (including the manufacture/testing of niche renewable energy generating equipment) due to their proximity to energy and transmission networks. Under the EU Renewable Energy Directive (*Directive 2009/28/EU*), Ireland is considering the export of renewable energy to Member States, in the first instance to the United Kingdom. In order to achieve this goal the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (DoECNR) intends to develop a framework for the renewable energy export opportunity in Ireland, with particular focus on identifying areas for large scale projects (e.g. wind farms) to generate such energy for export.

County Galway has, in terms of renewable energy, huge potential for the development of wind, solar, biomass, geothermal, hydro and wave energy. The wave and wind resources along the west coast are among the richest in Europe. The Council shall collaborate with EirGrid in seeking the enhancement of the existing electricity network and infrastructure at appropriate coastal areas for the promotion of ocean energy (also referred to as blue energy - wave, tidal and offshore wind) and with the Galway Marine Institute in the development of its '*SmartBay Project*' (which includes marine observation, advanced technology sensor and data management systems, communication projects and R&D) and offers significant opportunities for large multinationals and Irish-based SME's.

Low carbon technologies also present an economic opportunity within the County and green technology development is emerging as a major field of innovation and growth. The Council also recognises the importance of developing renewable energy sources in the interest of delivering on the *National Climate Change Strategy*, of achieving a low carbon economy and security of energy supply. In order to ensure a secure and effective supply of energy, Galway County Council will facilitate the development of a range of sustainable forms of energy creation within the County. Galway County Council will strive to achieve a reduction in the carbon emission targets for public bodies through the implementation of energy efficient and energy management priorities.

The *Planning and Development Regulations 2008* provide exemptions from planning permission for solar panels, heat pumps, wind turbines and wood pellet burners subject to certain conditions. It should be noted that where an individual wishes to install any class of micro-renewable technology that does not fall within exemptions, they are required to apply for planning permission. The existing restrictions on exempted development as set out in *Article 9 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001* still apply.

7.4.1 Electricity and the National Transmission Grid

A strong transmission grid is essential in order to attract and retain high-tech industrial investment, to ensure competitive energy supplies, to achieve balanced development, to reduce dependency on fossil fuels, and to achieve climate change targets. Moreover, to attract renewable energy development, it is important for County Galway that the existing grid infrastructure is reinforced where necessary and expanded to areas not adequately serviced. The transmission system within the country plays a vital role in the supply of electricity, providing the means to transport power from generators to demand centres using a system comprising of 400 kV, 220 kV and 110 kV networks (and through ESB networks 38kV medium and low voltage networks to customers). The transmission system generally comprises of overhead lines, except in limited circumstances, for example, in the city centres, where some limited underground cables are used. The Moyle Interconnector in Northern Ireland is permitted to export 300MW annually to Great Britain. EirGrid has constructed a 500 MW HVDC interconnector from Ireland to Wales. In the future, interconnectors will play an increased role in the export demand for energy including energy generated through offshore renewable energy.

Anticipated increasing power flows on the network means that, between now and 2025, the capacity of the bulk transmission system will need to be significantly increased. The major investment underway in the high voltage electricity transmission system is occurring under EirGrid's *Grid25* Programme which is considered by the Government as the most important investment in Ireland's transmission system for several generations. The Government also affirms that EirGrid, ESB Networks and Bord Gáis are obliged to adhere to all relevant guidelines and standards as they act in the national interest, and act on behalf of electricity consumers.

Eirgrid's subsequent *Grid25 Implementation Programme 2011-2016 (IP)* is a practical strategic overview of how the early stages of *Grid25* are intended to be implemented. The plan has been subject to a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). Section 2.5.4 of the IP refers to Reinforcement of the Transmission System in the West Region. This identifies two key issues that need to be addressed in terms of the strategic development of the electricity transmission infrastructure in this region and two main new corridors:

Issues:

- The significant quantity of generation, in particular generation from renewable sources that is expected to materialise in the West Region;
- General demand growth in the area.

Corridors

- New electricity infrastructure which will be required from the North Mayo area, initially towards existing grid infrastructure located in either the east, or the south part of the West Region. It is likely that such infrastructure will then continue to the key markets on the eastern side of the country;
- New electricity transmission infrastructure which will also be required from west County Galway to Galway City and beyond.

It should be noted that the connection of these new generators will also result in an associated requirement to upgrade many parts of the transmission network.

Eirgrid's Transmission Development Plan (TDP) is a 10 year plan (reviewed annually) which lists particular transmission projects, including projects in County Galway that are proposed to realise the *Grid25* Strategy. Each individual project in the TDP is justified on its own merits and reviewed at key milestones during the lifecycle of the project taking account of the most up to date information, assumptions and forecasts available. The most recent TDP is the Draft Transmissions Development Plan 2013-2023, available at http://www.eirgrid.com/media/Draft_TDP_2013-2023_For_Public_Consultation.pdf. Galway County Council supports the *Grid25* Strategy and the Grid West project, in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.

Of particular note to County Galway and the West Region is the *Grid West project*. This consists of a new high capacity power circuit linking the Bellacorrick area of Co. Mayo to a strong point on the transmission grid. Based on the region's renewable potential it is envisaged that, in time, the project will involve two high capacity power lines from Bellacorrick, Co. Mayo to both Cashla in Co. Galway and Flagford in Co. Roscommon. However, the pace at which a second line will be installed is dependent on a number of factors including the speed at which further renewable energy generation is developed in the region. Eirgrid is currently working with a Government appointed independent expert panel to review underground and overhead options for the Grid West project before proceeding to the next stages of project development.

7.4.2 Wind Energy

Galway County Council has produced the *County Galway Wind Energy Strategy* which forms part of this plan. The Strategy supports a plan led approach to wind energy development in County Galway and sets out Strategic Areas, Acceptable in Principle Areas, and Areas Open for Consideration and it is the policy of the Council to maximise wind energy development in all three of these areas, on a case by case basis, subject to meeting specific requirements and guidance contained within the strategy. An aim of the strategy is to meet a minimum target of 500 MW of wind energy in County Galway and to generate the equivalent of over 70% of its electricity needs from wind energy.

7.4.3 Gas Network

The use of natural gas, as a proportion of total primary energy production has fallen from 54% in 1990 to 17% in 2010 (Source: *CSO Environmental Indicators Ireland 2012*). The Bord Gáis Network owns and operates the gas transmission pipeline within the country and applies a 400m 'Zone of Interest' corridor along the gas pipeline.

7.4.4 Wave and Tidal Energy

Located on the Atlantic Coast, County Galway has great opportunity to harness the potential of wave and tidal energy. The *White Paper on Energy (2007)* has a target of 500MW of electricity generation from ocean power which has to be met by 2020. The Council shall have regard to the Department of Energy, Communication and Natural Resources (DoECNR) *Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan 2012-2020*.

7.4.5 Bio-Energy

Bio-energy is derived from bio-fuels such as biodiesel, biogas and biomass through the use of a wide variety of technologies. These energy sources are considered to be "CO₂ Neutral", not adding to the carbon dioxide level in the atmosphere and are more reliable in terms of consistency in supply than many other renewable energy technologies. The Council will encourage the production of bio-crops and forestry for biomass in the generation of renewable energy as well as production units in appropriate locations. In addition to the "CO₂ Neutral" status of this energy source, the Council recognises that this sector also offers opportunities for farm diversification and rural employment.

7.4.6 Solar Energy

In recent years the use of solar energy in Ireland in addition to ground-source heating systems has provided sustainable sources of energy for buildings and has reduced the demand for electricity supply from the national grid. The Council will encourage such initiatives subject to normal planning considerations.

7.4.7 Heat Energy Distribution

Heat distribution infrastructure such as district heating has been promoted within the County including Tuam Hub Town. The development of efficient district heating systems would help reduce the CO₂ emissions associated with heating buildings.

7.5 Energy and Renewable Energy Policies and Objectives

Energy and Renewable Energy Policies

Policy ER 1 – Sustainable Energy Policy and Targets

Promote the implementation of the Government's White Paper *Delivering a Sustainable Energy Future for Ireland, Energy Policy Framework 2007-2020* (or any updated or superseding document) over the lifetime of the *Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021* to assist in ensuring that the energy efficiency target is realised by 2020 from renewable sources.

Policy ER 2 – Development of Renewable Energy

The Council shall support proposals for renewable energy developments at appropriate scales (including, ocean energy/wave and tidal technologies and ancillary facilities including associated grid connection) at appropriate locations within the County having regard to residential amenities, biodiversity and landscape sensitivities, where such proposals are in compliance with the *County Development Plan 2015 - 2021* and the principles of proper planning and sustainable development. Where possible the Council will develop its own micro generation projects to facilitate its own energy requirements.

Policy ER 3 – Security of Supply

Facilitate the strategic goal of effective balanced regional development through the implementation of policies that will deliver reliable and effective energy networks and electricity grid for the West Region including County Galway, minimising environmental impact by:

- a) Promoting and supporting the provision of secure and efficient energy supply and storage including electricity, gas, and renewable energy including wind, wave/tidal, solar, bio-energy and heat energy distribution;
- b) Supporting infrastructural renewal, strengthening and development of strategic electricity networks within the County, as provided for under Eirgrid's *Grid25 Strategy*, including Eirgrid's Grid West project;
- c) Facilitating the extension of a natural gas distribution network to serve both the County and West Region.

Policy ER 4 – Sustainable Development and Energy Efficiency

Promote more sustainable development through energy end use efficiency, increasing the use of renewable energy and improved energy performance of all new building developments throughout the County.

Energy and Renewable Energy Objectives**Objective ER 1 – Electricity and Renewable Energy Infrastructure**

Support the development and expansion of infrastructure for the generation, storage, transmission and distribution of electricity, renewable energy and other renewable energy proposals in suitable locations in County Galway.

Objective ER 2 – Priority Transmission Infrastructure Projects

Facilitate the progression of and implement improvements to the existing electricity networks and facilitate the development of new transmission infrastructure projects in accordance with EirGrid's *Grid25* Strategy that might be brought forward during the lifetime of this plan, subject to relevant Irish planning and European environmental legislation including Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and/or other environmental assessment.

Map ER1 outlines existing and proposed energy transmission infrastructure corridors.

Objective ER 3 – Low Carbon County

Promote County Galway as a low carbon County by 2020 having regard to the *Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Bill* when adopted. Encourage and favourably consider proposals for renewable energy developments and ancillary facilities in order to meet national, regional, county energy targets and to facilitate a reduction in CO₂ emissions.

Objective ER 4 – Renewable Energy

a) Support and facilitate the sustainable development and use of appropriate renewable energy resources and associated infrastructure within the County, including;

- Wind Energy;
- Wave/Tidal Energy;
- Hydro-Power;
- Solar Energy;
- Bio-Energy;
- Geo-Thermal;
- Combined Heat Power (CHP);
- Heat Energy Distribution (such as District Heating/Cooling Systems); and
- Other renewable energy sources, as appropriate and in line with national guidelines for sustainable development.

b) The Council shall commence a County Renewable Energy Strategy within the lifetime of the plan as resources permit. This document will also take micro generation options into account and will recognise that renewable energy projects are not just limited to large scale infrastructural projects.

Objective ER 5 - Wind Energy Developments

Promote and facilitate wind farm developments in suitable locations, having regard to areas of the County designated for this purpose in the *County Galway Wind Energy Strategy*. The Planning Authority will assess any planning application proposals for wind energy production in accordance with the *County Galway Wind Energy Strategy*, the *DoEHLG Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Wind Energy Development, 2006* (or any updated/superseded documents), having due regard to the Habitats Directive and to the detailed policies, objectives and Development Standards set out in the *Wind Energy Strategy*.

Objective ER 6 – Wind Energy Strategy

The policies, objectives and development management guidelines/standards set out in the *County Galway Wind Energy Strategy* shall be deemed to be the policies, objectives and development management guidelines/standards for the purposes of the *Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021*.

Objective ER 7 – Energy Efficiency Technology in Buildings

The Planning Authority will have regard to the DoEHLG Guidelines on *Sustainable Residential Developments in Urban Areas: Guidelines for Planning Authorities, (2009)* and the accompanying guidance document *Urban Design Manual* in the assessment of any proposals for residential development, including *inter alia* those in respect of energy efficiency, passive solar design and renewable energy sources.

The Council shall:

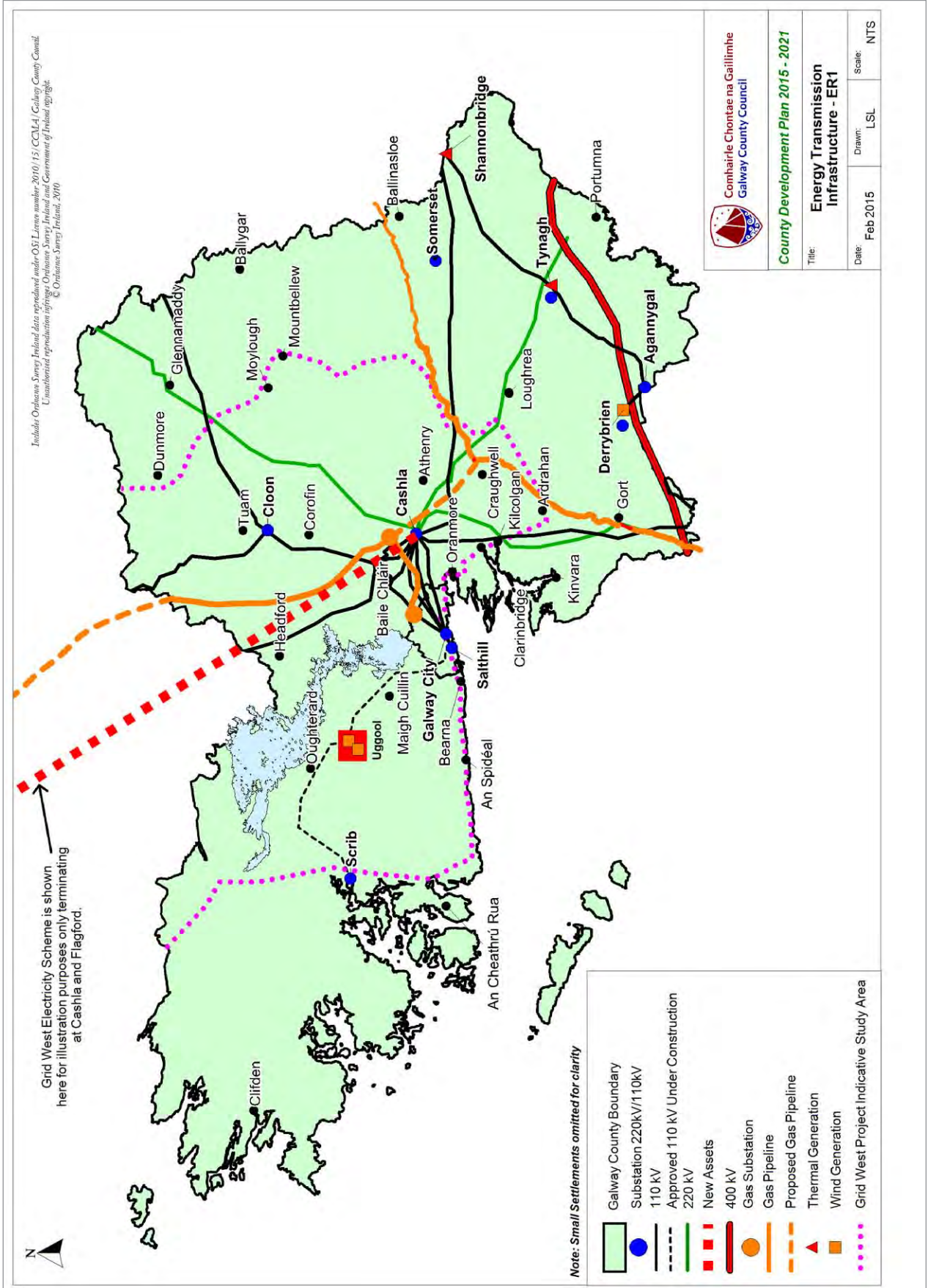
- (a) Encourage and actively promote innovative housing design, energy efficient technologies and layout solutions that address concerns of environmental sustainability with regard to matters such as energy efficiency and the use of materials;
- (b) Actively encourage the integration of micro renewable energy sources into the design and construction of single and multiple housing developments throughout the County;
- (c) The Council shall work with local and relevant departments to identify where there is poor energy infrastructure and low penetration of renewable energy. The Council shall promote the use of district heating/cooling and combined heat and power in new single and multiple housing developments, within schools, commercial and public buildings throughout the County;
- (d) Galway County Council shall require the provision of energy efficient street lighting in all private developments.

Objective ER 8 – Promoting Energy Hubs

Galway County Council shall promote Tuam Hub Town, Athenry and Gort and their environs as energy hubs, to take account of opportunities to develop suitable sustainable enterprises due to their proximity to electricity and gas transmission networks and minimising environmental impact.

Objective ER 9 – Oileáin Árann an Energy Transition Community

The Council shall continue to support Comharchumann Fuinnimh Oileáin Árann (Aran Islands Energy Cooperative), SEAI and Údarás na Gaeltachta in their objective to develop the Islands as being energy independent by 2022 and becoming Ireland's first energy transition community.



7.6 Information and Communications Technology

The *National Broadband Plan for Ireland 2012 - Delivering a Connected Society* recognises that widespread investment in high speed digital and internet services can realise benefits in relation to foreign direct investment by boosting the attractiveness of regional locations outside of the urban centres. Hence as part of this strategic Broadband Plan, there is a commitment to hasten the pace of advancement in terms of the roll out of quality, reliable and fast broadband connections throughout the country. It is also government policy that state entities shall avail of all opportunities to facilitate the deployment of infrastructure to the telecommunications market. The laying of ducts alongside the Galway to Mayo gas pipeline and ducting as part of sewage works in Tuam are two recent examples where Galway County Council has contributed towards this policy goal. The Metropolitan Area Network (MAN) is the state's network of ducting and fibre optic cable laid within a metropolitan area which can be used by a variety of businesses and organisations. It provides services including, but not limited to, telecoms, internet access, television, telematics and CCTV. Galway has 5 towns (Athenry, Ballinasloe, Clifden, Gort and Loughrea) where MANs has been rolled out, which is a key infrastructural asset for economic development.

Furthermore, the *National Digital Strategy for Ireland 2013 - Doing more with Digital – Phase 1 Digital Engagement* aspires to encourage more people to interact through the medium of information and communications technology. A successful example of this in County Galway is 'The Connemara Programme' which is a social enterprise that utilises effectively digital technologies (e-commerce & social media) in enhancing the overall performance of a host of businesses in this region.

7.7 Information and Communications Technology Policies and Objectives

Information and Communications Technology Policies

Policy ICT 1 – Information and Communications Technology Infrastructure

It is a policy of the Council to achieve a balance between facilitating the provision of telecommunications infrastructure, in the interests of social and economic progress and sustaining residential amenity and the protection of the built and natural environment.

Policy ICT 2 – Installation of Information and Communications Technology Infrastructure in High Amenity Areas

It is a policy of the Council that where feasible proposed developments pertaining to the installation of potentially obtrusive information and communications technology infrastructure shall be located in landscape categories 1-3. Where they must be located on sensitive landscapes (those being a Class 4 (Special) or 5 (Unique) landscape category areas or in proximity to a National Monument, Protected Structure/Architectural Conservation Areas or within a focal point/view) they shall be accompanied by visual impact assessments as part of the planning application process.

Policy ICT 3 - Broadband Infrastructure

Galway County Council will regularly audit existing broadband infrastructure in Galway County and will highlight areas which are structurally weak in the availability of the infrastructure. Galway County Council, in recognition of ICT infrastructure as being socially and economically vital will endeavour to promote the use of existing infrastructure that is underutilised and make the promotion of ICT related activity in the County a priority for all Council development related forums.

Information and Communications Technology Objectives

Objective ICT 1 – Facilitate the Delivery of Telecommunications, Broadband and Digital Infrastructure

Support and facilitate the delivery of high capacity ICT infrastructure, broadband networks and digital broadcasting in the County having regard to the Government Guidelines *Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures-Guidelines for Planning Authorities 1996* (DoEHLG) and Circular Letter PL 07/12 (including any updated/superseding documents) and where it can be demonstrated that the development will not have significant adverse effects on the environment including the integrity of the Natura 2000 network.

Objective ICT 2 – Assimilation of Telecommunications Infrastructure into the Landscape

Seek to locate telecommunication masts in non scenic amenity areas, having regard to the Landscape Sensitivity Rating Assessment of the County. In instances where their location is essential in a Class 4 (Special) or 5 (Unique) landscape category areas or in proximity to a National Monument, Protected Structure/Architectural Conservation Area or within a focal point/view, it shall be necessary to minimise their obtrusiveness in as far as is practically possible.

Objective ICT 3 – Co-Location of Telecommunications Infrastructure

Avoid a proliferation of communications masts and antennae in the open countryside and facilitate the potential for future mast sharing and co-location.

Objective ICT 4 – Open Access Fibre Ducting

Support and promote the installation of connections for high speed technologies, where practicable, in accordance with the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources documents including *Recommendations for Open Access Fibre Ducting and Interior Cabling for New Residential Buildings 'Making Homes Fibre Ready', 2011*, the *National Broadband Plan for Ireland 2012 - Delivering a Connected Society* and the *National Digital Strategy for Ireland 2013, Doing more with Digital – Phase 1 Digital Engagement*.





Climate Change & Flooding

8.1 Introduction

Flooding is an environmental phenomenon that can pose a risk to human health as well as causing economic and social effects. The frequency, pattern and severity of flooding is expected to increase as a result of climate change. Accordingly, it is more important than ever to take account of flood risk in spatial planning. This section sets out the Council's approach to address the effects of climate change including the risks from flooding within County Galway.

8.2 Strategic Aims

The Council, in compliance with EU and national legislation, shall strive to achieve an integrated and sustainable approach to the development of the County, to strike a balance between development, the prudent management of the environment and natural resources and to adapt to climate change including the risks posed by flooding. The following strategic aims are based on the three pillars of sustainable development:

- To increase awareness of the potential impacts of climate change to enable people to adapt and manage future extreme weather events such as flooding within the County and region;
- To promote the sustainable development of the County by ensuring that future development is considered and managed against the risk of flooding;
- To support an iterative process to flood risk management as data and analysis becomes available;
- To minimise the level of flood risk to people, businesses, infrastructure and the environment;
- Ensure major emergency planning takes account of climate change adaptation;
- Increase the resilience of buildings and infrastructure networks to extreme weather events;
- To support and manage a healthy and diverse natural environment with capacity to adapt within the County and region;
- To apply an ecosystem-based approach to adaptation including the promotion of green infrastructure within the County and region.



8.3 Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation

To date the policy response to climate change has focused largely on mitigation measures by reducing greenhouse gas emissions through energy efficiency measures, the Kyoto Protocol, emissions trading schemes, etc. While it is of utmost importance that such mitigation measures are continued, there is now recognition that regardless of the success of mitigation measures, the global climate will continue to change and adaptation measures are needed to manage the unavoidable.

An effective response to climate change must combine both -

- **Mitigation:** Defined as any human intervention aimed at reducing harmful influences on the earth's climate system, including action aimed at reducing emissions and creating or enhancing carbon sinks;
- **Adaptation:** Defined as any adjustment to -
 - (a) any system designed or operated by human beings, including an economic, agricultural or technological system, or
 - (b) any naturally occurring system, including an ecosystem, that is intended to counteract the effects (whether actual or anticipated) of climatic stimuli, prevent or moderate environmental damage resulting from climate change or confer environmental benefits.

(Source: *Draft Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Bill 2013*).

Adaptation can also be thought of as learning how to live with the consequences of climate change.

The *National Climate Change Adaptation Framework 2012* provides the policy context for a strategic national adaptation response to climate change in Ireland. It provides a clear mandate for relevant Government departments, agencies and Local Authorities to commence the preparation of sectoral and local plans and to publish drafts of these plans. Plans or programmes will now be required to contain objectives regarding climate change including *mitigation and adaptation* measures.

8.3.1 EU and National Targets

The figure below summarises the climate change mitigation targets for Ireland as set out under national and international commitments:

Kyoto Protocol

- Limit the increase in Green House Gas (GHG) emissions to those agreed under the Kyoto Protocol and any amendments to same;
- Copenhagen Accord, December 2009.

EU Commission Post-Kyoto Targets for 2020

- Reduce emissions in the non-trading sectors (agriculture, transport, residential, commerce, waste) by 20% from 2005 base;
- Reduce emissions in the Emission Trading Scheme (ETS) sector by 21% from 2005 base.

Source: WRA (2010) *Regional Planning Guidelines for the West Region 2010-2022*

8.4 Risk Assessments

The *National Climate Change Adaptation Framework 2012*, states that risk assessment will be a vital part of planning for adaptation and once assessed, plans and measures can be designed to manage those risks. The following preliminary risk assessment for the Development Plan is based on the vulnerabilities and challenges that have been identified within the DECLG document *National Climate Change Adaptation Framework 2012*, EPA document *Ireland's Environment 2012 – An Assessment* and from the Council's own statutory assessments associated with the Development Plan including Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Appropriate Assessment (AA) and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA).

8.4.1 Impact on Water Resources: Water Quality, Water Services and Flooding

8.4.1.1 Water Quality and Water Resources

Water quality and resources are directly impacted by climate change and strategies for protecting natural waters and managing water resources need to be adapted to take account of changing conditions. While there is evidence of an overall improvement in water quality, Ireland faces major challenges to achieve water quality targets set for 2015, 2021 and 2027 as required by the Water Framework Directive (WFD). The revised River Basin Management Plans 2015-2021 will continue to address water quality and to include for climate risk considerations.

Irish Water has been established to take over the responsibility for managing and supervising investment in public water services infrastructure. Water abstraction controls must take account of future changes in rainfall patterns and the consequent impacts on the availability of water resources. Design standards for critical infrastructure may need to be climate proofed to cope with more flooding.

8.4.1.2 Responsive Actions

- Galway County Council will continue to implement measures in the River Basin Management Plans and in the forthcoming revised plans;
- Galway County Council in collaboration with *Irish Water* shall continue to deliver capital works, monitor water quality/leak detection, promote water conservation methods and ensure that such works are climate resilient in design and location;
- The Council shall promote the use of energy efficiency technology in the servicing/maintenance of wastewater and water infrastructure within the County.

8.4.1.3 Flooding

Increased precipitation, sea level rises and increased storm intensity will affect wetlands, rivers, lakes and estuaries as well as agricultural land, coastal communities, the fishing industry, transportation infrastructure, roads, rail and port/harbours. One of the main impacts of climate change for County Galway over recent times has been flooding which has been mainly from fluvial and coastal sources. This has led to local areas/buildings being flooded, certain roads made impassable, increased pressure on sewerage/water networks and extended flood plains. Galway County Council is continually assessing and monitoring/mapping the effects of flooding within the County. In November 2009, it was estimated that 337,000Ha (832,000 acres) or 1,300 square miles were affected by flooding within County Galway. The range extended from Milltown, Baile Chláir, Gort, Portumna, Ballinasloe, and Ballymoe. Other pockets of flooding occurred near Bearna, Maigh Cuilinn, Ros Cathail, Oughterard, Headford and Caherlistrane.

Galway County Council's approach to flood risk management is to avoid, reduce and/or mitigate, as appropriate in accordance with *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009*, the risk of flooding within flood risk areas.

8.4.1.4 Responsive Actions

- Galway County Council shall direct developments and zone land uses in accordance with *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009* (or any superseding document);
- Galway County Council shall continue flood mitigation and climate adaptation works;
- The Council shall continue to update GIS mapping of flood events as new information from the OPW and local sources becomes available;
- Priority Transportation Infrastructure Projects for County Galway 2015-2021 as outlined within this plan (Table 5.1) shall be climate proofed;
- The Council's emergency response plan (prepared in collaboration with the HSE and Garda Síochána) shall continue to be implemented and updated as appropriate.
- The Council will seek the improvement and/or restoration of the natural flood risk management functions of flood plains;
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessments (SFRA's) and site-specific Flood Risk Assessments (FRA's) shall provide information on the implications of climate change with regard to flood risk in relevant locations.

8.4.2 Impact on the Natural Landscape and Biodiversity

With the predicted onset of higher ambient temperatures and varying rainfall patterns, land use and agricultural patterns will be modified. Biodiversity is also being impacted upon by climate change in the timing of flowering and bird migration including the potential arrival of alien invasive species, increased pathogens and pests. Flooding can also lead to lower agricultural crop yields, some ecological systems such as wetlands have suffered increased stress and coastal ecosystems could be more vulnerable.

The total area of peatland within County Galway is estimated as 1,575 square km: 429 square km as 'raised bog' and 1,146 square km as 'blanket bog'. The amount of raised bog overlapping with designated areas is 111.7 square km (compiled in October 2013 using Corine 2000 Dataset and designated areas (SAC, SPA & NHA 2013). Climate change could affect the quantity of carbon take up and storage by peatlands. Healthy peatlands will be more resilient to climate change as they will absorb heavy rainfall and will be less prone to drying out.

The EU document *Guidance on Integrating Climate Change and Biodiversity into Strategic Environmental Assessment 2013* aims to maintain and enhance ecosystems and their services by 2020 by establishing green infrastructure and restoring at least 15% of degraded ecosystems by influencing planning practices in 2 ways by:

- (a) Setting priorities to restore and promote the use of green infrastructure;
- (b) Ensuring no net loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

This document describes an ecosystem based approach as managing, restoring and protecting biodiversity and ecosystem services to provide multiple benefits to human society as well as potentially offering a new tool to use in the SEA process. Ecosystem based approaches contribute to protecting and restoring natural ecosystems by conserving or enhancing carbon stocks, reducing emissions caused by ecosystem degradation and loss, and providing cost effective protection against some of the threats that result from climate change.

8.4.2.1 Responsive Actions

- In accordance with legislation, the Council is preparing a Strategic Environmental Assessment and an Appropriate Assessment of the Development Plan that will assess the plan's strategies, policies and objectives;
- The Core/Settlement Strategies of the County Development Plan promotes the consolidation of residential land use within appropriately serviced areas;
- Galway County Council shall consider any forthcoming recommendations as outlined in the proposed National Raised Bog SAC Management Plan and to any site specific management plans for Raised Bog SAC's adopted for County Galway;
- The Development Plan shall promote the use of green infrastructure through objectives in the plan;
- Galway County Council shall seek to identify, maintain and/or enhance green infrastructure or green networks in Local Area Plans which have a multifunctional use (e.g. flood control, biodiversity movement, amenity, air purification, etc.).

8.4.3 Green House Gas (GHG) Emissions and Climate Change

The EU Commission Roadmap for moving to a competitive low carbon economy by 2050 points to EU-wide GHG emission reduction requirements of up to 80% by 2050. Ireland has reached its Kyoto Protocol commitment for the 2008-2012 period. Projections by the EPA indicate that even in the best case scenario, Ireland will breach its annual obligations for GHG emissions under the EU 2020 target by 2017. Accordingly, further cost effective actions need to be identified, assessed, adopted and implemented to reduce GHG emissions in the near term. At a local level, Galway County Council must contribute to the stabilisation and reduction of national greenhouse gas emissions and also contribute to national climate change adaptation. The Council shall promote the use of renewable energy sources and energy conservation particularly for environment, housing and transportation infrastructure.

8.4.3.1 Responsive Actions

- Collaborate with Galway City Council and Galway Energy Agency Ltd. (GEAL) in the updating of the Galway Climate Change Strategy;
- Develop a transport strategy which includes specific targets for a 20% reduction in car dependency and a 20% modal shift to more efficient transport means;
- Promote the development of the Western Rail Corridor for passenger travel and rail freight;
- Collaborate with the transport and business/enterprise/industrial sectors in an efficient information dissemination and evaluation process regarding data on flood plains, river basins and coastal risk areas.

8.4.4 Impact on Air Quality

Air quality in Ireland is of a high standard across the country and is among the best in Europe, meeting all EU air quality standards in 2010. This is due largely to prevailing clean Atlantic air and lack of large cities and heavy industry. It is noted by the EPA in *Ireland's Environment 2012 – An Assessment* that there has been a decrease in levels of particulate matter in cities and larger urban areas due to improvements in vehicle engine technology. This decrease is not seen in smaller towns, where domestic solid fuel emissions are more significant than traffic emissions. Many towns do not benefit from the ban on smoky coal and often do not have access to cleaner fuel alternatives such as natural gas. Ireland faces challenges of meeting new air quality standards by 2020. This will require an integrated approach across a number of sectors including industrial, transport and residential emissions. Local Authorities in conjunction with Government departments and national agencies must make air quality an integral part of their traffic management and planning processes. Households and businesses must upgrade building fabric to reduce heat and energy need and to shift from solid fuel to cleaner alternatives including natural gas. The CSO in their 2012 Assessment Report noted the following total final energy consumption percentage figures by fuel type for Ireland: oil 60%, solid fuel 5%, gas 14%, electricity 18%, renewable energy 2% and derived heat 0%.

8.4.4.1 Responsive Actions

- The Council shall maximise the insulation and heating controls in properties owned by Galway County Council;
- The Council shall consider the introduction of renewable energy sources of heating for tenants and the promotion of cleaner and healthier environments within towns and villages across the County.

8.4.5 Impact on Human Health

The EU Health Strategy 2008-2013 – Together for Health: A Strategic Approach for the EU identifies the protection of people from health threats due to climate change as a priority. Direct impacts come from temperature-related illness and deaths or extreme weather events. Indirect climate change impacts will affect the spread of water, food or vector borne diseases and have other impacts on food or water supplies. Implementation of legislation on waste water treatment plants, enterprise/industrial activities and septic tanks as well as good agricultural practice will reduce the risks to drinking water quality and help reduce water pollution generally. Actions are also required to reduce the risk to health from high radon levels in some areas.

8.4.5.1 Responsive Actions

- The Council shall continue to collaborate with the HSE in relation to the potential spread of water, food or vector borne pathogens;
- The Council shall closely monitor compliance with the Building Regulations relating to radon.

The following policies and objectives are based on the strategic aims outlined within Section 8.2 of the Development Plan and attempt to address the relevant risks and impacts identified at national and County level. The policies and objectives contain both mitigation and adaptation processes. Adaptation policies shall be flexible and adjusted as and when new information and guidance becomes available.

8.5 Climate Change, Air Quality and Radon Policies and Objectives

Climate Change Policies

Policy CC 1 – Climate Change Policy

It is Council policy to have regard to EU and national legislation and strategies on climate change in its decision making process, in order to contribute to a reduction and avoidance of human induced climate change, in accordance with national targets under the *Kyoto Protocol* and the *EU Roadmap*.

Policy CC 2 – Climate Change Adaptation Plans

Support the *National Climate Change Adaptation Framework 2012* by implementing relevant measures in any forthcoming adaptation plans. Such plans shall be in accordance with national guidance issued by the DoECLG and EPA and undertaken in collaboration with the West Regional Authority, Galway City Council, Mayo County Council and Roscommon County Council.

Policy CC 3 – Increase Awareness of Climate Change

The Council shall work collaboratively with Regional/Local Authorities and other agencies to adapt to climate change and to increase the awareness of the impacts of climate change to enable people to understand and respond to the challenges that they face as a result of current and future climate change.

Policy CC 4 – Mainstreaming Climate Change Adaptation

Galway County Council shall mainstream climate change adaptation into land use planning, building layouts, energy, transport, natural resource management, forestry, agriculture and marine waters.

Policy CC 5 – Climate Change and the Natural Environment

The Council shall support a healthy and diverse natural environment with capacity to adapt by promoting the role of green networks in helping the County/Region to mitigate and adapt to climate change by strengthening habitat networks, reducing habitat fragmentation and providing opportunities for species to migrate.

Policy CC 6 – Adapting Infrastructure to Climate Change

The Council shall be guided by the EU document *Adapting Infrastructure to Climate Change (SWD /2013/137)* which sets out how climate change will affect energy, water supply, transport, communications infrastructure and buildings. All critical infrastructure proposals shall be 'climate proofed' which shall not only consider the resilience to the adverse impacts of climate change but shall also minimise the emission of greenhouse gases over the lifespan of the physical asset in question.

Policy CC 7 – Local Authority Action Regarding Climate Change

It is a policy of the Council to be a leader in the action against climate change. The Council will strive to reduce energy consumption and increase the use of renewable energy in line with international, national and any forthcoming regional targets.

Policy CC 8 – Human Health

The Council shall continue to collaborate with the HSE and other relevant agencies in relation to the potential spread of water, food or vector borne pathogens.

Climate Change Objectives

Objective CC 1 – Climate Change Adaptation Plan

Galway County Council shall collaborate with the West Regional Authority and other Local Authorities in the preparation of a Climate Change Adaptation Plan, subject to guidance from the DoECLG and the EPA.

Objective CC 2 – Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Galway County Council shall implement measures which seek to establish a low carbon economy and society by 2050 and which seek to reduce greenhouse gas emissions including the adoption of sustainable planning strategies through integrating land use and transportation.

Objective CC 3 – Green Infrastructure

Galway County Council shall promote the benefit of open spaces and implement the integration of green infrastructure/networks (e.g. interconnected network of green spaces (including aquatic ecosystems) and other physical features on land) into new development and regeneration proposals in order to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Objective CC 4 – Climate Proofing Critical Infrastructure

Galway County Council shall have regard to climate change in assessing all critical transport and energy infrastructure developments, so as to ensure the viability of such developments into the future.

Objective CC 5 – An Ecosystems Approach and Land Use

Galway County Council shall implement an ecosystems approach (holistic approach) to land use and land use change and ensure that climate change adaptation measures are taken into account in planning decisions. The Council shall also –

- (a) Have regard to any recommendations and forthcoming recommendations as outlined in the proposed *National Raised Bog SAC Management Plan* and the *National Biodiversity Plan*;
- (b) Integrate climate risk into the review of the *Biodiversity Action Plan for County Galway 2008 - 2013*;
- (c) Seek to control the spread of non-native and alien invasive species on land and water using new regulatory powers.

Air Quality Objectives

Objective CC 6 – Air Quality

Galway County Council shall promote the preservation of best ambient air quality compatible with sustainable development in accordance with the EU *Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe (CAFE) Directive (2008/50/EC)* and by ensuring that all air emissions associated with new developments are within Environmental Quality Standards as set out in the *Air Quality Standards Regulations 2011 (SI No. 180 of 2011)* (or any updated/superseding documents).

Objective CC 7 – Air Purification

The Council shall encourage landscaping and deciduous tree planting in an environmentally sensitive manner within towns and villages as a means of air purification, the filtering of suspended particles and the improvement of their micro-climate.

Radon Objective

Objective CC 8 – Radon

The Council shall have regard, to the specific guidance on radon prevention measures for new homes as contained within the existing Building Regulations (including any updated/superseding regulations that may be published within the lifetime of this Development Plan).

8.6 Flooding

Flooding cannot be completely eliminated, but its impacts can be minimised with proactive and careful management of catchments and identified flood risk areas and by ensuring that development does not individually or cumulatively give rise to new flood risks. In order to minimise the impact of increased future flood risk, there are various steps that Local Authorities can take. These include flood protection works, stormwater attenuation and more significantly, avoidance of development in floodplains, except in very limited circumstances.

Galway County Council recognises the need for measures to address the regular and repeated flooding issues that arise along the River Shannon and related tributaries, such as the River Suck and Galway County Council recognises that a maintenance programme for Aibhann Na Shionna is essential. Galway County Council will seek to work with the OPW, Fáilte Ireland and the relevant authorities to address the issue of flooding at Thoor Ballylee.



8.6.1 Legislative and Policy Background

The EU Floods Directive (2007/60/EC) was introduced to reduce and manage the risks that floods pose to human health, the environment, cultural heritage and economic activity. Implementation of this EU Directive is required to be coordinated with the requirements of the EU Water Framework Directive and the current River Basin Management Plans. The Directive requires Member States to carry out a preliminary assessment in order to identify the river basins and coastal areas where potential significant flood risk exists, to prepare flood hazard and risk maps and to prepare flood risk management plans focused on prevention, protection and preparedness which include measures to reduce the probability of flooding and its potential consequences.

National flood policy developed from the OPW *Report of the Flood Policy Review Group* (2004) which focuses on managing flood risk, rather than relying only on flood protection measures, proposed taking a catchment-based approach to being proactive in assessing and managing flood risks including the preparation of flood maps and flood risk management plans.

The national Catchment and Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) programme commenced in 2011 and it is intended to deliver on the main elements of the aforementioned 2004 national flood policy and on the requirements of the EU Floods Directive. CFRAM studies are being undertaken for each of the six river basin districts in Ireland. County Galway is located within both the Shannon International and the Western River Basin Districts. Galway County Council will be required to take account of the CFRAMs when they are introduced.

The OPW produced flood maps as part of the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA) that identify areas at risk of flooding, including fluvial, coastal, pluvial and groundwater flooding, for the entire country. The *Stage 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for County Galway* accompanies this plan and supplements this information.

The national guidelines '*The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities*' (2009) introduced mechanisms for the incorporation of flood risk identification, assessment and management into the planning process. Planning Authorities are required to have regard to the guidelines when carrying out their functions under the Planning Acts.

The core objectives of the Flood Risk Management Guidelines are to:

- Avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding;
- Avoid new developments increasing flood elsewhere, including that which may arise from surface water run-off;
- Ensure effective management of residual risk for development permitted in floodplains;
- Avoid unnecessary restrictions of national, regional or local economic and social growth;
- Improve the understanding of flood risk among relevant stakeholders; and
- Ensure that the requirements of EU and national law in relation to the natural environment and nature conservation are complied with at all stages of flood risk management.

The key principles set out in the Flood Risk Management Guidelines are to:

- Avoid flood risk where possible;
- Substitute less vulnerable uses when avoidance is not possible;
- Mitigate and manage the risk where avoidance and substitution are not possible.

The guidelines follow the principle that development should not be permitted in flood risk areas, particularly flood plains, except where there are no alternative and appropriate sites available in lower risk areas that are consistent with the objectives of proper planning and sustainable development.

8.6.2 The County Development Plan and Flood Risk Considerations

The County Development Plan is required to undergo an appropriate level of Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) and in this regard a Stage 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for County Galway has been carried out as part of the plan process. This assessment is available as a support document to the plan. The SFRA process is also integrated into the Strategic Environmental Assessment process which is also being undertaken alongside the preparation of the County Development Plan. Lower tier plans, such as the Local Area Plans, will also be subjected to their own SFRA requirements.

The SFRA has been undertaken and prepared in accordance with *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2009). The purpose of the SFRA is to identify flooding or surface water management issues related to the County that may warrant further investigation at the appropriate plan level, or at planning application level, and also to suggest measures to be integrated into the County Development Plan that will contribute towards both flood risk management in the County and compliance with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines.

Areas of County Galway are vulnerable to flooding and this vulnerability can be exacerbated by changes associated with global warming such as increased occurrences of severe rainfall events, sea level rise, increased storm frequency and associated flooding (Refer to SFRA Maps). Local conditions such as low-lying lands and slow surface water drainage increase the risk of flooding. This risk can also be increased by human actions including clearing of natural vegetation to make way for agriculture, draining/rehabilitation of bog and wetland areas and the development of settlements in the flood plains of rivers and low lying or eroding coastlines as well as by changing weather patterns. Inadequately planned infrastructural development, forestry operations and urban development in the floodplain, for example, can also give rise to flooding hazards, coastal erosion/flooding and loss of habitats.

The County Galway SFRA (Stage 1 SFRA including flood maps) contained within the supporting documents of this Development Plan, provides information on various flood risk indicators that occur within the County.

8.6.3 Flood Zones and the Sequential Approach

The Planning System Flood Risk Management Guidelines (2009) prescribe the use of a sequential approach to ensure development is directed towards land that is at a low risk of flooding. The sequential approach makes use of flood risk assessment and of prior identification of flood zones for river (fluvial) flooding. It is essential that the risk potentially arising from other sources of flooding (e.g. coastal and pluvial) should also be taken into account in all areas and stages of the planning process.

There are three types or levels of flood zones defined for the purposes of implementing the Planning System Flood Risk Management Guidelines:

1. **Flood Zone A** – where the probability of flooding from rivers and the sea is highest (greater than 1% or 1 in 100 for river flooding or 0.5% or 1 in 200 for coastal flooding);
2. **Flood Zone B** – where the probability of flooding from rivers and the sea is moderate (between 0.1% or 1 in 1000 and 1% or 1 in 100 for river flooding and between 0.1% or 1 in 1000 year and 0.5% or 1 in 200 for coastal flooding); and

3. Flood Zone C – where the probability of flooding from rivers and the sea is low (less than 0.1% or 1 in 1000 for both river and coastal flooding). Flood Zone C covers all areas which are not in zones A or B.

Table 8.1 indicates the types of land uses that are appropriate in each of the Flood Zones identified within the County, in accordance with *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines* (2009). Where developments/land uses are proposed that are considered inappropriate to the Flood Zone, then a Development Management Justification Test and Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment will be required in accordance with *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines* (2009).

Land Uses	Flood Zone A	Flood Zone B	Flood Zone C
HVD – Highly Vulnerable Development	Inappropriate (if proposed then Justification Test & detailed FRA required)	Inappropriate (if proposed then Justification Test & detailed FRA required)	Appropriate (screen for flood risk)
LVD – Less Vulnerable Development	Inappropriate (if proposed then Justification Test & detailed FRA required)	Inappropriate due to climate change (if proposed then Justification Test & detailed FRA required)	Appropriate (screen for flood risk)
WCD – Water-Compatible Development	Appropriate (detailed FRA may be required)	Appropriate (detailed FRA may be required)	Appropriate (screen for flood risk)

Table 8.1: Flood Zones and Appropriate Land Uses

Note: Refer to Flood Risk Management Guidelines for additional detail.

- 1. HVD** – Houses, schools, hospitals, residential institutions, emergency services, essential infrastructure, etc.
- 2. LVD** – Economic uses (retail, leisure, warehousing, commercial, industrial, non-residential institutions, etc.), land and buildings used for agriculture or forestry, local transport infrastructure, etc.
- 3. WCD** – Docks, marinas, wharves, water-based recreation and tourism (excluding sleeping accommodation), amenity open space, sports and recreation, flood control infrastructure, etc.

In general, flood vulnerable development in flood plains should be restricted. Development should also be restricted on lands identified as “benefiting lands” as there may be legacy flood risk issues in these areas.

Advice Note:

Flood hazard and flood risk information is an emerging dataset of information. The flood hazard maps used by the Council may be altered in light of future data and analysis, in particular the CFRAMS. Therefore, all landowners and developers are advised that Galway County Council accept no responsibility for losses or damages arising due to assessments of vulnerability to flooding of lands, uses and developments. Owners, users and developers are advised to take all reasonable measures to assess the vulnerability to flooding in a particular area, prior to submitting a planning application.

8.7 Flood Risk Management Policies and Objectives

Flood Risk Management Policies

Policy FL 1 – Flood Risk Management Guidelines

It is the policy of Galway County Council to support, in co-operation with the OPW, the implementation of the *EU Flood Risk Directive (2007/60/EC)*, the *Flood Risk Regulations (SI No. 122 of 2010)* and the DEHLG/OPW publication *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines (2009)* (and any updated/superseding legislation or policy guidance). Galway County Council will also take account of the Shannon International and Western Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Studies.

Policy FL 2 – Catchment Planning

The Council will actively work with the CFRAM Programme and catchment based Flood Planning Groups, especially in the east of the County where catchments go beyond the Council's administrative boundary, in the development and implementation of catchment-based strategies for the management of flood risk - including those relating to storage and conveyance.

Policy FL 3 – Improvement and/or Restoration of Natural Flood Risk Management Functions

Where resources are available and subject to compliance with the Habitats and Birds Directives, the Council will contribute towards the improvement and/or restoration of the natural flood risk management functions of flood plains.

Policy FL 4 – Principles of the Flood Risk Management Guidelines

The Council shall implement the key principles of flood risk management set out in the Flood Risk Management Guidelines as follows:

- (a) Avoid development that will be at risk of flooding or that will increase the flooding risk elsewhere, where possible;
- (b) Substitute less vulnerable uses, where avoidance is not possible; and
- (c) Mitigate and manage the risk, where avoidance and substitution are not possible.

Development should only be permitted in areas at risk of flooding when there are no alternative, reasonable sites available in areas at lower risk that also meet the objectives of proper planning and sustainable development.

Development in areas which have the highest flood risk should be avoided and/or only considered in exceptional circumstances (through a prescribed Justification Test) if adequate land or sites are not available in areas which have lower flood risk.

Policy FL 5 – SFRA of Lower Tier Plans

Lower tier plans shall undertake SFRA (Strategic Flood Risk Assessment) in compliance with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines and in consultation with the OPW.

Flood Risk Management Objectives

Objective FL 1 – Flood Risk Management and Assessment

Comply with the requirements of the DoEHLG/OPW *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management-Guidelines for Planning Authorities* and its accompanying *Technical Appendices Document 2009* (including any updated/superseding documents).

This will include the following:

- (a) Avoid, reduce and/or mitigate, as appropriate in accordance with the Guidelines;
- (b) Development proposals in areas where there is an identified or potential risk of flooding or that could give rise to a risk of flooding elsewhere will be required to carry out a Site-Specific Flood Risk Assessment, and justification test where appropriate, in accordance with the provisions of *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009* (or any superseding document);
- (c) Development that would be subject to an inappropriate risk of flooding or that would cause or exacerbate such a risk at other locations shall not normally be permitted;
- (d) Galway County Council shall work with other bodies and organisations, as appropriate, to help protect critical infrastructure, including water and wastewater, within the County, from risk of flooding.

Objective FL 2 – Surface Water Drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs)

Maintain and enhance, as appropriate, the existing surface water drainage system in the County. Ensure that new developments are adequately serviced with surface water drainage infrastructure and promote the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems in all new developments. Surface water run-off from development sites will be limited to pre-development levels and planning applications for new developments will be required to provide details of surface water drainage and sustainable drainage systems proposals.

Objective FL 3 – Protection of Waterbodies and Watercourses

Protect waterbodies and watercourses within the County from inappropriate development, including rivers, streams, associated undeveloped riparian strips, wetlands and natural floodplains. This will include protection buffers in riverine, wetland and coastal areas as appropriate.

Objective FL 4 – Flood Risk Assessment for Planning Applications and CFRAMS

Site-specific Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) is required for all planning applications in areas at risk of flooding, even for developments appropriate to the particular flood zone. The detail of these site-specific FRAs will depend on the level of risk and scale of development. A detailed site-specific FRA should quantify the risks, the effects of selected mitigation and the management of any residual risks.

The Council shall have regard to the results of any CFRAM Studies in the assessment of planning applications.

Objective FL 5 – SFRA/FRA and Climate Change

SFRAs and site-specific FRAs shall provide information on the implications of climate change with regard to flood risk in relevant locations. The 2009 OPW Draft Guidance on *Assessment of Potential Future Scenarios for Flood Risk Management* (or any superseding document) shall be consulted with to this effect.

Objective FL 6 – FRA and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

Flood risk may constitute a significant environmental effect of a development proposal that in certain circumstances may trigger a sub-threshold EIS. FRA should therefore be an integral part of any EIA undertaken for projects within the County.

Heritage, Landscape & Environmental Management

9.1 Introduction

Our heritage is a very valuable, finite resource and it is important that we recognise its value in our quality of life and in all our daily activities. Heritage can include built, natural and cultural elements of the past and the skills used in its creation and maintenance.

Every day we make decisions about what aspects of our built, natural and cultural heritage to keep and what to discard. The decisions are often unconscious and are usually informed by our values and understanding of what has heritage value. It is important that we take responsibility for our actions and understand the implications for the protection and survival of heritage in general. It is essential that all stakeholders see themselves as having a shared responsibility for their heritage.

We also need to be mindful that we are also creating the heritage of tomorrow. We must ensure that future generations will be proud of the urban and rural heritage which we leave as a legacy. Therefore it is essential that clear policies and objectives are in place to properly utilise, conserve, manage and protect our built, natural and cultural heritage.

9.2 Strategic Context and Strategic Aims

The Irish Government has signed and ratified a number of international and European Conventions and EU Directives with regard to heritage. These conventions and directives have directed the development of national legislation to protect our built, natural and cultural heritage. The Regional Planning Guidelines support a common approach between Local Authorities in the region in managing and protecting the built, natural and cultural heritage of the region. *Galway County Heritage Plan* is a strategic 6 year plan that sets out a number of actions which aim to raise awareness and understanding, while at the same time conserving and managing the heritage of the County. The *Galway County Biodiversity Plan* provides a framework for the conservation of natural heritage and biodiversity at the County level;

- To promote appropriate enhancement of the built and natural environment as an integral part of any development;
- To promote a reasonable balance between conservation measures and development needs in the interests of promoting orderly and sustainable development;
- To protect the landscape categories within the County and avoid negative impacts upon the natural environment;
- To promote appropriate enhancement of the natural environment as an integral part of any development.

9.3 General Heritage Policies

General Heritage Policies

Policy GH 1 – Conserve, protect and enhance the special character of the County as defined by its natural heritage and biodiversity, its built environment, landscape and cultural, social and sporting heritage.

Policy GH 2 – Ensure that heritage protection is an integral part of coherent policies on economic and social development and of urban and rural planning.

Policy GH 3 – Implement the legislative provisions of the *Planning and Development Act, 2000* (as amended), which offers protection to the architectural, archaeological and natural heritage.

Policy GH 4 – Engage with all relevant stakeholders (and in particular local communities) in matters relating to the protection of natural, built and cultural heritage.



9.4 Built Heritage

9.4.1 Legislative Context

In 1997, Ireland ratified the Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe Granada 1986, and introduced legislative provisions for its protection in *Part IV of the Planning and Development Act, 2000*. *Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2011) and an Advice Series published by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht provide information.

9.4.2 Architectural Heritage

The physical form of individual structures in the countryside and in the towns and villages of County Galway has evolved through many periods. The built environment which has developed over the years has attained a character that contributes to varied regionally and locally distinctive areas in County Galway.

The architectural heritage of Galway is a unique and special resource. Our architectural heritage consists not only of great artistic achievements of the past, but also the everyday works of craftsmanship of the past. Structures and places have over time acquired character and special interest through their continued existence and familiarity. In a changing world they provide an anchor. All of their parts have been tested by our climate, and those that have survived the ravages of time and of constant use, have acquired value. If we enjoy the fruits of this inheritance, we have a duty to ensure that it is conserved and passed onto our successors. Sympathetic reuse can allow the architectural heritage to be enjoyed and used into the future.

9.4.3 Protected Structures

A protected structure is a structure that the Planning Authority considers to be of special interest from an architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical point of view. The Planning Authority in its Record of Protected Structures (RPS) includes details of protected structures. A Record of Protected Structures is the record included in a Development Plan, correct at the time of publication. It may be amended by the addition or deletion of entries independently of the Development Plan review process.

The inclusion of a structure in the RPS does not preclude appropriate use or development. The word protection is defined in the *Planning and Development Act, 2000* (as amended) as including, in relation to a structure, or part of a structure, conservation, preservation and improvement compatible with maintaining the character and interest of the structure. Protection is offered to:

- a) The interior of the structure;
- b) The land lying within the curtilage of the structure;
- c) Any other structures lying within that curtilage and their interiors, and all fixtures and features which form part of the interior or exterior of any structure.

Normal planning exemptions do not apply to a protected structure or a proposed protected structure. No works, which would adversely affect the character of the structure, or any element of it, which contributes to its special interest, may be carried out to a protected structure without planning permission. An owner or occupier of a protected structure may make a written request to the Planning Authority to issue a Section 57 Declaration as to the type of works, which it considers would or would not materially affect the character of the structure or any element of the structure that contributes to its special interest.

9.4.4 Architectural Conservation Areas

An Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) is a place, area, group of structures or townscape, which is of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest or contributes to the appreciation of a protected structure. An Architectural Conservation Area may or may not include protected structures. In an ACA, protection is placed on the external appearance of such areas or structures. Planning permission must be obtained before significant works can be carried out to the exterior of a structure within an ACA, which might alter the character of the structure, or of the ACA.

9.4.5 Vernacular Architecture

Vernacular architecture refers to the traditional building forms and types built using local materials, skills and building techniques which form a vital component of the landscape. This includes traditional domestic buildings such as thatched cottages but could also include other traditional structures such as shopfronts, farmsteads, outbuildings, aspects of the industrial past, including lime kilns, mills, forges, and their products, such as gates. These structures reflect the unique local history and character of a place. The loss of vernacular architecture may not only result from the removal of whole buildings but also the gradual attrition of details such as the replacement of roof coverings and openings with inappropriate materials. Any changes proposed to a vernacular structure should be sympathetic to its special features and its character while ensuring its continued use.

9.4.6 Energy Efficiency and Traditionally Built Structures

Proposals to improve the thermal performance of historic buildings and to insert renewable energy technologies need to be sensitive to traditional methods of construction to ensure that the proposed works are compatible with the traditionally accepted method of allowing for moisture to be absorbed and released easily. Ventilating the internal spaces performs the important function of allowing the building to breathe. Interventions such as impermeable building products may have unintended harmful consequences for historic traditional buildings. The location of solar panels, wind turbines or other renewable technologies must be carefully considered in the historic environment.

9.4.7 Designed Landscapes

Historic designed landscapes are gardens, parks or estates that were deliberately laid out to create a particular effect. By using features such as flowers and trees to form vistas, altering river courses to form lakes, building walled gardens to create sheltered areas, an architectural and horticultural composition was created. The designed landscapes of Galway consist primarily of demesnes associated with large country houses and are often the setting for a protected structure.

9.5 Architectural Heritage Policies and Objectives

Architectural Heritage Policies

Policy AH 1 – Architectural Heritage

Protect the architectural heritage of County Galway which is a unique and special resource.

Policy AH 2 – Traditional Skills

Maintain a database of traditional building skills, and promote training and awareness of the use of appropriate materials and skills within the Local Authority, community groups and owners and occupiers of traditionally built structures.

Architectural Heritage Objectives

Objective AH 1 – Legislative Context

Ensure the protection of the architectural heritage of County Galway which is a unique and special resource, in particular by implementing the legislative provisions of the *Planning and Development Act, 2000* (as amended) in relation to architectural heritage and the policy guidance contained in the *Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines 2011* (and any updated/superseding document).

Objective AH 2 – Protected Structures (Refer to Appendix V)

Ensure the protection and sympathetic enhancement of structures included and proposed for inclusion in the Record of Protected Structures (RPS) that are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest, together with the integrity of their character and setting.

Objective AH 3 – Architectural Conservation Area (Refer to Appendix III)

Protect, conserve and enhance the essential character of any Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) through the appropriate management and control of the design, location and layout of new development, alterations or extensions to existing structures, surviving historic plots and street patterns and/or modifications to the character or setting of the Architectural Conservation Area. The identification of areas of special interest may be considered during the lifetime of the plan in either urban or rural settings. (See Map AH1)

Objective AH 4 – Works Relating to Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas

Ensure that any development, modifications, alterations, or extensions materially affecting the character of a protected structure, or a structure adjoining a protected structure, or a structure within or adjacent to an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA), is sited and designed appropriately and is not detrimental to the character or setting of the protected structure or of the ACA. This will include the following:

- a) Works materially affecting the character of a protected structure or the exterior of a building/structure within an ACA will require planning permission;
- b) Any works carried out to a protected structure or the exterior of a building/structure within an ACA shall be in accordance with best conservation practice and use sustainable and appropriate materials.

Works within the ACA shall ensure the conservation of traditional features and building elements that contribute to the character of the area. New proposals shall have appropriate regard to scale, plot, form, mass, design, materials, colours and function.

Objective AH 5 – Demolition

Prohibit development proposals, either in whole or in part, for the demolition of protected structures, save in exceptional circumstances, or the demolition of a structure within an Architectural Conservation Area that contributes to the special character of the area.

Objective AH 6 – Vernacular Architecture

Recognise the importance of the contribution of vernacular architecture to the character of a place and ensure the protection, retention and appropriate revitalisation and use of the vernacular built heritage, including structures that contribute to landscape and streetscape character and resist the demolition of these structures.

Objective AH 7 – Local Place Names

Protect local place names as an important part of the cultural heritage and unique character of an area. Support the use of appropriate names for new developments that reflect the character and heritage of the area and that contribute to the local distinctiveness of a place.

Objective AH 8 – Energy Efficiency and Traditionally Built Structures

Ensure that measures to upgrade the energy efficiency of protected structures and traditionally built historic structures are sensitive to traditional construction methods and use appropriate materials and do not have a detrimental impact on the material, aesthetic or visual character of the building.

Objective AH 9 – Local Landscape and Place Assessment

To support proposals from local communities including Tidy Town Committees, Chambers of Commerce and residents groups in analysing the character of their place and promoting its regeneration for their own use and enjoyment and that of visitors to the area.

Objective AH 10 – Designed Landscapes

Identify and evaluate the surviving historic designed landscapes in the County and promote the conservation of their essential character, both built and natural.

Objective AH 11 – Custodianship

Promote an inter-disciplinary approach demonstrating best practice with regard to the custodianship of protected structures, recorded monuments and elements of built heritage.

9.6 Archaeological Heritage

The archaeological heritage of County Galway includes structures, constructions, groups of buildings, developed sites, all recorded monuments as well as their contexts, and moveable objects, situated both on land and underwater. All known archaeological monuments are included in the statutory Record of Monuments and Places. The Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) was established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994 and structures, features, objects or sites listed in the RMP are known as Recorded Monuments. Any persons proposing to carry out works at or in relation to a recorded monument must give 2 months written notice to the Minister.

Any works that may affect a national monument in the ownership or guardianship of the Minister or of the Local Authority or are protected by a Preservation Order require the prior consent of the Minister. Archaeological structures may, in some situations, be considered as architectural heritage and, therefore, may appear on both the Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) and the Record of Protected Structures (RPS). These structures are accordingly protected by both the National Monuments Acts and the *Planning and Development Act, 2000* (as amended). Burial grounds are an important part of local heritage and often contain the standing remains or sites of earlier structures and also contain a great diversity of animal and plant life. Burial grounds, which are included in Records of Monuments and Places, are afforded protection under Section 12 of the *National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994*. Consultation with the National Monuments Service of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht is necessary prior to undertaking any proposed works in relation to historic graveyards.

Copies of the Record of Monuments and Places for County Galway are available from Galway County Council's Planning Department and through Galway County Libraries or online at www.archaeology.ie.

9.7 Archaeological Heritage Policies and Objectives

Archaeological Heritage Policies

Policy ARC 1 – Legislative Context

It is the policy of Galway County Council to support and promote the conservation and appropriate management and enhancement of the County's archaeological heritage within the plan area. Galway County Council will ensure the implementation of the legislative, statutory and policy provisions relevant to the conservation of the archaeological heritage.

Policy ARC 2 – Archaeological Sites

Seek to promote awareness of and access to archaeological sites in the County where appropriate.

Policy ARC 3 – Consultation

Consult with the National Monuments Service of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in relation to proposed developments adjoining archaeological sites.

Policy ARC 4 – Management of Archaeological Sites and Monuments

Support the preservation, conservation and management of archaeological sites and monuments, together with the settings of these monuments.

Policy ARC 5 – Archaeological Heritage

Ensure the protection and sympathetic enhancement of archaeological heritage in the plan area, in particular by implementing the relevant provisions of the *Planning and Development Act, 2000* (as amended), *The National Monuments Act, 1930* (as amended), and *The National Policy on Town Defences, 2008* (Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government).

Policy ARC 6 – Archaeological Landscapes

To facilitate where possible the identification of important archaeological landscapes in the County.



Archaeological Heritage Objectives

Objective ARC 1 – Protection of Archaeological Sites

Protect archaeological sites and monuments their settings and visual amenity and archaeological objects and underwater archaeological sites that are listed in the *Record of Monuments and Places*, in the ownership/guardianship of the State, or that are subject of Preservation Orders or have been registered in the Register of Historic Monuments and seek to protect important archaeological landscapes.

Objective ARC 2 – Development Management

All planning applications for new development, redevelopment, any ground works, refurbishment, and restoration, etc. within areas of archaeological potential or within close proximity to Recorded Monuments or within the historic towns of County Galway (Ardrahan, Athenry, Dunmore, Eyrecourt, Loughrea and Tuam) will take account of the archaeological heritage of the area and the need for archaeological mitigation.

Objective ARC 3 – Protection of New Archaeological Sites

Protect and preserve archaeological sites, which have been identified subsequent to the publication of the *Record of Monuments and Places*.

Objective ARC 4 – Burial Grounds

Protect the burial grounds, identified in the *Record of Monuments and Places*, in co-operation with the National Monuments Service of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. Encourage the local community to manage burial grounds in accordance with best conservation and heritage principles.

Objective ARC 5 – Battlefield Sites

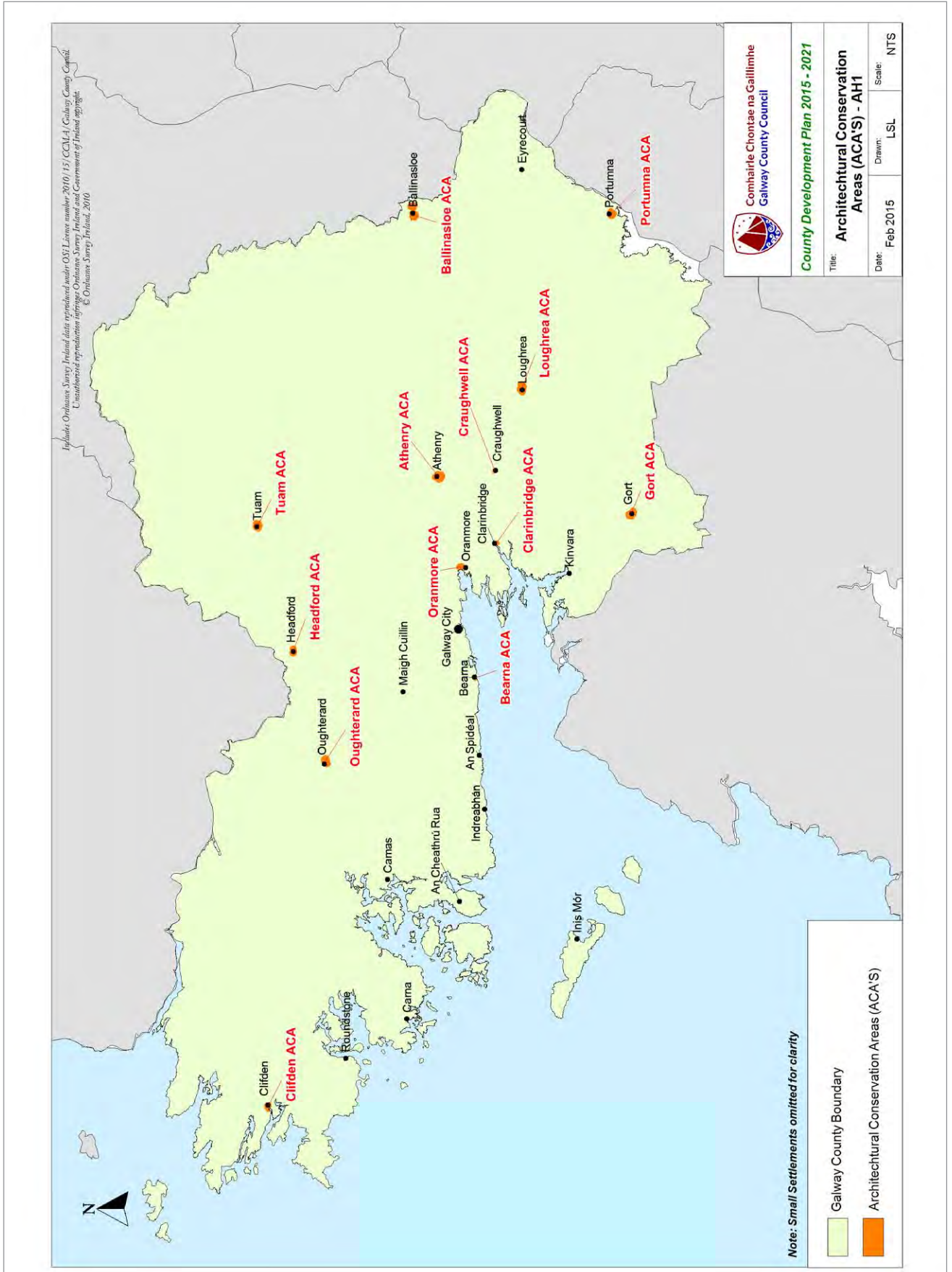
Protect the Battle of Aghrim site and other battlefield sites and their settings. Refer all planning applications within the battlefield sites and their environs to the National Monuments Service of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht for their consideration.

Objective ARC 6 – Underwater Archaeological Sites

To protect and preserve the underwater archaeological sites in rivers, lakes, intertidal and sub-tidal locations.

Objective ARC 7 – Recorded Monuments

Ensure that any development in the immediate vicinity of a Recorded Monument is sensitively designed and sited and does not detract from the monument or its visual amenity.



9.8 Natural Heritage and Biodiversity

9.8.1 Context

The great diversity of landscape and seascape, coupled with location and climate, has resulted in a diversity of natural and semi-natural habitats in County Galway. These include woodland, grassland, wetland, marine, coastal, upland, river and lake habitats. This biodiversity is under pressure from development and human activity. A sustainable approach is needed to protect and conserve the natural heritage.

The various habitats in the County form part of an “ecological network” that facilitates the movement of species between areas and ensures the effective functioning and survival of the diverse range of habitats and species in the County. Ecological networks provide a spatial, network-based approach to the conservation of biodiversity, which differs from the site-based approach of environmental designations, by using ‘corridors’ or ‘stepping stones’ that support species migration, dispersal and daily movements between the ‘core areas’ and thereby contribute to a more integrated and functional ecological system.

Natural heritage includes the variety of life we see around us every day and also includes the landscape and its geological foundation. The variety of life is often referred to as biological diversity or biodiversity. Biodiversity is a word used to describe the natural world that includes people, animals, plants, fungi, microbes as well as the places they live, which are called habitats. Natural heritage includes a wide range of natural features and processes that make an essential contribution to the environmental quality, ecological biodiversity, landscape character, visual amenity, recreational activities, public health and investment potential of the area.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service under the auspices of the Department of the Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht is responsible for the designation of the Natural Heritage Areas (NHA), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA). The designation of sites is a continuing process as boundaries are revised and adjusted and new sites are added. Galway County Council will take cognisance of any revisions and adjustments as furnished by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of the Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

Candidate Special Areas of Conservation

The Candidate Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) have been selected because they support habitats and plant and animal species that are rare or threatened in Europe and require particular measures, including the designation of protected sites, to conserve them. Together with the SPAs they form part of the ‘Natura 2000’ network of sites throughout Europe.

Special Protection Areas

The Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and proposed Special Protection Areas (pSPAs) which were established under the *Birds Directive*, have been selected because they support populations of birds of particular species that are rare or threatened in Europe and require particular measures, including the designation of protected areas to conserve them. The *Birds Directive* also recognises that habitat loss and degradation are the most serious threats to the conservation of wild birds and therefore places great emphasis on the protection of habitats, such as wetlands, for endangered as well as regularly occurring migratory species.

Natural Heritage Areas and Associated Legislation

The national designation for wildlife and nature conservation is the Natural Heritage Area (NHA), and established Natural Heritage Areas are protected under the Wildlife Acts 1976-2000. The Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) cover nationally important semi-natural and natural habitats, landforms or geomorphological features, wild plant and animal species or a diversity of these natural attributes. These areas are considered important for the habitats present or hold species of plants and animals whose habitat need protection under national legislation. NHAs and proposed NHAs may also be regarded as stepping stones or ecological corridors in the context of Article 10 of the EU *Habitats Directive*.

European Directives, Natura 2000 and Environmental Assessments

At European level, the *Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC)* and the *Birds Directive (2009/147/EC)* mandate the identification and protection of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs), which together create a network of protected wildlife areas, known as the Natura 2000 network, across the European Union. The designation of these sites form part of a range of measures aimed at conserving important or threatened habitats and species. The Water Framework Directive Register of Protected Areas also contains an inventory of protected area sites to include areas designated for the protection of habitats and species.

Non-Designated Sites

It is important to recognise that nature conservation is not just confined to designated sites and acknowledge the need to protect non-designated habitats and landscapes and to conserve the biological diversity of the County.

Ecological Networks

Inland waterways, which include lakes, rivers, and streams, are living systems of high local biodiversity value due to the habitats associated with them, and function as ecological corridors that connect related habitats/designated sites, enabling species to move between them. Established trees and hedgerows are also of high local biodiversity value and contribute to ecological connectivity. Features that contribute to the creation of an ecological network should be retained and included in the design plans for development proposals.

Green Infrastructure

Green infrastructure can be defined as networks of green areas that provide multiple environmental, social and economic benefits to society. Developing a green infrastructure approach can assist with the loss of biodiversity while enhancing the environment in which we live and thus creating a high quality environment. Green infrastructure can include open spaces, woodlands, parks, farmland and private gardens. Comhar Sustainable Development Council publication, 2010 - *Creating Green Infrastructure for Ireland: Enhancing Natural Capital for Human Wellbeing* sets out how a network of green spaces can be developed to benefit natural heritage and biodiversity as well as the greater economy and society, while the EU Paper on Green Infrastructure (GI) (April 2013) recognises the growing importance of maintaining green infrastructure and ecosystem services and functions.

Invasive Species

Non-native invasive species, both invertebrate and plants, can represent a major threat to local, regional, national and global biodiversity. Terrestrial and aquatic habitats can be negatively affected, resulting in significant damage to conservation and economic interests, such as agriculture, forestry and civil

infrastructure. Occasionally public, animal and plant health may also be threatened. Schedule 3, Part 1 & Part 3 of *S.I. 477 European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011* refer to a list of non-native species which are subject to restrictions regarding introduction of and dispersal of these species.

Riparian Zones

A riparian zone is an integral part of the protection of a watercourse system and should be sufficiently wide to protect the river or water course. The determined width should be tailored to site specific, river reach or lakeshore characteristics. It is important that the buffer zone is large enough to protect the ecological integrity of the river (including emergent vegetation) and the riparian zone (bank side vegetation including trees) takes into account the human history of the area.

Coastal Zone

The coastal zone and inland waterways, which includes lakes, rivers and streams, are living systems that are home to a wide variety of habitats and species and which also contribute significantly to the character and amenity of the County and support tourism, recreation and quality of life for those living in and visiting the County.

Much of the coastline of Galway County is home to a variety of natural habitats and there are several important/rare/interesting species of flora and fauna. Much of the coastline is designated candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC) and Special Protection Area (SPA). The interface between land and sea is a significant resource in the County and is multi-faceted in that it contains towns, villages, harbours, piers and slipways, which cater for development needs of the County and is also an irreplaceable amenity resource of beaches, sand dunes and cliff faces which are a significant tourism asset and add to the quality of life of local people.

Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) is about the planning and management of coastal resources and coastal space. It is envisaged that this will be an ongoing process, which will evolve over time. Integrated Coastal Zone Management will address issues such as coastal tourism development, the fishing industry, coastal settlement patterns, transport, coastal erosion, habitat destruction, protection of coastal zone cSACs and SPAs and prevention of pollution. In the context of County Galway, it is acknowledged that there are coastal zone assets which are under constant threat and therefore in need of protection. These include leisure beaches, piers and harbours, eco-systems and cliffs.



9.9 Natural Heritage and Biodiversity Policies and Objectives

Natural Heritage and Biodiversity Policies

Policy NHB 1 – Natural Heritage and Biodiversity

It is the policy of Galway County Council to support the protection, conservation and enhancement of natural heritage and biodiversity, including the protection of the integrity of European sites, that form part of the Natura 2000 network, the protection of Natural Heritage Areas, proposed Natural Heritage Areas Ramsar Sites, Nature Reserves, Wild Fowl Sanctuaries and Conamara National Park (and other designated sites including any future designations) and the promotion of the development of a green/ecological network within the plan area, in order to support ecological functioning and connectivity, create opportunities in suitable locations for active and passive recreation and to structure and provide visual relief from the built environment.

Policy NHB 2 – Non-Designated Sites

Recognise that nature conservation is not just confined to designated sites and acknowledge the need to protect non-designated habitats and landscapes and to conserve the biological diversity in the County.

Policy NHB 3 – Green Infrastructure

Protect existing green infrastructure and provide additional green infrastructure where possible such as green roof technology and energy efficiency pumps.

Policy NHB 4 – Water Resources

Protect, conserve and enhance the water resources of the County, including, rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands, springs, turloughs, surface water and groundwater quality, as well as surface waters, aquatic and wetland habitats and freshwater and water dependant species and seek to protect and conserve the quality, character and features of inland waterways by controlling developments close to navigable and non-navigable waterways.

Policy NHB 5 – Geological and Geo-Morphological Systems

Protect, conserve and enhance important geological and geo-morphological systems in the County and seek to promote access to such sites where possible.

Policy NHB 6 – National Biodiversity Plan, Galway County Heritage Plan and Galway County Biodiversity Plan

It is the policy of the Council to support the implementation of the *National Biodiversity Plan* and *Galway County Biodiversity Plan* and *Galway County Heritage Plan* in partnership with relevant stakeholders subject to available resources.

Policy NHB 7 – Invasive Species

It is a policy of the Council to support measures for the prevention and eradication of invasive species. This will include the dissemination of information to raise public awareness, the adoption of codes of practices/standard biosecurity measures in normal Local Authority activities, consultation with relevant stakeholders, the promotion of the use of native species in amenity planting and landscaping and the recording of invasive/non native species as the need arises and resources permit.

Policy NHB 8 – National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) Management Plans

It shall be the policy of the Council to ensure that development takes into account any relevant Management Plans prepared by NPWS for SACs and SPAs.

Natural Heritage and Biodiversity Objectives

Objective NHB 1 – Protected Habitats and Species

Support the protection of habitats and species listed in the Annexes to and/or covered by the *EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) (as amended)* and the *Birds Directive (2009/147/EC)*, and regularly occurring-migratory birds and their habitats and species protected under the *Wildlife Acts 1976-2000* and the *Flora Protection Order*.

Objective NHB 2 – Biodiversity and Ecological Networks

Support the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and ecological connectivity within the plan area, including woodlands, trees, hedgerows, semi-natural grasslands, rivers, streams, natural springs, wetlands, stone walls, geological and geo-morphological systems, other landscape features and associated wildlife where these form part of the ecological network and/or may be considered as ecological corridors or stepping stones in the context of *Article 10* of the *Habitats Directive*.

Objective NHB 3 – Water Resources

Protect the water resources in the plan area, including rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands, springs, turloughs, surface water and groundwater quality, as well as surface waters, aquatic and wetland habitats and freshwater and water dependant species in accordance with the requirements and guidance in the *EU Water Framework Directive 2000 (2000/60/EC)*, the *European Union (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (as amended)*, the *Western River Basin District Management Plan 2009-2015*, *Shannon International River Basin Management Plan 2009-2015* and other relevant EU Directives, including associated national legislation and policy guidance (including any superseding versions of same) and also have regard to the *Freshwater Pearl Mussel Sub-Basin Management Plans*.

Objective NHB 4 – Geological and Geo-Morphological Systems

Protect and conserve geological and geo-morphological systems, sites and features from inappropriate development that would detract from their heritage value and interpretation and ensure that any plan or project affecting karst formations, eskers or other important geological and geo-morphological systems are adequately assessed with regard to their potential geophysical, hydrological or ecological impacts on the environment.

Objective NHB 5 – Control of Invasive and Alien Invasive Species

Where the potential for spread of invasive species is identified as part of a development proposal the developer will be required to submit an invasive species management plan. A landscaping plan will be required for developments near water bodies and ensure that such plans do not include alien invasive species.

Objective NHB 6 – Protection of Bats and Bats Habitats

Seek to protect bats and their roosts, their feeding areas, flight paths and commuting routes. Ensure that development proposals in areas which are potentially important for bats, including areas of woodland, linear features such as hedgerows, stonewalls, watercourses and associated riparian vegetation which may provide migratory/foraging uses shall be subject to suitable assessment for potential impacts on bats. This will include an assessment of the cumulative loss of habitat or the impact on bat populations and activity in the area and may include a specific bat survey. Any assessment shall be carried out by a suitably qualified professional and where development is likely to result in significant adverse effects on bat populations or activity in the area, development will be prohibited or require mitigation and/or compensatory measures, as appropriate.

Objective NHB 7 – Eskers

Assess applications for quarrying and other proposed developments that are in close proximity to eskers that have the potential to impact on their landscape, scientific or amenity value.

Objective NHB 8 – Coastal Zone

It is an objective to protect the coastal zone through the following measures:

- a) Ensure that conservation works undertaken in coastal areas are in accordance with best practice and measures to protect the coast, the coastal edge and coastal habitats are supported;
- b) Seek to prevent the unauthorised removal of sand and related beach material;
- c) Protect, enhance and conserve beaches in the County from inappropriate development and seek to maintain the current status of the designated Blue Flag beaches and Green Coasts and to increase the number of beaches and coasts holding this status in the future;
- d) Facilitate an Integrated Coastal Zone Management approach to ensure the conservation, management and protection of man-made and natural resources of the coastal zone;
- e) Support the preparation of an Integrated Galway Bay Framework Management Plan by all relevant stakeholders to provide for the sustainable and integrated development of the Galway Bay Area in a co-ordinated manner.

Objective NHB 9 – Inland Waterways

Protect the amenity and recreational value of navigable and non-navigable waterways.

Objective NHB 10 – Protection of the Coastal Zone

Protect the amenity, character, visual, recreational, economic potential and environmental values of the coast. Ensure that natural coastal defences including sand dunes, beaches and coastal wetlands are not compromised by inappropriate development. Conserve the character, quality and distinctiveness of seascapes.

Objective NHB 11 – Trees, Parkland/Woodland, Stonewalls and Hedgerows

- a) Protect important trees, tree clusters and hedgerows within the County and ensure that development proposals take cognisance of significant trees/tree stands. Ensure that all planting schemes use suitable native variety of trees of Irish provenance;
- b) Seek to retain natural boundaries, including stonewalls, hedgerows and tree boundaries, wherever possible and replace with a boundary type similar to the existing boundary where removal is unavoidable. Discourage the felling of mature trees to facilitate development and encourage tree surgery rather than felling where possible. All works to be carried out in accordance with the provisions of the *Forestry Act, 1946*.

Objective NHB 12 – Soil/Ground Water Protection

Developments shall ensure that adequate soil protection measures are undertaken, where appropriate, including investigations into the nature and extent of any soil/groundwater contamination.

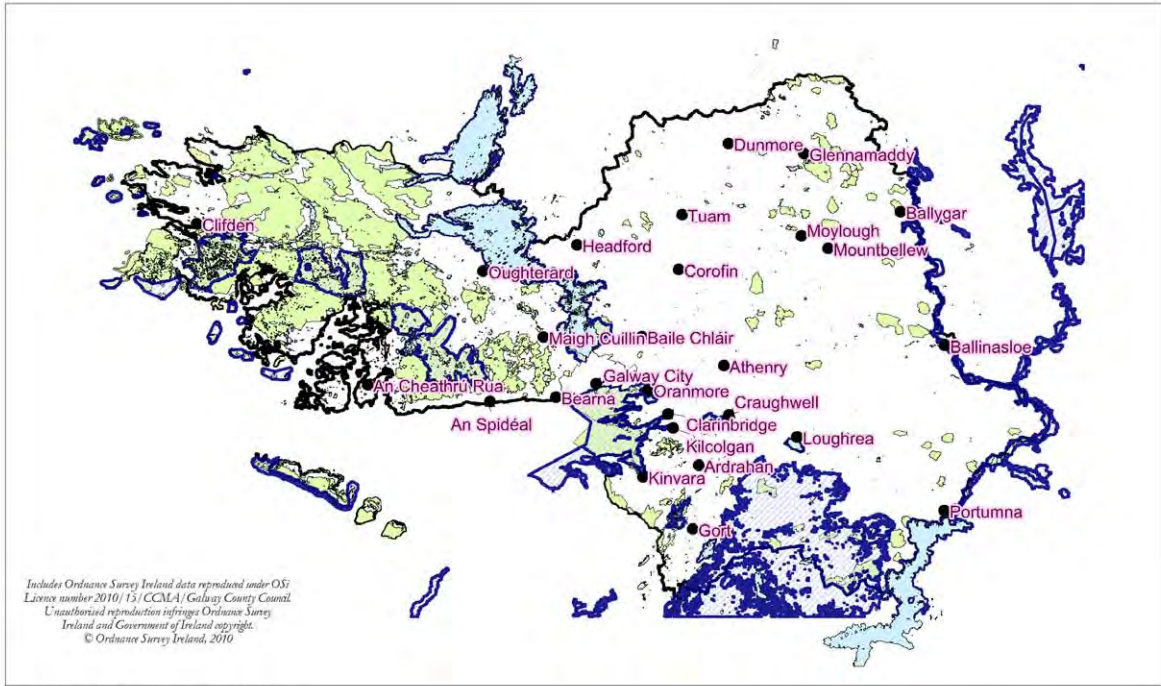
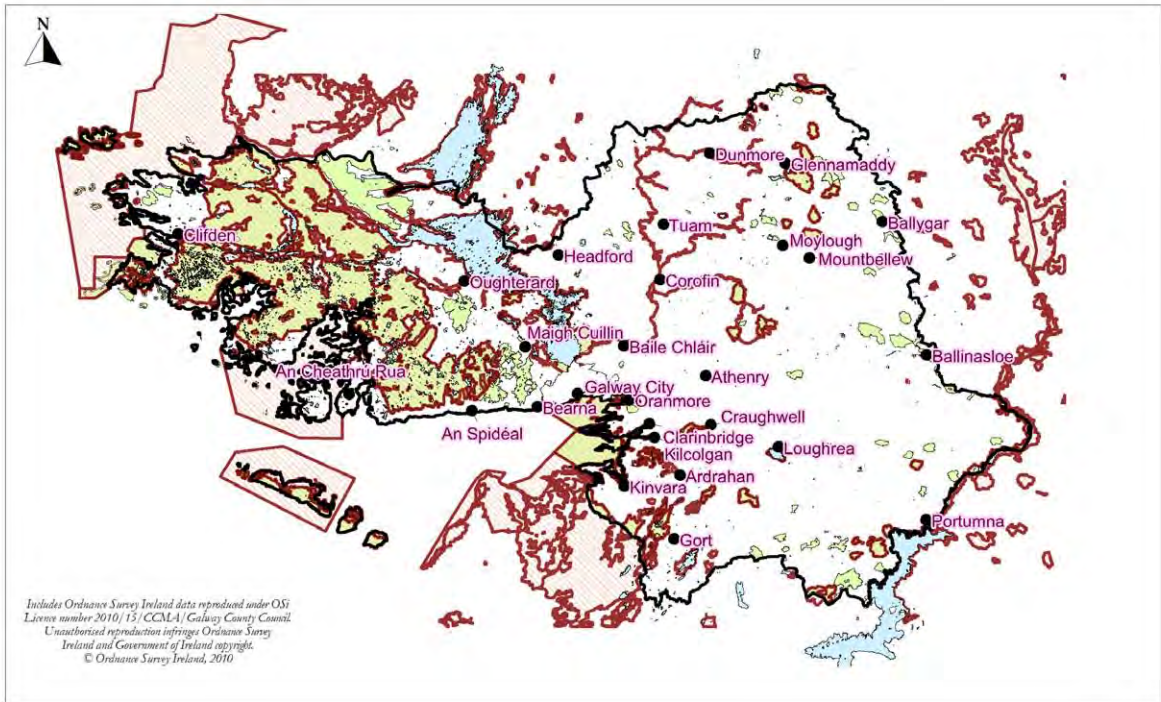
Objective NHB 13 – NPWS and Integrated Management Plans

Galway County Council shall seek to engage with and support the National Parks & Wildlife Service to ensure Integrated Management Plans are prepared for all Natura 2000 sites and ensure that such plans are fully integrated with all land use and water management plans in the County, with the intention that such plans are practical, achievable and sustainable and have regard to all relevant ecological, cultural, social and economic considerations and with special regard to local communities.

Objective NHB 14 – Protection of Riparian Zones

Protect the riparian zones of watercourse systems throughout the County, recognising the benefits they provide in relation to flood risk management and their protection of the ecological integrity of watercourse systems and ensure they are considered in the land use zoning in Local Area Plans.





Note: Small Settlements omitted for clarity

- Galway County Boundary
- Lakes
- SAC
- NHA
- SPA

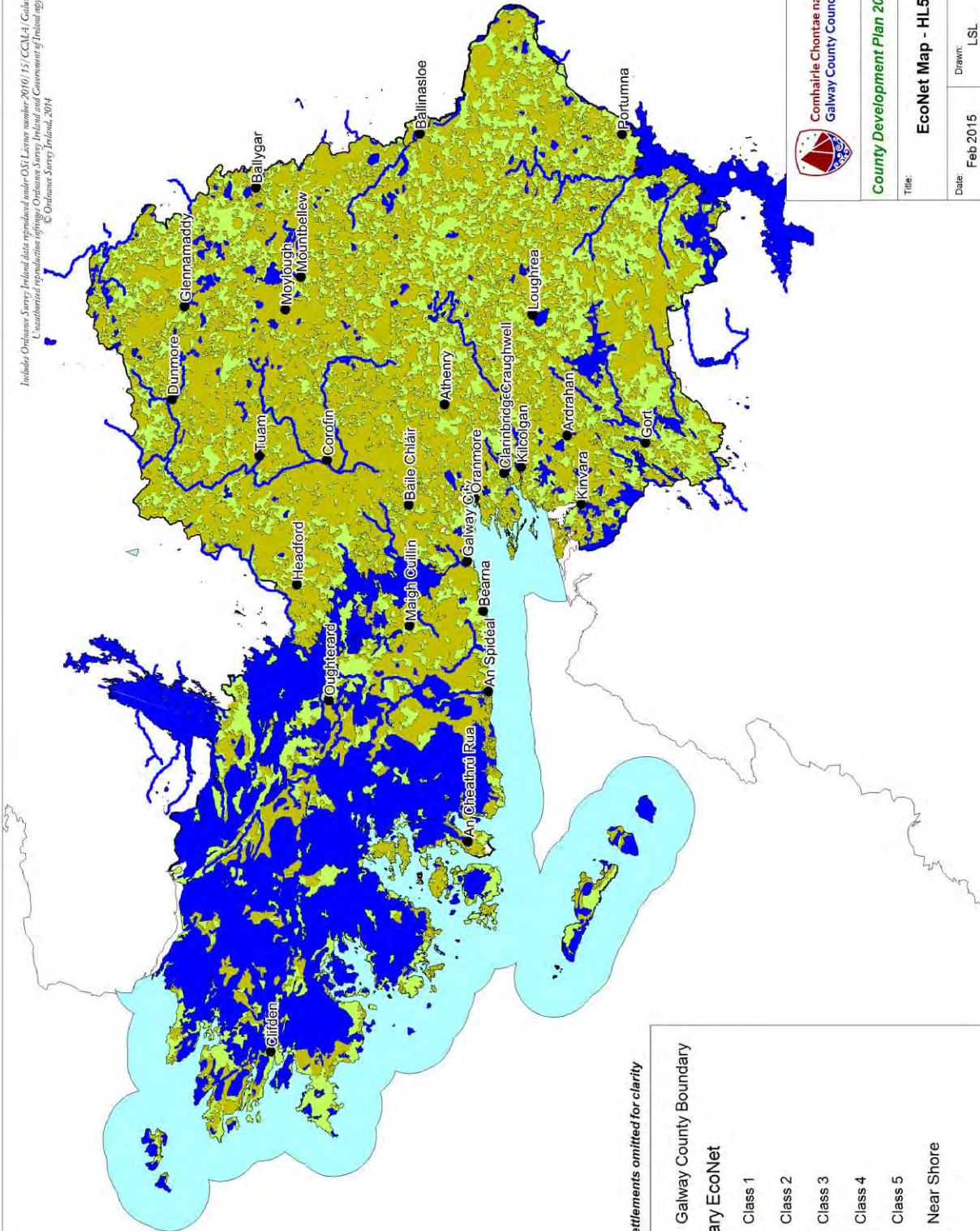
Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council

County Development Plan 2015 - 2021

Title:
Designated Environmental Sites - NHB1

Date: Feb 2015 Drawn: LSL Scale: NTS

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Note: Small Settlements omitted for clarity

	Galway County Boundary
Preliminary EcoNet	
	Class 1
	Class 2
	Class 3
	Class 4
	Class 5
	Near Shore

Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe Galway County Council		
County Development Plan 2015 - 2021		
Title: EcoNet Map - HL5		
Date: Feb 2015	Drawn: LSL	Scale: NTS

9.10 Landscape Conservation and Management

9.10.1 Landscape Character

Landscape is a precious national asset. County Galway is richly endowed with a variety of landscape types ranging from the quartzite mountain ranges and blanket bogs of Conamara to the fertile patchwork of farmland in east Galway and the bare karst pavements of the Oileáin Árann and South Galway.

Human interaction with the natural heritage has produced a great variety of characteristic landscapes and landscape features. The natural diversity of the landscapes of the County coupled with built and cultural heritage features such as the archaeological monuments, stonewalls, hedgerows, woodlands, field patterns, settlements and buildings has given the County its distinctive character. The increasing development pressure of recent years has caused changes in the national landscape which are unprecedented in scale and nature, and has led to the Government setting out guidelines for landscape appraisal. This assessment of the landscape is to ensure that “the environment and heritage generally are maintained in a sustainable manner, while at the same time enabling a proactive approach to development”.

The Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) requires the inclusion of a development plan objective for:

“The preservation of the character of the landscape where, and to the extent that, in the opinion of the Planning Authority, the proper planning and sustainable development of the area requires it, including the preservation of views and prospects and the amenities of places and features of natural beauty or interest”.

The *Heritage Act, 1995* classifies landscape as ‘areas, sites, vistas and features of significant scenic, archaeological, geological, historical, ecological or other scientific interest’. The *European Landscape Convention* was signed and ratified by Ireland in March 2002 and came into force in March 2004 and the DoECLG announced its intention to publish a National Landscape Strategy in October 2007 (to date, this Strategy has not been published by the DoECLG).

9.10.2 Landscape Assessment

The *Draft Landscape and Landscape Assessment Guidelines (2000)*, although not yet finalised in statutory form requires that Planning Authorities establish a policy response in relation to the varying degrees of landscape sensitivity within the County. An assessment of the landscape of County Galway was undertaken in 2003 and indicated the landscape character rating, landscape value rating and landscape sensitivity rating. These are described in detail in Section 2.2 of the Landscape and Landscape Character Assessment for County Galway (supporting document to the *Galway County Development Plan 2015-2021*).

The *Draft Landscape and Landscape Assessment Guidelines (2000)* require a classification of landscapes as follows:

9.10.2.1 Landscape Character

This is a combination of landform, land cover and visual units, which are attractive in the landscape. A total of 25 character areas have been identified in the County.

9.10.2.2 Landscape Values

These are responses of the perceptions that communities have of the landscape they inhabit. The perceptions arise from intrinsic attributes such as visual beauty, ecology, archaeology, social history, religious sites, mythology and traditional settlement patterns and community values.

9.10.2.3 Landscape Sensitivity

This is a measure of the ability of the landscape to accommodate change or intervention without suffering unacceptable effects to its character and values. Sensitivity ratings are derived from a combination of landscape values and landscape character. (Map LCM2)

An assessment of the landscape of County Galway has been carried out indicating landscape character rating, landscape value rating and landscape sensitivity rating. (Map LCM1 & LCM2)

Five landscape sensitivity classes have been established:

- Class 1 – Low sensitivity
- Class 2 – Moderate sensitivity
- Class 3 – High sensitivity
- Class 4 – Special
- Class 5 – Unique

Based on the assessment of the landscape and the establishment of sensitivity ratings for various areas of the County, the Planning Authority shall implement the following policies and objectives.



9.11 Landscape Conservation and Management Policies and Objectives

Landscape Conservation and Management Policies

Policy LCM 1 – Preservation of Landscape Character

Preserve and enhance the character of the landscape where, and to the extent that, in the opinion of the Planning Authority, the proper planning and sustainable development of the area requires it, including the preservation and enhancement, where possible of views and prospects and the amenities of places and features of natural beauty or interest.

Landscape Conservation and Management Objectives

Objective LCM 1 – Landscape Sensitivity Classification

The Planning Authority shall have regard to the landscape sensitivity classification of sites in the consideration of any significant development proposals and, where necessary, require a Landscape/ Visual Impact Assessment to accompany such proposals. This shall be balanced against the need to develop key strategic infrastructure to meet the strategic aims of the plan, and having regard to the zoning objectives of serviced development land within the Galway Metropolitan Areas.

Objective LCM 2 – Landscape Sensitivity Ratings

Consideration of landscape sensitivity ratings shall be an important factor in determining development uses in areas of the County. In areas of high landscape sensitivity, the design and the choice of location of proposed development in the landscape will also be critical considerations.

Objective LCM 3 – Open/Unfenced Landscape

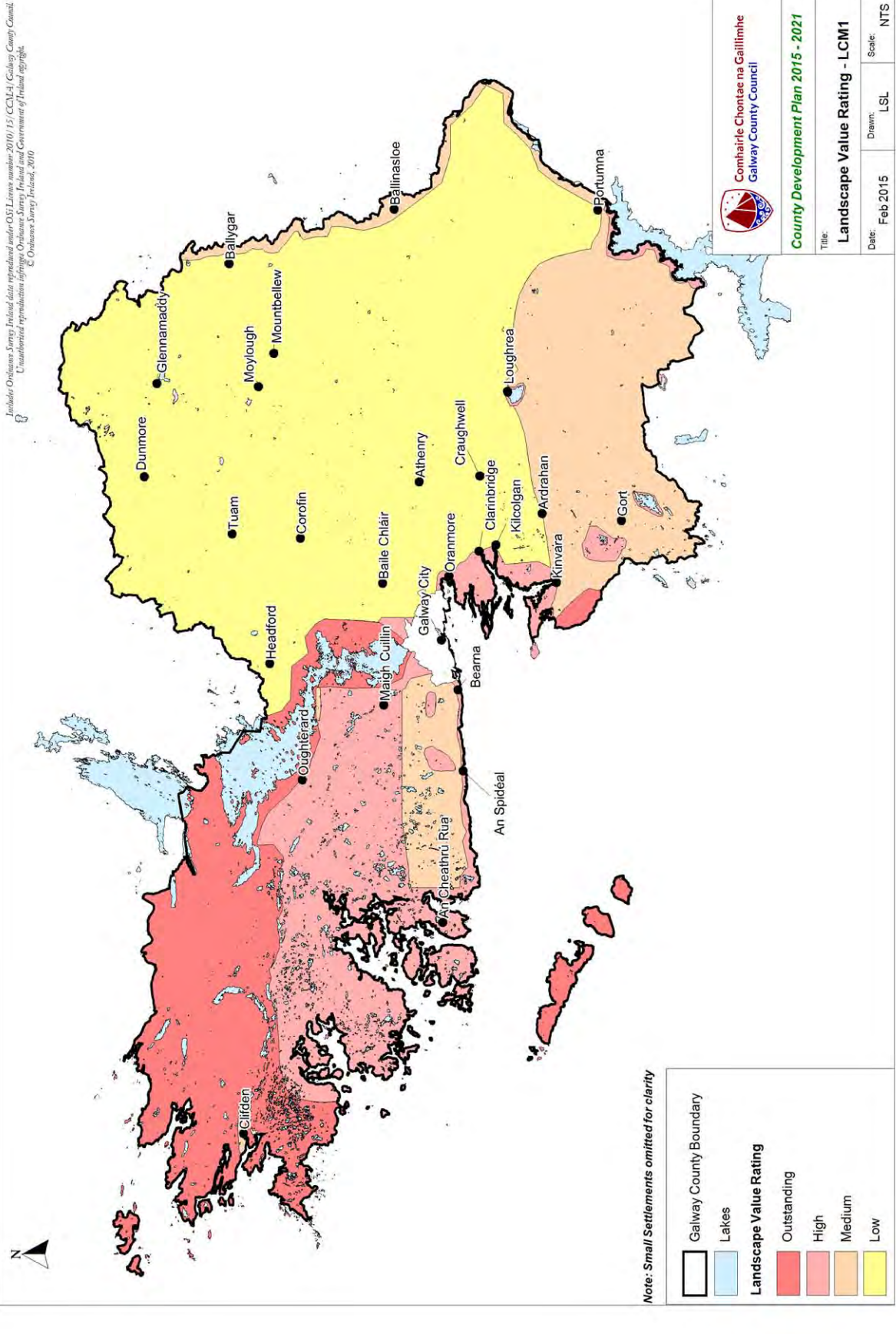
Preserve the status of traditionally open/unfenced landscape. The merits of each case will be considered in light of landscape sensitivity ratings and views of amenity importance.

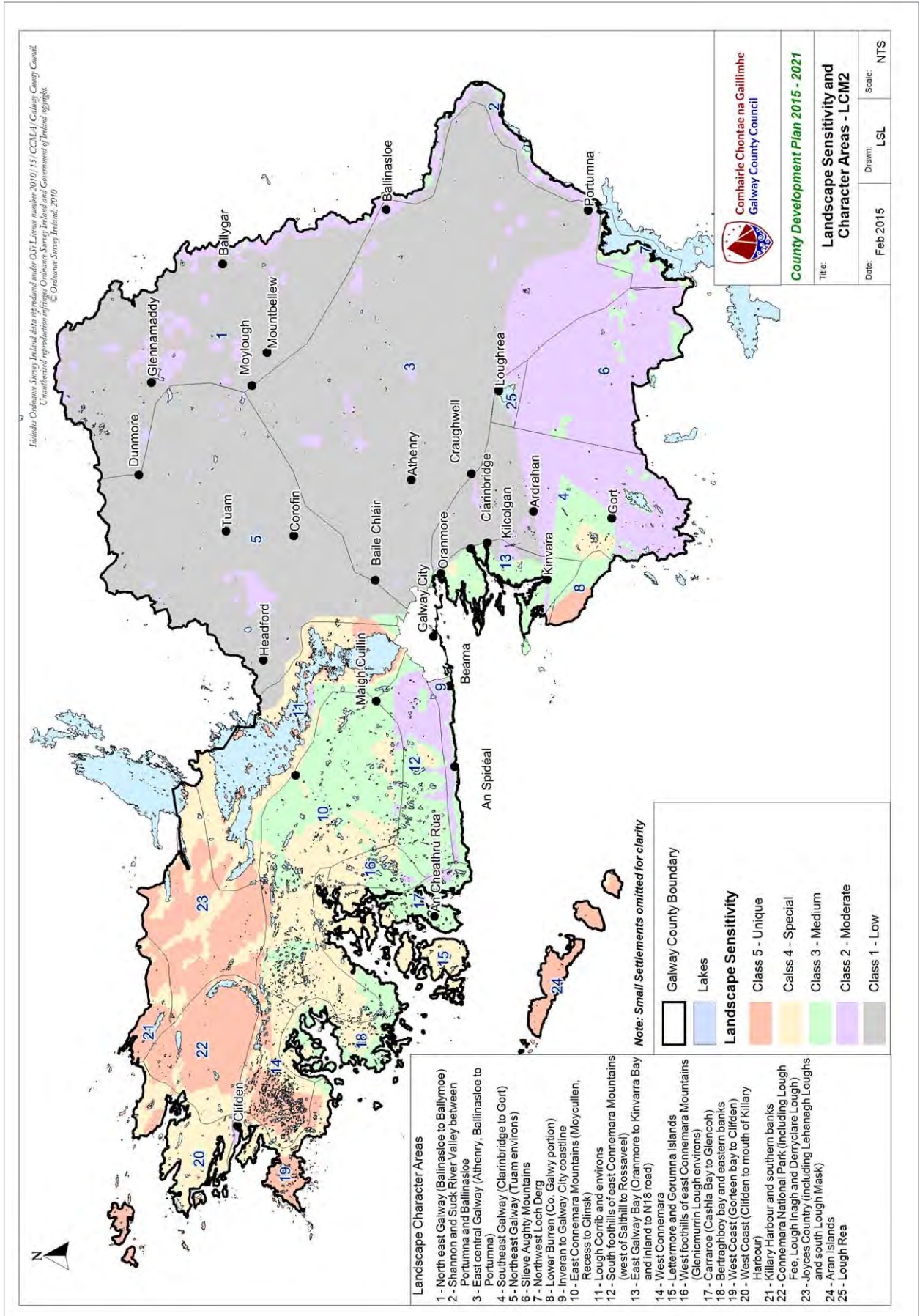
Objective LCM4 – Review of the Landscape Character Assessment.

On adoption of the *National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025*, the Planning Authority shall facilitate the development of the National Landscape Character Assessment prior to reviewing the County Landscape Character Assessment.



Incluidh Ordainne Stairí Inleoid dáta rephreataid in 2010/15/CCL1-1 Galway County Council.
 Ceathrúdar rephreataid in 2010/15/CCL1-1 Galway County Council.
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9.12 Focal Point and Views

County Galway has many important focal points from which views and vistas of great natural beauty may be viewed. These focal points and views have a very important amenity, tourism, economic and cultural value for the County and its people. It is therefore important to protect and conserve these views and vistas and development where permitted should not hinder or obstruct these views and vistas but should be located and designed in a manner so as not to negatively impact on these focal points and views.

9.13 Focal Point and Views Objective

Focal Point and Views Objective

Objective FPV 1 – Development Management

Preserve the focal points and views as listed in Map FPV1 from development that in the view of the Planning Authority would negatively impact on said focal points and views. This shall be balanced against the need to develop key infrastructure to meet the strategic aims of the plan, and have regard to the zoning objectives of serviced development land within the Galway Metropolitan Area.

9.14 World Heritage Sites

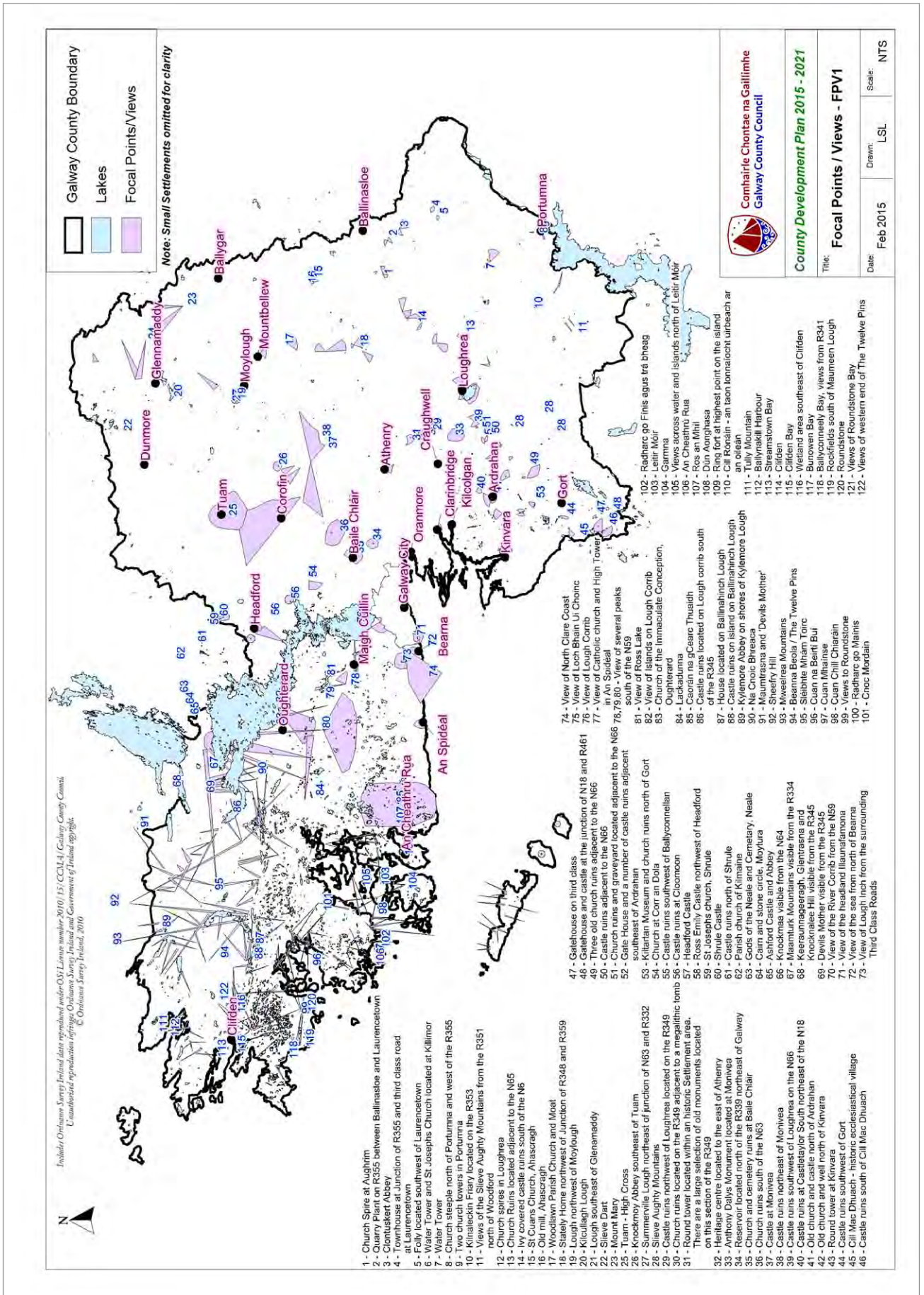
A Tentative List is an inventory of those properties which a country intends to consider for nomination to the World Heritage List. The new Tentative List was approved by the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and submitted to UNESCO in March 2010. The nomination of any property from the new Tentative List for inscription on the World Heritage List will only take place after consultation with the relevant stakeholders, interested parties and local communities. Two sites in County Galway have been included on the Tentative List, namely, the Western Stone Forts and the Burren.

9.15 World Heritage Objective

World Heritage Objective

Objective WH 1 – Tentative World Heritage Sites

Protect the Outstanding Universal Value of the tentative World Heritage Sites in County Galway namely the Western Stone Forts and the Burren that are included in the UNESCO Tentative List, Ireland 2010 and engage with other national and international initiatives which promote the special built, natural and cultural heritage of places in the County.



Cultural, Social & Community Development

10.1 Introduction

Irish society has undergone significant social change during the past generation. The reasons for this are multifaceted but derive from a combination of economic growth, improved health care, international communications, membership of the European Union, increased multi-culturalism and better access to formal higher educational facilities. The resultant changes in family and community relations pose new challenges for Local Authorities in providing, guiding and facilitating the provision of facilities, which will enhance the quality of life in communities.

The document '*Putting People First: Action Programme for Effective Local Government*¹' outlines national policy for reform and development of the local government system and has major implications for how Galway County Council delivers its local and community services over the lifetime of this plan. In line with this national policy the Council takes cognisance of the recommendations of this document as resources allow.

Galway County Council has a major role to play in the delivery of national and local policy in relation to assisting, promoting and supporting community, economic and cultural development in the County. It has developed a significant number of important policy documents and strategies (which take cognisance of national policy) which underpin the policies and objectives of the Development Plan including the *Integration and Diversity Strategy 2013-2015*, *Galway Age Friendly Strategy 2014-2019*, and a *Youth Support Programme*. The Business Response Unit of the Council provides a single point of contact for businesses in the County while the Social Inclusion Unit promotes and embeds social inclusion in the day to day work of the Council. The City and County Sports Partnership is an initiative of the Irish Sports Council to create a national structure to co-ordinate and promote the development and increase participation of sport, recreation and physical activity at a local level. The role of the County Arts Office is to ensure access and participation in the arts for all. Galway County Community and Voluntary Forum (GCCVF) which consists of a network of community and voluntary groups in the County provide a strategic service and forum for this sector of the community.



¹ Policy document issued by the Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government, 2012.

10.2 Strategic Aims

- To promote and facilitate the sustainable development of An Ghaeltacht and Island communities in County Galway;
- To promote and facilitate sustainable communities through land use planning, by providing for land uses capable of accommodating community, leisure, recreational, amenity and cultural facilities;
- To ensure that the needs of all individuals and local community groups are delivered in tandem with the residential and physical infrastructure, in order to create a quality, built environment in which to live.

10.3 Cultural Heritage and Community Identity

County Galway possesses a strong community identity and has a rich and diverse cultural heritage. This identity is expressed in many ways: in the language that people speak, the arts and crafts they practice, the festivals they celebrate, the games they play, the jobs and occupations that provide their livelihood, the buildings they create and the location in which they live. The County's sense of place and the many strands of its cultural inheritance have been substantially maintained despite the social changes of recent times and an increasingly multi-ethnic society.

10.4 An Ghaeltacht

The County contains the largest and most populous Gaeltacht in the country. It stretches from Baile Chláir, which is east of the city to Cloch na Rón in west Conamara, a distance of approximately 100km, and from Oileáin Árann northwards to the Mayo border. The language and culture of An Ghaeltacht is a unique and precious inheritance, which it is a national aim to preserve and protect. This aim is now enshrined in the *Planning and Development Act, 2000* (as amended).

The 2011 Census of Population shows that a total of 33,608 persons live in the electoral districts of Gaeltacht na Gaillimhe, in the County functional area. This represents a strong growth of 2,860 additional persons or an increase of 9.3% between 2006 and 2011. The County Galway Gaeltacht was defined by the Government in 1956 and was based at that time on a region within which 80% or more of the population spoke Irish as an everyday language.

It is a fundamental policy of the state to preserve the Irish language. The strongest Irish speaking community in the country is located in County Galway, mainly in the area from Bearnna to Carna and including Oileáin Árann. This linguistic community is under severe pressure for many reasons, one being the pressure of people with no Irish moving in, as well as other external influences and a lack of service provision in their own language. The official Gaeltacht consists of a number of different communities and the Council recognises that the Irish language is stronger in some communities than in others.

10.4.1 Economic Development in An Ghaeltacht

The Council continues to support Údarás na Gaeltachta in fulfilling its role as a Development Agency of this region.

10.4.2 Preserving and Promoting An Ghaeltacht in the Planning Process

A very small part of the country is designated as being in An Ghaeltacht and it must be preserved and promoted linguistically. Galway County Council recognises that there has been population decline in some parts of An Ghaeltacht. Any development, which in the opinion of the Planning Authority would have a significant negative impact on the Irish language and An Ghaeltacht, will not be permitted. However, Galway County Council will seek to support An Ghaeltacht by considering favorably appropriate development within the Gaeltacht area.

10.5 An Ghaeltacht Policies and Objectives

An Ghaeltacht Policies

Policy G 1 – Preserving and Promoting An Ghaeltacht in the Planning Process

The Council through the Gaeltacht Local Area Plan 2008-2018 has outlined policies and objectives to protect and encourage the social, cultural and linguistic heritage of the Gaeltacht, whilst seeking to realise the economic and development potential of the Gaeltacht in a balanced and sustainable manner over the lifetime of the plan.

Policy G 2 – Economic Development in An Ghaeltacht

Galway County Council, through its Economic Development role, is committed to working closely with all the statutory development agencies, especially Údarás na Gaeltachta, to achieve sustainable development in the Galway Gaeltacht while protecting and promoting the Irish language as the first community language of the area.

Policy G 3 – The Irish Language as an Asset

Recognise the economic, social and cultural importance of Irish in the Gaeltacht and throughout the County.

Policy G 4 – Official Languages Act 2003

Support and implement the recommendations of the *Official Languages Act 2003* (or any superseding or updated version of same.)

An Ghaeltacht Objective

Objective G 1 – Linguistic and Cultural Heritage of An Ghaeltacht

It shall be an objective of the Council to protect the linguistic and cultural heritage of the Gaeltacht and to promote Irish as the community language.

10.6 Islands

The unique group of Islands off the coast of County Galway are an important part of the culture, heritage, ecology, economy and tourist appeal of the County. Island communities have an unparalleled reputation for resourcefulness in surviving daunting physical and economic conditions and have retained and developed their unique culture and identity.

According to the CSO Census 2011 there are five Islands off the Galway coast with permanent populations. The main group of islands are referred to as the Óileáin Árann. The largest island is Inis Mór, the middle and second largest is Inis Meáin and the smallest and most eastern is Inis Oírr. The three islands have all experienced a marginal increase in population from 2006 Census figures. According to the 2011 Census results, the populations of Inis Mór, Inis Meáin and Inis Oírr were 845, 157 and 249 respectively.

Inishbofin lies seven miles off the Galway coast and the Island had a population of 160 in 2011. Inishbofin is a breeding area for many species of birds, the rare breed on the island at present is the Corncrake. Inishturk lies to the west of Claddaghduff and according to the Census 2011; the island had one inhabitant.

A number of the islands have European/national designations in the form of SAC's and NHA's and are also located in the Landscape Sensitivity 5 of the County Development Plan. It is essential that any proposed development would take cognisance of these designations to ensure that development would not have an adverse impact on the islands and their characteristics. A visual impact assessment is normally required due to the environmental and landscape sensitivities. It is essential that applicants/agents would liaise with the Planning Authority in the form of pre-planning prior to submitting a planning application for any form of development on the islands. In addition to these islands, there are a number of islands which are not permanently inhabited along the Galway coastline, namely Inis Eirc, Turbot Island, Cruagh and Crump Island.

The islands off the Galway coast are an important part of the cultural and unique heritage of the County and are a valuable tourist attraction; therefore the Council will positively encourage development that complies with the objectives of the plan.



10.7 Islands Policies and Objectives

Islands Policies

Policy IS 1 – Supporting the Islands

Support the inhabited islands in County Galway and recognise the special planning and development needs of islands and islands communities, particularly access, infrastructure and services.

Islands Objectives

Objective IS 1 – Economic and Tourism Development on the Islands

Support the economic and tourism development of the islands for the benefit of island communities generally and to encourage the development of speciality or niche economic sectors that might be appropriate to different islands.

Objective IS 2 – Development Proposals on the Islands

- a) Support sustainable development proposals that contribute to the long term economic and social development of the islands;
- b) Priority shall be given to development that contributes to retention of the year-round population on the islands, that has a clear and identifiable economic and social benefit and that is compatible with the capacity of the local community to accommodate it;
- c) Ensure that new development of any kind is sympathetic to the individual form and character of the islands landscapes and traditional building patterns.

Objective IS 3 – Framework Plan for the Islands

As resources permit, support the island communities in the preparation of a framework plan for the islands.

10.8 Community Facilities and Services

It is generally accepted that fair and equitable access to infrastructural services is a key factor in providing for sustainable and balanced communities. The quality of life in a community depends not only on the provision of housing, employment and infrastructure support but also on access to social, community and cultural facilities which are fundamental to social cohesion and personal enhancement. The concentration of population and services in and around Galway City in recent years has caused a serious imbalance in service provision, resulting in towns and villages, which are close to the City being near a wide range of services while the peripheral areas are losing population and in danger of losing further services. In contrast, other rapidly expanding towns and villages have to cope with overcrowded schools, lack of childcare facilities and health services.

In order to be sustainable, communities require access to these essential social services such as health care, public transport, leisure, recreation, social and educational opportunities. The challenge for Galway County Council will be to act with the various communities in identifying their needs, obtaining resources and supporting programmes to sustain community life. The co-operation of State Agencies and Government Departments in the delivery of certain services such as education and training, childcare, facilities for older persons and people with special needs or disabilities, social and cultural amenities, libraries, community facilities, sports and recreational spaces, health services, play facilities, burial grounds and places of worship is essential. Galway County Council will support the retention of rural post offices which are a vital service for the rural people.

10.9 Community Facilities and Services Policies and Objectives

Community Facilities and Services Policies

Policy CF 1 – Community Facilities

Assist where possible the development of community facilities and services within the County. Encourage and facilitate, where feasible the provision and extension of integrated community facilities to serve the needs of communities in the County.

Policy CF 2 – Community and Voluntary Sector

Support the strengthening of the Community and Voluntary sector throughout the County.

Policy CF 3 – Education and Childcare Facilities

Promote the provision of education opportunities for all groups in the County and the provision of day care and childcare facilities by both the public and private sectors in settlements and communities throughout the County.

Policy CF 4 – Library Services

Continue to promote the use of the library service and further develop each library as a community gathering place and learning hub.

Policy CF 5 – Community and Cultural Needs

Recognise the community and cultural needs of new communities in the County and promote the sharing of facilities in our towns and villages.

Policy CF 6 – Burial Grounds

Implement the ongoing programme for the provision and extension of burial grounds within available resources. The Planning Authority will seek to acquire lands where the extension of public burial grounds in the ownership or charge of the Council which is necessary or likely to be necessary during the plan period. Archaeologically significant medieval burial grounds will not be considered for extension if such an extension would constitute a proven risk to the archaeological heritage.

Policy CF 7 – Arts, Sports and Social Inclusion

Support the implementation of the Council's Arts, Sports, Social Inclusion, the *Integration and Diversity Strategy 2013-2015*, *Galway Age Friendly Strategy 2014-2019*, and a *Youth Support Programme* and other appropriate plans and programmes that may be developed during the lifetime of this plan.

Policy CF 8 – Cultural Development in the County

Actively encourage and support Arts organisations to achieve their full potential, while enhancing the artistic life of County Galway. The Council supports and develops organisations and individuals working in the cultural and creative services.

Community Facilities and Services Objectives**Objective CF 1 – Universal Accessibility, Universal Design and Social Inclusion**

Promote and support where possible the concept of universal accessibility, universal design and facilitate social inclusion through high standards of design in projects and plans.

Objective CF 2 – Education Provision and Facilities

Work closely with the Department of Education and Skills and the Office of Public Works to identify and protect suitable sites for new educational facilities. Site reservations for primary and post primary schools shall be considered when developing Local Area Plans and this may include campus arrangements.

Objective CF 3 – Crèche Facilities

Require the provision of crèche facilities in mixed use/residential developments in accordance with the ministerial guidelines for Planning Authorities on Childcare Facilities published in 2001. The Planning Authority shall encourage the development of a broad range of childcare facilities, i.e. part-time, full day-care, after-school care, etc., including those based in residential areas, in employment areas and in areas close to where users of such facilities live. In general, childcare facilities outside of established settlements shall only be permitted adjacent to or in close proximity to existing educational or social facilities (national schools, rural shops/post offices, etc).

Objective CF 4 – Sport, Amenity and Recreation

Support and facilitate local communities and sporting organisations in the development of sport and recreational facilities. Support the modest expansion of existing and authorised sporting facilities throughout the County. Seek to develop open spaces throughout the County which will support a range of recreational and amenity activities that provides for active and passive needs.

Objective CF 5 – Play Facilities

Support the development of play facilities at suitable locations in the County in accordance with the National Play Strategy *Ready Steady Play!*.

Objective CF 6 – Burial Grounds

Acquire lands where the extension of public burial grounds is in the ownership or charge of the Council which is necessary or likely to be during the plan period. Archaeologically significant medieval burial grounds will not be considered for extension if such an extension would constitute a proven risk to the archaeological heritage.

Objective CF 7 – Older Persons Services

Consider favourably projects throughout the County that deliver services for older persons or that integrate services for older persons and children.

Objective CF 8 – Health Services

Promote the continued improvement and expansion of health and medical care facilities within the County in a planned and co-ordinated way, by accommodating projects that assist in providing such medical care facilities, including mental health services together with their necessary support services and developments, as well as their infrastructural requirements.

Objective CF 9 – Support the Development of the Unique Culture of the County

Facilitate the development of cultural infrastructure within communities throughout the County that will further enhance the cultural vibrancy of the County.

Objective CF 10 – Fire Service in the Conamara Area

Support the development of Fire Service(s) in the Conamara Area.



10.10 Recreation and Amenity

Recreation ranges from competitive sports to the passive appreciation of the natural environment and the expression of the artistic spirit through painting or craftwork. County Galway has a wide diversity of recreational activities some of which derive from local customs and traditions. Many of the competitive sports demand ever increasing standards of facilities and accommodation, and participants in the County will require access to such facilities in order to compete equally with fellow competitors at national and international level. On the other hand, there will be an equal imperative to preserve the unspoilt amenities such as beaches, dunes, bogs and mountainsides for their recreational qualities. Settlement centres also possess buildings and locations of local significance, which give a sense of place and provide a useful role for local people as congregational points or play areas. Support and develop the National Cycle Route between Dublin – Ballinasloe – Galway City – Clifden and that a scheme of cycle loops/greenways will be supported across the County.

10.11 Recreation and Amenity Policies and Objectives

Recreation and Amenity Policies

Policy RA 1 – Promotion of Recreation and Amenity

Co-operate with various stakeholders in promoting and developing the recreational and amenity potential of the County and carry out appropriate development as and when resources permit.

Policy RA 2 – Protection of Sensitive Areas

Protect the amenity of scenic and environmentally sensitive areas and promote the knowledge and appreciation of the natural amenities of the County.

Policy RA 3 – Walking and Cycle Routes

Support cycling and walking and other such recreational groups and organisations in promoting their disciplines and developing routes and facilities.

Policy RA 4 – Sports, Recreation, Amenity and Play Policy

Develop and implement a sports, recreation, amenity and play policy for the County within the lifetime of the plan based on the recommendations of the Recreational Needs Study being undertaken by Galway County Council.

Policy RA 5 – Bridleways

Galway County Council will support and promote programmes and initiatives that will help to develop bridleways in County Galway.

Recreation and Amenity Objectives

Objective RA 1 – Swimming Facilities

It is an objective of the Council to enhance the provision of swimming facilities throughout the County and ensure the quality of bathing waters is maintained and to contribute towards the achievement of the requirements of the EU *Bathing Water Directive* and to transposing *Bathing Water Quality Regulations (SI No. 79 of 2008)* and EU Mandatory Values, as a minimum and EU Guide Values, where possible.

Objective RA 2 – Recreation Outlets

It is an objective of the Council to support the provision of age friendly recreation outlets, including public parks, play areas, community allotments and walkways.

Objective RA 3 – Recreation Facilities

It is an objective of the Council to develop sport, recreation and amenity facilities in appropriate locations consistent with proper planning and sustainable development in the County and in partnership with local community and sports groups and/or private parties. The modest expansion of existing and authorised sporting facilities throughout the County will be supported.

Objective RA 4 – Allotments

It is an objective of the Council to consider positively the provision of, or permission for, the development of allotments within rural and agricultural areas where they are accessible from the built-up area of the County, to be available to the community.

Objective RA 5 – Clifden Greenway

It is an objective of the Council to protect the alignment of the Clifden Railway Line as a Greenway and to support its completion.

Objective RA 6 – Walking Routes/Rights of Ways

Prohibit the intrusion of development along public walking routes and public rights of way, particularly those in scenic areas, the sea coast and along inland waterways.

Objective RA 7 – Walking and Cycle Routes

Support and promote programmes to develop walking and cycle routes including the *Irish Trails Strategy* the *Galway County Council Walking and Cycling Strategy (2013)* and *The National Cycle Network Scoping Study (2010)*.

10.12 Public Rights of Way

Public rights of way have existed over centuries and served as a means for people to travel around various parts of the County. Public rights of way can form a significant recreation and amenity resource and are also an important economic and tourism asset for the County.

10.13 Public Rights of Way Policy and Objective

Public Rights of Way Policy

Policy PRW 1 – Preservation of Public Rights of Way

It is the Policy of the Council to preserve and protect verified public rights of way which give access to seashore, mountain, lakeshore, riverbank or other places of natural beauty or recreational utility.

Public Rights of Way Objective

Objective PRW 1 – Identification of Existing Public Rights of Way

Seek to identify, map and protect verified existing public rights of way that give access to seashore, mountain, lakeshore, riverbank or other places of natural beauty or recreational utility as they become available to the Planning Authority over the lifetime of the plan.

10.14 Social Inclusion and Universal Access

10.14.1 Social Inclusion

Social inclusion refers to a series of positive actions to achieve equality of access to services and goods, to assist all individuals to participate in their community and society, to encourage the contribution of all persons to social and cultural life and to be aware of and to challenge all forms of discrimination. Social inclusion seeks the creation of an inclusive and fair society, combating inequality, social exclusion and poverty.

Social exclusion is experienced when individuals cannot access employment, live in poverty and have no input into decisions or policy that affects their lives. Social exclusion can therefore undermine families, individuals and communities.

10.15 Social Inclusion and Universal Access Policies and Objectives

Social Inclusion and Universal Access Policies

Policy SI 1 – Social Inclusion and Universal Access

Support the principles of social inclusion and universal access and ensure that all individuals have access to goods, services, facilities and buildings and in light of these principles recognise the social and economic disadvantages in areas of East Galway and Conamara and assist individuals to participate in and contribute to social and cultural life within County Galway as a whole.

Policy SI 2 – Social Inclusion Programmes/Interventions

Support the implementation of the requirements and provisions as set out in the *Disability Act 2005*, the *National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016* (including any updated or superseding document), including RAPID and CLÁR which support locally-based social inclusion interventions with emphasis on supporting people and communities suffering disadvantage and exclusion through a wide spectrum of locally promoted actions.

Policy SI 3 – Implementation of Policy

Implement the provisions of the *County Galway Local Authorities Disability Action Plan 2007-2015* and the *Social Inclusion Strategy* (including any updated/superseding documents), *Galway Age Friendly Strategy 2014-2019*, *Integration and Diversity Strategy 2013-2015*, *Galway Traveller Interagency Strategy*, *Galway LGBT Diversity Strategy* and *Irish National Positive Ageing Strategy*.

Policy SI 4 – Lifelong Learning

Galway County Council shall support the concept of lifelong learning.

Policy SI 5 – Ageing and the Family

Work with NUI Galway and other partners to make County Galway a flagship for the integration of research and practice in the areas of ageing and family needs.

Social Inclusion and Universal Access Objectives

Objective SI 1 – Recognised Special Needs

Consideration shall be given to individuals with recognised special needs in the location, layout and design of housing developments, communal facilities, public spaces and transport services.

Objective SI 2 – Housing for the Older Person and People with Other Special Needs

Ensure that appropriate units are developed in the housing market for the older person, people with disabilities and other special needs households.

Objective SI 3 – Proofing of Traffic Management Infrastructure

Ensure that traffic management infrastructure is developed in accordance with road design manuals and in accordance with the DM Standards and Guidelines of this plan to cater for all needs.

Objectives SI 4 – Services and Rural Transport Networks

The Council will support the development of new rural transport networks where gaps in services are identified.

Objective SI 5 – Priorities for Traffic Management Policies in Urban Areas

Progress traffic management policies that facilitate pedestrians and cycle users in conjunction with vehicular movement in urban centres, towns and villages.

Objective SI 6 – Integrated Transport Strategy and Older Residents

Develop a transport policy and integrated transport strategy to address the transport concerns of all residents and the broader community.

Objective SI 7 – Community Safety and Infrastructure

Promote and support the development of infrastructure that improves community safety.

Objective SI 8 – World Health Organisation and Age Friendly Cities

Consider the World Health Organisation (WHO) Checklist of Essential Features of Age Friendly Cities when implementing the County Development Plan.

Objective SI 9 – Life Long Communities

Facilitate all members of the community living at home in their own homes and communities for as long as possible.



Agriculture, Fishing, Marine Resources & Forestry

11.1 Introduction

The National Spatial Strategy sets out how rural development can support balanced regional development through strengthening of the rural economy and environmental qualities. The government's rural development agenda is being advanced by a multi-sectoral approach including the development of the agri-food, fisheries and forestry sectors within Ireland. The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine are also progressing with Ireland's Rural Development Programme for the period 2014 to 2020, which will be co-financed by the European Union. Rural development policy in the period 2014 to 2020 is intended to contribute towards the objectives of the competitiveness of agriculture; the sustainable management of natural resources, climate action and a balanced territorial development of rural areas.

11.1.1 Agriculture

The Government recognises the opportunities and challenges facing agriculture/fishing and in response the Department of Agriculture Fisheries and Food (in collaboration with An Bord Bia, Teagasc, Bord Iascaigh Mhara (BIM), Enterprise Ireland, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Agricultural Consultants) produced the *Food Harvest: A Vision for Agri-Food and Fisheries 2020 Report* in 2013 which sets out a cohesive roadmap for the industry in order to build capacity, adapt to challenge and to grow in the context of emerging opportunities in the decade ahead. The future of the family farm is at the core of *Food Harvest Strategy 2020* and in ensuring that small farmers in vulnerable areas are provided with opportunities to continue farming in the way their families have for generations. The Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) also provides support for farmers in order to reduce land abandonment, fragmentation and in the maintenance of existing permanent grassland.

11.1.2 Fishing and Marine Resources

The Irish aquaculture industry began in the 1970's and continues to provide employment and generates income in rural and coastal areas. The Irish aquaculture industry (marine and freshwater, shellfish and finfish) is market led with most of the produce being exported to meet the growing worldwide demand for marine and freshwater food. Declining wild catches and caution over exploitation and depletion of fish stocks, has resulted in an ever-growing pressure on aquaculture to service and supply market needs. This is reflected in diverse initiatives/projects to expand production volumes and to increase the variety of farmed species including cod. There is also an increasing interest in aquatic plant aquaculture, and in providing opportunities to create new business/enterprises in seaweed aquaculture. A number of state agencies, including, Údarás na Gaeltachta, BIM and the Marine Institute continue to provide support to the aquaculture sector.

11.1.3 Forestry

Land use, land use change and forestry has a major role in reducing or offsetting Green House Gases (GHG) emissions. Ireland has a major opportunity in large areas of marginal land that are well suited to afforestation and in fostering 'green growth'.

11.2 Strategic Aims

Galway County Council acknowledges the importance of our indigenous agri-food, fisheries and forestry industry and the role they play as a key enabler in rural development and within the rural economy at a regional and county level. The Council shall promote an integrated approach to the sustainable development of rural and coastal areas including the enhancement of primary farming methods, the agri-food, fisheries and forestry sectors that are located within its functional area. Achieving all these aims will require that public support for the agri-food, fisheries and forestry sectors and rural areas be maintained throughout the lifetime of this plan and beyond.

In accordance with the strategic vision of the plan, objectives are based on the following strategic aims:

- To maintain and support into the future the County's rural/coastal communities including the traditional family farm;
- To harness a pride of place and to assist rural communities to promote their natural resources including the sustainable stewardship and management of natural ecosystems within land and sea;
- To support existing local rural economies, promote diversification, improve conditions of local farms and rural enterprises and to help develop local markets within the County;
- To help foster 'green growth/management practices' (including food security, quality and diversity) in primary food production methods within the agri-food, fisheries and forestry sectors within the County;
- To pursue climate change mitigation and adaptation actions thus enabling agriculture to respond to climate change, particularly to the effects of extreme weather fluctuations.

11.3 Agriculture and Food

Agriculture is an integral part of the EU, Irish economy and society and any reductions in farming activity could lead to an increase in the depopulation of rural areas and losses within rural activities including tourism. The EU Common Agricultural Policy Reform (*CAP Towards 2020*) promotes a more sustainable, smarter and more inclusive growth for rural areas across Europe. EU citizens are also demanding high quality and a wide choice of food products, reflecting high safety, quality and welfare standards, including local products.

Ireland has the potential to become a world leader in sustainable food production, to increase the carbon efficiency within the sector and help reinforce the uniqueness of our food offering on EU and world markets. The development within Ireland of a genetic traceability system will further enhance consumer assurance and traceability and are key examples of the smart green growth initiative proposed under the *Food Harvest 2020 Strategy*.

Ireland is also the first country in the world to monitor the carbon footprint of producers on a national scale. A pilot programme for the dairy industry was initiated in 2011 and a national scheme, equivalent to that operational in the beef sector will be implemented in 2012/2013. By the end of 2013, 32,000 beef farms in Ireland will be carbon foot-printed. In the next two years all 18,000 dairy farms in Ireland will be audited.

According to the *Food Harvest 2020 Strategy* changes in livestock numbers will see:

- An increase in dairy cow numbers by 24%;
- Suckler cow numbers are expected to decrease by 13%;
- Total cattle count is expected to be 6.82 million by 2020. This represents a reduction in total cattle numbers of 2% as compared with the average cattle count over the period of 2007-2009;
- Sheep numbers are expected to decline by 5.5%;
- Total sheep numbers will have fallen by 46% from a peak in 1993.

Overall the move towards increased production efficiency systems for ruminant livestock will further enhance the environment while achieving the targets set in *Food Harvest 2020*.

11.3.1 National Profile

The *Census of Agriculture 2010* showed at a national level there were 139,860 farms operating in Ireland in June 2010, compared to 141,527 farms in June 2000. The utilised agricultural area increased by 2.8% over the ten year period from 4,443,071 hectares in June 2000 to 4,569,359 hectares in June 2010. The average size of an agricultural holding increased from 31.4 hectares to 32.7 hectares in 2010. Specialist beef production continues to be the most common farm type, accounting for over half of all farms in 2010.

11.3.2 County Employment Profile in Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Table 11.1. traces the changes in the numbers of people employed in agriculture, forestry and fisheries at County Galway level, over a number of Census periods from 2002-2011. From the figures set out below it would appear that there is a slight rise in persons employed in Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry in 2011 than in the previous Census period of 2006.

Period	Total Employed in County	Total Employed in Agriculture, Fishing and Forestry Sector	% Employed in Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing
2002	65,543	6,553	9.96%
2006	70,617	5,749	8.14%
2011	69,207	5,908	8.5%

Table 11.1: Employment by Category

The 2011 Census for County Galway also indicates that *Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing* was ranked 5th in the Total Employed (5,908) in this sector for 2011.

11.3.3 Agricultural Profile within County Galway

The *Census of Agriculture 2010*, indicates that Agriculture is the predominant land-use within County Galway. There were 13,445 farms listed within the County, the total area farmed was 347,122.7 ha and the average farm size was 25.82 ha. Both the total area farmed and average farm size has increased since 2000. Cattle and sheep are the main type of farming, dairy, pig and poultry farming are also important categories. Equine activities are also practised but to a lesser degree. Forestry and horticulture are also practised within the County.

11.3.4 Organic Farming

There is a big increase in the demand for organic and speciality foods. This has presented an opportunity for farmers to obtain an attractive premium for organic beef, lamb, venison, milk, fruit and vegetables as well as other locally produced food. There is undoubtedly a large potential for more farmers to switch to organic farming within County Galway. In order to promote farm diversification into areas such as organic food production and food processing, the Council will promote the provision of regularised farmers markets in appropriate locations, including the traditional market towns such as Tuam, Ballinasloe, Loughrea, Oranmore, Gort, Athenry, Kinvara and Clifden, which have evolved as centres of agricultural trade, outlets for quality, local produce and economic viability of local agriculture.

11.3.5 Agri – Tourism Development

The County has a wealth of natural and built amenities and provides a quality of life in the countryside that underpins year-round tourism products and services. Potential exists to develop agri-tourism as another means of diversifying the rural economy and can include equestrian centres, pitch and putt courses, outdoor pursuit centres, farmhouse guest accommodation and other similar activities including small-scale craft centres. Where proposals for agri-tourism development can be accommodated, the Council will encourage and facilitate their development subject to normal development management criteria.

11.3.6 Local Breeds

Galway County Council recognises the significance of the Connemara Pony, the Galway Sheep breed and the Irish Draught Horse as being breeds well recognised and identified within County Galway. Galway County Council commends and supports the efforts of breeder societies and those promoting our native breeds and encourages all efforts that positively enhance these native breeds.



11.4 Agriculture, Fishing/Marine Resources and Forestry Policies

Agriculture, Fishing/Marine Resources and Forestry Policies

Policy AFF 1 – Agri-Food Sector, Fisheries/Marine Resources and Forestry

The Council shall recognise innovative strategies in the agri-food sector, fisheries/marine resources and forestry within the County.

Policy AFF 2 – Sustainable Management of Natural Resources

Support the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Report titled *Food Harvest: A Vision for Agri-Food and Fisheries 2020*.

11.5 Agricultural Policies and Objectives

Agriculture Policies

Policy AFF 3 – Sustainable Development of the Countryside

Facilitate the sustainable development of the countryside. The Council recognises that the diversification of appropriate uses on rural landholdings may be necessary in order to ensure the continued viability of agriculture.

Policy AFF 4 – Organic Farming and Rural Tourism

The Council shall promote and support the organic farm sector (including the development of niche markets) and rural tourism initiatives including appropriate infrastructure to support such initiatives.

Agriculture Objectives

Objective AFF1 – Sustainable Agriculture

The Council shall support the sustainable development of agriculture, with an emphasis on a high quality, traceable primary production methods, the promotion of local food supply and agriculture diversification.

Objective AFF 2 – Rural Diversification

Galway County Council shall support those who live and work in agriculture and/or related activities in rural areas and who wish to remain on their land holding. Accordingly the Council will favourably consider rural diversification intended to supplement farm income where the activity remains ancillary and compatible to the ongoing agricultural use of the farm and does not have an adverse impact on residential amenity:

- a) Specialist farming practices e.g. specialised animal breeding, equine facilities, poultry, mushroom growing, vegetable and fruit growing;
- b) Farm enterprises such as processing, animal pet farms/horse riding schools with an element of retail activity;
- c) The production of organic and speciality foods to meet the increase in demand for such products;
- d) The conversion of disused buildings/existing farm buildings for appropriate owner run, rural oriented, enterprises, as a way of supporting a viable rural community, subject to proper planning and sustainable development of the area;
- e) Support the development of appropriate agri-tourism activities and eco-tourism development proposals and promote the County as a green tourist destination.

Objective AFF 3 – Farmers’ Markets

Support the establishment or facilitation of regularised local farmers’ markets within the towns and villages as outlined in the Core/Settlement Strategy in accordance with best practice and in a manner that is complementary to the existing market and retail activities of those towns and villages.

Objective AFF 4 – Intensive Agriculture Developments

Have regard to S.256 of the *Planning and Development Act 2000* (as amended) which amends the *EPA Act 1992* regarding the control of emissions when assessing intensive agricultural developments.

Objective AFF 5 – Compliance with the EU Habitats Directive

New agricultural projects that may potentially affect Natura 2000 Sites, individually or in combination with other plans and projects shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment to ensure that there are no likely significant effects on the integrity of any Natura 2000 Sites in the County.

Objective AFF 6 – Drainage or Reclamation of Wetlands

The Council will implement the relevant parts of the *Planning and Development (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 2011* and the *European Communities (Amendment to Planning and Development) Regulations 2011* which require planning permission to be applied for where the area impacted by works relating to the drainage or reclamation of a wetland exceeds 0.1 hectares or where such works may have a significant effect on the environment. Such planning applications would need to be supported by an Appropriate Assessment where necessary.

11.6 Fishing and Marine Resources

Fishing is not only an economic activity, it is also a way of life and it is central to the identity and prosperity of many coastal communities within County Galway. The fishing industry relates not only to commercial fishing (at sea and inland) but also to tourism and recreational activities. The marine resource is very important to the County as it supports a significant number of water-based activities, both work and pleasure related. These include trips to islands, both inhabited and uninhabited, boat hire, yachting, adventure sports, pier/shore angling, sea angling, dolphin and bird watching, hiking, visiting heritage sites and festivals. The Oileáin Árann and Inishbofin are very popular tourist destinations and a number of ferries service the islands on a daily basis. Most islands also have air connectivity with the mainland. Galway County Council recognises the importance of these services in providing local employment in coastal areas and also in attracting visitors to the area. Fishing, fish processing, transport, mariculture, aquaculture and related activities including seaweed aquaculture, seaweed harvesting and processing also generate significant employment in the County. Marine energies (including offshore wind energy/wave and tidal) will in the future play an important role in enhancing energy efficiencies, minimising land use requirements of the power sector and in reducing GHG emissions. With the proposed investment in grid connections and transmission capacity under *Grid West* project marine energies have the potential to create a significant number of jobs within coastal areas and in diversifying the local economy.

There are a number of strategic ports, the most important being Ros an Mhíl. It is the largest and busiest port in the County and is a major fishing port and fish processing location. It is the main base for the Galway and Árann Deep-Sea fishing fleet and is a major ferry port for passengers and goods for the three Oileáin Árann Islands.

The Council shall encourage and support an integrated approach to marine enterprise as set out within the national Integrated Marine Plan titled *Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth* and due to the existing facilities/enterprises, Ros an Mhíl (in collaboration with private business, educational and research institutes such as the Marine Institute) has the potential to develop as a location for a 'maritime/marine cluster' within the County.

11.6.1 Marina Development and Water Borne Transport

Marina developments have grown in importance and are necessary to cater for the requirements of pleasure crafts such as yachts and cruisers. Marinas not only provide services to tourist and local residents who are involved in water-based activities/enterprises, but they are also an important access point through which visitors can visit local towns and villages, their associated services and amenities.

The Council recognises the importance of ferry services between Oileáin Árann, Inishbofin, Ros an Mhíl, Cleggan and the mainland. Galway County Council will work and collaborate with other agencies to identify opportunities for the establishment of other viable water-borne routes within the County and with other adjoining counties as appropriate.

11.6.2 Shellfish Designations

In order to protect existing shellfish waters and to ensure the future protection of these areas, the European Union introduced the *Shellfish Waters Directive* (2006/113/EC). The purpose of this Directive is to put in place concrete measures to protect waters, including shellfish waters, against pollution and to safeguard certain shellfish populations from various harmful consequences, resulting from the discharge of pollutant substances into the sea. The Directive applies to the aquatic habitat of bivalve and gastropod molluscs only (includes oysters, mussels, cockles, scallops and clams). It does not include crustaceans such as lobsters, crabs and crayfish.

There are 3 areas along the County Galway coastline that are identified as Designated Shellfish Waters:

- Cuan Chill Chiaráin;
- Clarinbridge/Kinvara Bay;
- Aughinish Bay.

There are also a number of proposed Designated Shellfish Waters and these include:

- Outer Galway Bay Indreabhán;
- Mannin Bay;
- Clifden Bay/Ardbear Bay;
- Streamstown Bay;
- Ballinakill Bay.

A Pollution Prevention Programme is in place regarding these designated areas. Generally development is required to have regard to the requirements of the Western River Basin Management Plan which make reference to the protected shellfish waters. It is likely that those proposed for designation under this Directive will proceed during the lifetime of this plan. Developments adjoining, or in the vicinity of, designated Shellfish Waters must have regard to the designation and ensure that development does not have a negative impact on the quality of the water and Natura 2000 sites in the area.

11.6.3 Legislative Requirements

The Department of Environment, Community and Local Government (DoECLG), in association with Local Authorities are responsible for the management, use, activity and development of the physical environment up to the Mean High Water Mark (MHW). Powers under the *Planning and Development Act, 2000* (as amended), give Local Authorities jurisdiction as Planning Authorities over development on the foreshore that adjoins its functional area. The Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (DCENR) is responsible for all developments seaward of the MHW and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has functions that extend across the landward divide.

Marine-based aquaculture located on or below the foreshore is governed by the Foreshore Acts while aquaculture located on the landward side of the foreshore may also be subject to planning permission from Galway County Council. The foreshore is the seabed and shore below the line of high water of ordinary or medium tides and extends outwards to the low water mark.

Leases are granted under the Acts for the erection of long-term structures (e.g. piers, marinas, bridges, roads, car parks) and licences are granted for other works (e.g. laying of submarine pipelines and cables) and purposes (e.g. aquaculture).

The Council shall have regard to the provisions of the *Maritime Area and Foreshore (Amendment) Bill 2013* and shall adhere to the bills content when enacted.

The *EU Marine Strategy Directive* is closely aligned with the *EU Water Framework Directive* and promotes an ecosystem based approach to ensure the sustainable development of our marine environment in order to achieve good environmental status of the EU's marine waters by 2020. It is designed to achieve the full economic potential of oceans and seas in harmony with the marine environment. The Marine Institute is the national agency responsible for marine research, technology development and innovation (RTDI). The *Sea Change Strategy 2007-2013* seeks to transform the marine sector into one that is able to exploit market opportunities, create high value outputs and contribute to key national strategic objectives in an environmentally sustainable manner while embracing technological opportunities.

11.7 Fishing and Marine Resources Policies and Objectives

Fishing and Marine Resources Policies

Policy AFF 5 – Implementation of the Shellfish Waters Directive

Galway County Council will continue to work with local communities, relevant stakeholders and with the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine to ensure the proper and successful implementation of the Shellfish Waters Directive along County Galway's coastline.

Policy AFF 6 – Sustainable Growth within Fishing and Marine Resources Sectors

The Council shall support the sustainable development of fishing, marine resource enterprises and marine/eco tourism that is consistent with other policies of this plan, so as to maximise their contribution to jobs and growth within the coastal and rural communities of the County and to the growth of the national economy.

Policy AFF 7 – Integrated Approach

The Council shall promote County Galway as a coastal county and shall seek to increase our awareness of the value, opportunities and social benefits of the sea. Galway County Council shall also support an integrated or ecosystem approach as outlined within the document '*An Integrated Marine Plan for Ireland Harnessing our Ocean's Wealth 2012*' regarding future maritime development proposals in ensuring that ecological limits are respected and that development will not have significant adverse effects on the environment both on land and sea.

Policy AFF 8 – Marine Research

Promote and collaborate with NUIG and with the Marine Institute in their Research and Development initiatives in harnessing employment opportunities in the marine sector (e.g. SmartBay Project).

Fishing and Marine Resources Objectives

Objective AFF 7 – Commercial Sea Fishing

Galway County Council shall encourage and facilitate the sustainable development and expansion of the fishing industry while providing for the management and conservation of coastal habitats and ecosystems.

Objective AFF 8 – Aquaculture

The Council shall support and promote the sustainable development of the aquaculture sector in order to maximize its contribution to employment creation and growth in coastal communities whilst balancing environmental considerations. Special consideration should be made to gradually enforce a policy that would encourage onshore fish farming practices and special consideration would be given when granting planning for on shore farms to areas that are already involved in the fish farming industry.

Objective AFF 9 – Inland Fishery Resources

The Council shall support the County's valuable inland fishery resource and support its sustainable development and expansion through the protection of water and habitat quality and facilitation of ancillary infrastructure and improvements at appropriate locations.

Objective AFF 10 – Marine Research

Continue to support the further development of the existing NUIG marine research station at Maínis having regard to its long established land use on the site and its importance to the aquaculture industry to the local community and to the development of scientific knowledge.

Objective AFF 11 – Development of Offshore Resources

Galway County Council shall promote and support the development of sustainable off-shore resources such as offshore energy generating sites subject to the provisions of EU Directives including the *Habitats Directive and Shellfish Directive*.

Objective AFF 12 – Marina Developments

The Council shall support proposals for sustainable marina developments and associated amenities that are located at both existing marinas and at other appropriate and fully justified locations.

Objective AFF 13 – Water Borne Transport

Support the continued operation of ferry services between the islands and mainland in order to support coastal communities and to increase access for the tourism sector.

Objective AFF 14 – Provision of Infrastructure

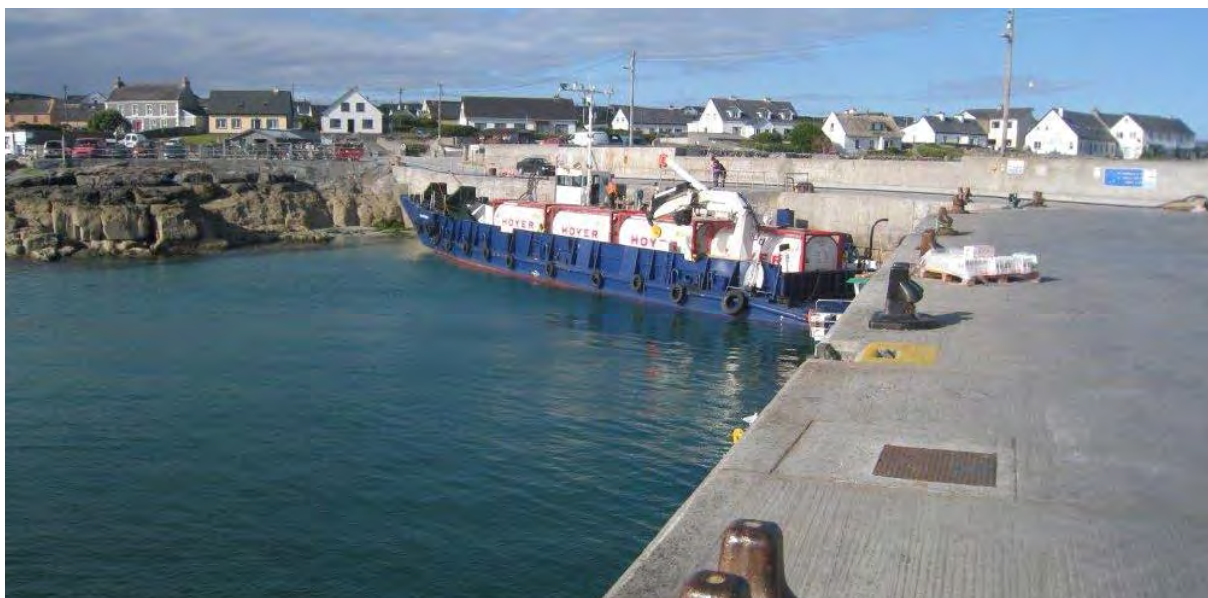
Facilitate the provision of infrastructure, which is necessary for the development of the fishing, seaweed and mari-culture industry. The provision of infrastructure, which is necessary for the development of the fishing and mari-culture industry, should be located in proximity to established landing facilities.

Objective AFF 15 – Aquaculture, Marine Enterprise and Biotechnology

The Council shall encourage and support an integrated approach to marine enterprise as set out within the national Integrated Marine Plan titled *Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth 2012*. The Council shall consider appropriately located marine resourced enterprises within the County subject to proper planning and in compliance with environmental legislation. Ros an Mhíl shall be promoted as a location for a 'maritime/marine cluster'.

Objective AFF 16 – Marine Tourism

The Council will support, subject to meeting the requirements of relevant Irish planning and European environmental legislation including the Habitats Directive, the sustainable development of the necessary infrastructure and amenities to support marine tourism such as deep sea angling, sailing, canoeing, surfing, island exploration and cruise ship passengers.



11.8 Forestry

Ireland has one of the lowest proportions of land devoted to forestry of all the EU nations. The national target as set out in the government document "*Growing for the Future: A Strategic Plan for the Development of the Forestry Sector in Ireland*" 1996 is to have a forestry cover of 17% by 2030. The number employed in the Irish forestry and forest products sector was estimated at 11,939 persons in 2012. The percentage of Ireland's land area under forest as of December 2011 was 10.6% or 6,653 ha. The average forest farm holding in 2011 was 8Ha. There were 3,864 felling licences issued by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine in 2011. The National Forest Policy Review is currently being undertaken and the recommendations arising from this will shape national forest policy goals with regard to levels of afforestation, the species composition and structure of the forest estate, the future roundwood supply, demand, research and development and innovation in the forestry sector and standards, guidelines and monitoring.

11.8.1 Forestry Profile within County Galway

The actual forest cover of Co. Galway is c. 9.84% of the total land area of the County or c. 593,966Ha. This compares with 11.01% or 6,889,456 at a national level (up to 2012). Under the afforestation scheme there was c. 380 ha of grazing land planted within the County in 2012. In order to assist in achieving the national target, the current area of forestry cover in Galway will need to be increased considerably by 2030.

Most forestry proposals are grant aided. The Native Woodlands Scheme (NWS) is also a grant aided package for farmers and other landowners, aimed at encouraging the proactive protection and expansion of Ireland's native woodlands and associated biodiversity. Subject to normal restrictions the NWS may be a suitable option for sites in areas deemed generally sensitive from an environmental, landscape or amenity perspective, including sites near or adjacent to existing designated woodlands and other important habitats.

11.8.2 Forestry Management - Guidelines, Licenses and Approvals

Forestry in Ireland operates within a legal and regulatory framework. This is necessary in order to protect forests and also to ensure that forestry operations and activities are carried out in compliance with the principles of sustainable forest management. It is important that those involved in the forestry sector are familiar with the various legal and regulatory obligations governing forestry.

The Forest Service has published a *Code of Best Forest Practice* which is a listing of all forestry operations and the manner in which they should be carried out to ensure the implementation of Sustainable Forestry Management (SFM) as well as a suite of Guidelines which are the mechanism by which the Forest Service ensures that the environmental aspect of the SFM are implemented. Adherence to these guidelines is a condition of grant aid and the issuing of a felling licence, the penalty for non-compliance is the withholding of approvals for grants and felling licences. Best Practice Manuals also include references to landscape and environment and assessors for the grant system should be encouraged to refer to the County Galway Landscape Character Assessment when considering applications.

While most forestry operations are exempt from the requirement to obtain planning permission, some forestry activities require, by law, a license or approval (consent) from the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

It is an offence to undertake the following forestry activities unless you first obtain a license or approval from the Department:

- **Tree Felling**

Under the Forestry Act 1946, a felling license is required to *uproot any tree over ten years old or to cut down any tree* (subject to certain exemptions);

- **Aerial Fertilisation**

Under the *European Communities (Aerial Fertilisation) (Forestry) Regulations 2012*, an aerial fertilisation Licence must be obtained before a person can use an aircraft to apply fertiliser to a forest;

- **Afforestation**

Under the *European Communities (Forest Consent and Assessment) Regulations 2010*, the approval of the Minister is required for all afforestation projects where the area involved is greater than 0.10 hectares (approximately 0.25 acres);

- **Forest Road Construction**

Under the *European Communities (Forest Consent and Assessment) Regulations 2010*, the approval of the Minister is required to construct a forest road.

11.8.3 Forest Service Appropriate Assessment Procedure

Under European and national legislation, the Forest Service is required to apply an appropriate assessment procedure to applications for consent, grant approval and licensing for various forestry activities, to evaluate the project within the context of any potentially relevant SAC or SPA.

There are a range of situations where the possibility of a significant effect may realistically exist, as follows:

- Applications for afforestation within the 1 km National Parks & Wildlife Service referral zone surrounding a Natura site;
- Applications for road construction on a site within 3 km upstream of, and hydrologically connected to, a Natura site; and
- Applications for felling licences within a Hen Harrier SPA and associated sections of 'Red Areas' that extend beyond the SPA boundary.

In these and other similar situations, the Forest Service applies a detailed screening process to identify whether or not the possibility of a significant effect actually exists.

11.8.4 Riparian Zone

A Riparian Zone is an integral part of the protection of a watercourse system and should be sufficiently wide to protect the river or water course. The recommended width for a larger river channel (>10m) is 35m to 60m and for smaller channels (<10m) is 20m or greater on each side of the river bank. The determined width should be tailored to site specific, river reach or lakeshore characteristics. It is important that the buffer zone is large enough to protect the ecological integrity of the river (including emergent vegetation) and the riparian zone (bank side vegetation including trees) and takes into account the human history of the area. The Forest Service usually applies a buffer zone ranging from 30m-50m on each side of the river bank, this may vary according to the slope of the river and site sensitivity (the minimum buffer applied is 10m on each side of the river bank).

11.8.5 Climate Change, Recreation and Bio-Energy

The Government's commitment to the national forestry strategy is reiterated in the *National Climate Change Strategy (NCCS) 2007 to 2012*. The key role played by forestry in addressing climate change directly (through sequestration) and indirectly (through the displacement of fossil fuel) is recognised in the NCCS. Forest sinks account for a significant share (2.08 million tonnes) of the total (8.66 million tonnes) contribution to emission reduction and is among the existing measures employed for achieving Kyoto compliance. However, to ensure that forestry continues to act as a positive sink into the long term requires an afforestation programme of at least 10,000 ha per annum up to 2035. It is clear that forestry has a role in the climate change agenda; however that role needs to be more clearly defined and articulated. The Forest Service *Neighbourhood Scheme* provides attractive support for the development of new and existing 'neighbourhoods' for public access, recreation and enjoyment on land in or near villages, towns and cities within the Country (refer to scheme manual which outlines the scope of the scheme). Renewable energy production provides for sustainable diversification from more conventional forms of agriculture. Ireland has the lowest use of biomass in the EU so the scope for development of bio-energy in Ireland is significant.

There are many bio-fuel sources including forest and wood residues and dry agricultural residues all of which can be combusted to produce heat, electricity or both and can be used as an energy source to fire solid fuel systems. The use of forestry residues for heat generation is likely to have the greatest potential for the West Region in the immediate future. There are also opportunities for the use of these by-products as bio-fuels as well as the promotion of the energy crop sector within the County's rural economy as part of agricultural diversification.

11.9 Forestry Policies and Objectives

Forestry Policies

Policy AFF 9 – Forestry Recreation

Co-operate with Coillte Teoranta, the Forest Service and private landowners in promoting greater public access and recreational use in the County. Support and promote the Forest Service 'Neighbourhood Scheme' which seeks to provide public access, recreation and enjoyment on such land in or near villages, towns within the country.

Policy AFF 10 – Forestry and Climate Change

In accordance with the *National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012* (including any updated/superseding Strategy) Galway County Council shall promote sustainable forestry development of appropriate scale within the County in order to address climate change directly through sequestration and indirectly through the displacement of fossil fuel.

Forestry Objectives

Objective AFF 17– Sustainable Management

Encourage sustainable forestry development and related management activities, including the promotion of mixed species forestry, particularly deciduous forestry as an alternative agriculture use. Encourage phased and selective rather than clear felling and the promotion of green infrastructure networks.

Objective AFF 18 – Sustainable Afforestation

Facilitate afforestation in appropriate locations, in co-operation with Coillte and the Forest Service and in line with EU environmental and national legislation and policy.

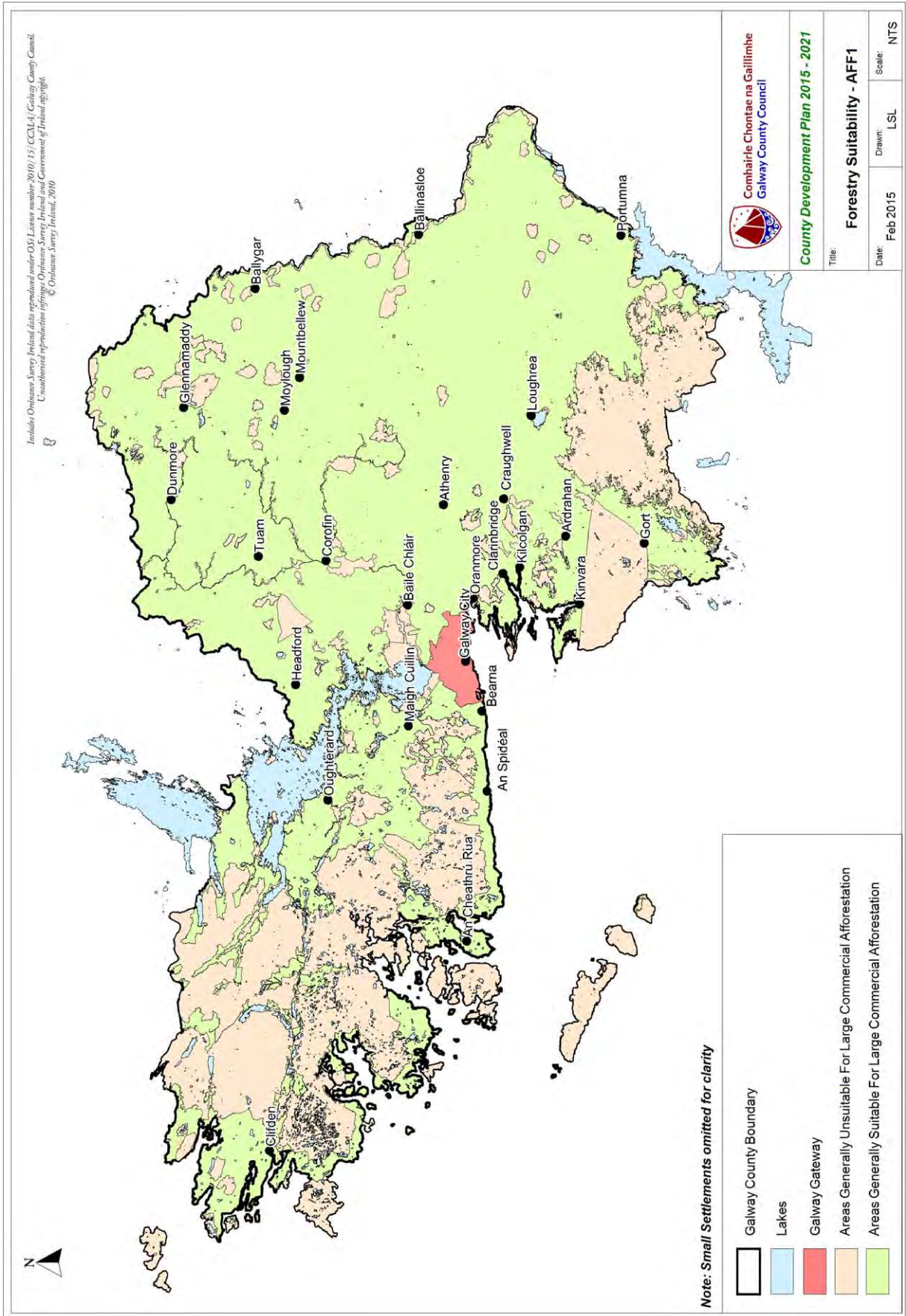
Objective AFF 19 – Afforestation and Landscape

Consider the likely impact of forestry on landscape quality and visual amenity in any afforestation proposals brought before the Local Authority for comment. Refer to the Landscape Character Assessment and to the DM Standards and Guidelines of this plan when considering such proposals.

Objective AFF 20 – Bio-Energy

Support the development of the bio-energy sector as an alternative agricultural use and have regard to the *Bio-Energy Action Plan for Ireland 2007* (including any updated or superseding document), to the Department of Agriculture and Food Best Practice Manuals and Guidelines and to the Landscape Character Assessment when considering significant planting of bio-energy crops.

See **AFF1 Forestry Suitability Map** at the end of chapter.





Implementation & Monitoring

12.1 Introduction

Galway County Council is committed to securing the implementation of the strategies, policies and objectives of this plan.

12.2 Implementation

Galway County Council will collaborate with relevant agencies and authorities to progress and expedite the implementation of the plan.

Implementation of the plan will be achieved by:

- Investment in infrastructure underpinning the development objectives of the plan. In this regard, the 'Core Strategy' of the plan shall set the priorities for the provision and improvement of infrastructure by both the Local Authority and other agencies, subject to the availability of funding;
- Integrating the strategies, policies and objectives of the plan with lower order plans such as Local Area Plans;
- Application of the objectives and standards of this plan in both Local Authority development and also in the assessment of all applications for development consent;
- Ongoing monitoring of the strategies, policies and objectives of the plan and identifying any needs for adjustment of objectives over the lifetime of the plan and in future reviews;
- Have regard to the *Regional Indicators Report Monitoring Framework for implementation of the Regional Planning Guidelines 2014* (including any updated/superseding documents).

12.3 Monitoring

Plan Objectives

As far as practicable, every effort has been made to formulate objectives that are specific, measurable, achievable and realistic. All of the objectives of the plan have been written with the specific aim of fulfilling the 'Settlement Strategy' of the plan and its associated objectives, as well as the environmental objectives as set out in the Strategic Environmental Assessment.

Performance Indicators

The measurement of the success of the implementation of the objectives of the plan will be a complex process, as a wide number of actions will be required to secure each goal. Table 12.1 sets out the major performance indicators under each goal and many are not within the direct control of Galway County Council. Performance indicators will be based on known sources of data, such as the Census 2011 data (including and updated Census results/data).

Statutory 2 Year Review

The Development Plan will be reviewed after 2 years and a progress report will be prepared on the achievements in securing the objectives of the plan.

12.4 Collaboration and Engagement

The implementation of this plan requires the cooperation and participation of all stakeholders and Galway County Council will undertake a leadership role to progress and secure the implementation of the plan. In providing a leadership role, the Council will aim to foster a collaborative approach with citizens, communities, stakeholders, sectoral interests, partners, Governmental and Non-Governmental agencies and adjoining authorities to achieve collective support and successful implementation of the plan.

Table 12.1 Performance Indicators

Strategic Aims	Performance Indicators
<p>Strategic Aim 1 – Promote Regional Development</p> <p>Promote regional development and growth through harnessing the economic and employment potential of the competitive advantages of County Galway such as its strategic location, quality of life, landscape, heritage and natural resources, in a sustainable and environmentally sensitive manner.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Population growth in the County is channelled into the appropriate growth settlements in accordance with the plan;• The overall population targets provided for in the Regional Planning Guidelines are not exceeded;• The zoning limits set out in the Core Strategy are carried through to local area plans;• Family income;• Unemployment rate;• Take up of new employment land;• Increase in rates base reflecting growth in commercial properties;• Diversification in employment sectors.

Strategic Aim 2 – Environmental Protection

Afford suitable protection to the environment and natural resources of the County and ensure the fulfilment of environmental responsibilities.

- Environmental quality data (EPA, NPWS, Irish Water, OPW & GCC);
- Water Quality;
- Air Quality;
- Noise Quality.

Strategic Aim 3 – Living Landscapes

Recognise the importance of living landscapes where people live, work, visit and enjoy while ensuring they are managed in a sustainable and appropriate manner.

- Diversification in farming sector;
- Diversification in employment sectors;
- Protection of Focal Points/ Views.

Strategic Aim 4 – Balanced Urban and Rural Areas

Prioritise development within the Hub town of Tuam, the Galway Metropolitan Area, the key towns and smaller towns, villages and settlements within the County, while supporting the role of the rural areas in sustaining the rural based economy.

- Number of new houses provided;
- Number of areas / houses refurbished in the Local Authority housing stock;
- Quality of new housing with regard to design, proximity to services, energy efficiency, green amenity;
- Range of house types and size provided;
- Diversification in farming and generation from the land of alternative income from farming;
- Total hectares of land developed for new enterprises in the plan period on business/enterprise/industrial zoned lands.

Strategic Aim 5 – Inclusive Communities

Encourage and support the development of inclusive communities which engage and include all members of society facilitating equal physical, social and cultural access and integration.

- Square metres of community/ education/institutional zoning granted in the plan period;
- Square metres of town centre/ commercial zoning granted in the plan period;
- Number of new educational / childcare facilities provided;
- Number of new leisure / recreational facilities provided;
- Improvements in walking/cycling linkages within settlements.

<p>Strategic Aim 6 – Integrated Development</p> <p>Ensure a more sustainable and integrated concept of development with regard to land use, transportation, water services, energy supply and waste management over the lifetime of the plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall quantum of new infrastructure projects/schemes delivered; • Growth in broadband coverage in the County; • Number of alternative energy projects delivered.
<p>Strategic Aim 7 – Sustainable Transportation</p> <p>Minimise travel demand and promote the increase of sustainable mobility throughout the County.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in commuting distance time to work and school; • Increase in the provision and use of public transport services; • Overall delivery of “Smart Travel” initiatives.
<p>Strategic Aim 8 – An Ghaeltacht</p> <p>Promote An Ghaeltacht as an Irish speaking community, recognising its importance locally, nationally and internationally.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of developments granted with the linguistic clause attached; • Quantum of developments permitted in An Ghaeltacht.
<p>Strategic Aim 9 – Infrastructural Projects</p> <p>Facilitate the development of infrastructural projects, which will underpin sustainable development throughout the County and region during the plan period.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of key infrastructural requirements as identified in the plan.
<p>Strategic Aim 10 – Heritage</p> <p>Enhance and protect the built heritage and natural environment, including buildings, archaeology, landscape and biodiversity, within the County.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance of extent and quality of protected habitats, if statistics are available from NPWS; • Number of protected structures lost or damaged; • Number of protected structures rescued and revitalised.
<p>Strategic Aim 11 – Climate Change Adaptation</p> <p>Engage in efforts to limit the human induced causes of climate change and take account of climate change in planning and delivering work programmes. Engage in efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change and integrate climate change considerations in planning and delivering work programmes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase / decrease in energy efficiency, (if statistics available); • Expansion of renewable energy generating sector; • Occurrence of flood damage.

Table 12.1 Performance Indicators

(Source: Galway County Council, Planning Section (2014))

Development Management Standards & Guidelines

13.1 Introduction – Aims

This part of the plan is concerned with the standards and guidelines, which will be applied to development proposals.

The aim of this chapter is to:

- Promote, guide and enforce high standards of development quality in urban and rural areas throughout the County having regard to quality of life, the environment, community, the economy and surrounding areas in a manner that supports the sustainable development for all of the people within the County in an equitable manner.

It is envisaged that the standards and guidelines as set out in this plan would be applied in a flexible manner, in particular circumstances where proposed development is otherwise consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and achieves high design quality. The achievement of the policies and objectives of the plan and the encouragement of good design, rather than the mechanistic application of development standards and guidelines, will be the aim of development management.

The Council is required to manage development to ensure that permissions granted under the *Planning and Development Act, 2000* (as amended) are consistent with the policies and objectives of the Development Plan. In making a decision on any individual planning application, the Planning Authority is restricted to considering the proper planning and sustainable development of the area, having regard to the matters provided for under Section 34 of the *Planning and Development Act, 2000* (as amended). This section of the Act sets out in detail the considerations which the Planning Authority must take account of, including the provisions of the *Development Plan, Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2007)* issued by the Minister for the Environment, Heritage & Local Government, other relevant Ministerial or Government policies and any submission or observations made in accordance with the Planning Regulations.

The Department produces a range of guidelines designed to help Planning Authorities, An Bord Pleanala, developers and the general public, details of which can be viewed on the DECLG's website at www.environ.ie/en/DevelopmentHousing/PlanningDevelopment/Planning/.

Guidelines produced under Section 28 of the *Planning and Development Act, 2000* (as amended) are relevant to and applicable to development proposals in County Galway.

13.1.1 Proper Planning and Sustainable Development

When making a Development Plan, the *Planning and Development Act, 2000* (as amended) requires Planning Authorities to consider proper planning and sustainable development of the area. There are 3 dimensions to sustainable development; economic, social and environmental and these dimensions should not be undertaken in isolation, because they are mutually dependent. The Government's Sustainable Development Strategy titled *Our Sustainable Future, A Sustainable Future for Ireland 2012* - states that '*economic growth, social cohesion and environmental sustainability must move forward in a mutually supportive manner*'.

Therefore to achieve sustainable development, economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system and in the implementation of this plan.

The DM Standards that follow apply to the entire administrative area of the County including Local Area Plan (LAP) areas.

13.2 General Development Guidelines

DM Standard 1: Qualitative Assessment-Design Quality, Guidelines and Statements (Urban and Rural Areas)

The main requirement for a qualitative assessment regarding residential development in towns and villages and in the open countryside (where relevant) shall have regard to the following:

a) Design Quality

The Council will seek to achieve a high quality design and layouts for all new developments to ensure that they integrate with, and make a positive contribution to their urban, rural or landscape settings. This will be guided through the provisions of the applicable statutory plans, national guidelines and design guidelines and will be a requirement of the development management process.

b) Design Guidelines

New residential development shall generally be guided by the following design guidelines, where applicable:

- *DoEHLG Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas-Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2009* including its accompanying document *Urban Design Manual – Best Practices Guide 2009*;
- *Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments 2007*;
- *DoEHLG Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities-Best Practice Guidelines for Delivering Homes, Sustaining Communities 2007*;
- *DoEHLG Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines 2005*;
- Galway County Council, *Galway Clustered Housing Guidelines*;
- Galway County Council, *Design Guidelines for the Single Rural House*;
- Galway County Council, *Local Area Plan (LAP's) provisions and*
- *Public Open Space*.

Public Open Space shall be integrated into the overall development and shall be appropriately located where it can be overlooked and all play areas supervised by surrounding residential development. Areas with high gradients or otherwise impractical to function effectively as open space will not be acceptable for consideration as useable open space. Narrow tracts of land (less than 10 metres in width) or other “incidental” or left over pieces of land shall not be considered as part of the useable open space provision in a residential development. The retention of key features such as streams, groups of trees, stone walls, etc. as well as any recorded monuments or features is of key importance and shall be encouraged at all times. On larger sites, areas should be identified for a hierarchy of uses including active and passive uses. On green field sites, the minimum area of useable open space that is acceptable is 15% of the total site area (not including incidental lands). On brown field, infill sites or all other sites, a minimum of 10% public open space will be required.

c) Design Statement

Significant development proposals will be required to submit Design Statements as part of their planning applications to demonstrate the suitability of the proposed design solution to the site context in accordance with the relevant urban design criteria. These Design Statements should include an appraisal of the distinctive site character, setting and context together with concise explanations and illustrations of the suitability and main elements of the design solution proposed for the site.

d) Universal Access

Universal design is the design of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability. Circulation within housing layouts, including access to individual buildings, should have regard to the varying needs of occupants over their lifetimes, including needs associated with mobility difficulties and normal frailty associated with old age. Innovative dwelling design shall be encouraged in order to facilitate the potential future provision of adaptable and accessible accommodation.

e) General Design Issues

The Planning Authority will require a variety of house types in proposals for 6 or more houses. Housing schemes for 20 or more houses should generally be broken into small functional and visual groups, which fulfil a social and aesthetic need for identity. This may be achieved through scale and massing arrangement, roof profiles, materials and decorative details.

Regarding materials and finishes the following should be considered:

- The Council encourages the use of sustainable materials, including hardwood windows and doors rather than uPVC;
- The Council encourages the use and integration of local materials in the construction and finishes of new buildings to enhance and maintain the character of the local area. In rural areas brick cladding or dry dash will not normally be accepted;
- The choice of colours for external finishes should harmonise local traditions and surrounding buildings.

13.3 Guidelines for Residential Development (Urban and Rural Areas)

DM Standard 2: Multiple Housing Schemes (Urban Areas)

All applications for new residential developments in urban areas will be assessed having regard to the standards set out in this section of the Development Plan.

Proposals for significant housing schemes must include a design brief or design statement in accordance with the *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas-Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2009*.

To achieve good urban design in residential developments, (including apartment developments), the 12 Urban Design Principles set out in the *Urban Design Manual-A Best Practice Guide 2009* (including any updated/superseding document) should be taken into account in designing schemes.

The following standards apply to residential developments in conjunction with the *Sustainable Residential Developments Guidelines 2009* and including the accompanying *Best Practice Manual*.

a) Quality of Proposed Layout and Elevations

The quality of the residential environment will be paramount in the acceptability of planning applications for multiple housing schemes. Layouts, elevations and design must be designed to create a strong sense of identity, place and community. The Council will seek to achieve a high standard of design through the provisions of the statutory plans and the development management process. However, as set out in the *DoEHLG Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines 2009*, including its accompanying document *Urban Design Manual-Best Practice Guide 2009* – where the design is of such poor quality as to result in a sub-standard housing environment, permission will be refused.

b) Context Sensitive

New developments should take full account of the characteristics of the natural and built environment of the site, the views and vistas to and from the site, and the surrounding areas.

c) Design Innovation

Innovation in layout is of key importance. New types of layout, for example the creation of home-zones, will be encouraged.

d) Permeability

Convenient access needs to be provided between and within areas, particularly to larger community and commercial facilities and to places of work. Routes within the area should be accessible for everyone and as direct as possible, and for this reason “gated estates” should be discouraged. The design process should consider what levels of permeability are appropriate for different street users, with permeability for pedestrians and cyclists taking precedence over permeability for vehicles.

River or canal paths for walkers and cyclists can provide attractive connections within and between areas. In the interests of security, it is necessary that all pedestrian and cycle links be designed in such a way so as to be overlooked.

e) Natural Features

The layout of the development should be designed around the retention of existing natural features. This would include any existing trees, hedgerows, watercourses and landform features, amongst others.

f) Landscaping

A high standard of landscaping is an essential part of high quality new developments. Plans for landscaping, including hard and soft landscaping, should be submitted at planning application stage. In general, indigenous planting suitable to the local site and soil conditions should be used.

g) Safety & Security

The layout and design of new developments should consider appropriate Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles to ensure the safety and security of residents and other users. Opportunities for vandalism and anti-social behaviour should be reduced to the greatest possible extent by ensuring that: areas used by the public (such as open spaces, footpaths, roads and parking areas) are overlooked by housing; there is adequate accessibility, visibility and lighting, particularly for pedestrians; a clear demarcation of public, semi-public and private areas is created; etc.

h) Traffic Safety and Management

The quality of the layout and the manner in which it addresses traffic management and safety is vital. Long straight roads will generally be discouraged and a layout with good provision for pedestrian safety and traffic calming will be required. Developments should have regard to the *Traffic Management Guidelines 2003* published by the DoT, DTO & DoEHLG, *Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2012* and the *Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines 2007*, *The Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets 2013* and *NRA Design Manual for Roads and Bridges 2000, Road Link Design Volume 6, Section 1, Part 1, NRA TD9/12 February 2012, Geometric Design of Major/Minor Priority Junctions and Vehicular Access to National Roads Volume 6 Section 1 Part 1, NRA TA 85/11, Road Safety Audit Volume 5, Section 2 Part 2 NRA HD 19/12*, including any updated or superseding versions of these documents that may be published during the lifetime of this plan.

i) Cycling Facilities

Developments should consider the provision of adequate cycling facilities in accordance with the DTO Provision of Cycling Facilities: *National Manual for Urban Areas 1998, Smarter Travel: A Sustainable Transport Future-A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009-2020*, the *National Cycle Policy Framework 2009-2020* and *Galway County Walking and Cycling Strategy* (and including any updated/superseding documents). Well designed and secure bicycle parking areas should be provided for terraced housing.

j) Building Control and Fire Prevention

In addition to planning requirements, access, energy efficiency, building control and fire prevention requirements shall be considered.

k) Large Schemes

Proposals for large residential schemes (50 units or more) should be presented in the context of a Masterplan Scheme where access for residents to public transport, schools and childcare facilities, shops and recreational facilities are all clearly indicated. The proposed management and on-going maintenance of public space within the scheme should also be included.

l) Phasing of Development

A phasing programme is required for large/medium sized housing development (50+ units) detailing proposals for completing roads, open space, public lighting etc. in line with house completions.

m) Side Boundaries

In general, it is desirable that all new houses shall have a minimum clear distance of 2 meters to the side boundaries of the site and shall not have first floor side window living room oriented in such a manner so as to cause overlooking and loss of privacy to other residential properties. Both the front and rear boundaries of each site in addition to the overall site must be suitably delineated with the use of block walls either, plastered/not plastered and capped/uncapped being the normal requirement.

n) Private Open Space

Private Open Space shall be designed for maximum privacy and oriented for maximum sunshine and shelter. In general, a minimum back to back distance between dwellings of 22 meters shall apply in order to protect privacy, sunlight and avoid undue overlooking. Reductions will be considered in the case of single storey developments and/or innovative schemes where it can be demonstrated that adequate levels of privacy, natural lighting and sunlight can be achieved.

o) Landscaping

Landscaping plays an important part in the aesthetic appearance of a residential development. Site specific details of landscaping shall be included within a site layout map as part of a planning application.

p) Estate Names and Numbering

Residences in housing estates shall be numbered in accordance with a naming and numbering scheme to be agreed with the Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development. The estate name shall be prominently and clearly displayed at the entrance to the estate and the naming and numbering of individual cul-de-sacs shall also have appropriate signage. New developments shall be required to consult with Coiste Logainmneacha Chontae na Gaillimhe, the Galway County Council Placename Committee, and to identify an appropriate name for new development shall reflect the local heritage and character of the area.

q) Housing Layout Assessment

Where land is being developed for housing, the following considerations will be taken into account in the assessment of the proposal:

- The need for land and public services to be used economically;
- Appropriate density;
- The adequacy of present and future community facilities;
- Adequate privacy for individual dwelling units;
- The safety of proposed layouts and the capacity of existing roads to absorb future development;
- Adequate provision for car parking, open space, landscaping and planting;
- Integration with existing development and the preservation of features on site.

r) Taking in Charge Policies

Developers intending on having residential developments "Taken in Charge" by the Local Authority shall engage with the relevant personnel in the Planning Authority with regard to the requirements of same to ensure compliance with appropriate standards and the Grant of Permission and ensure an orderly handover of services, roads, etc on completion of the development. Individual wastewater treatment plants serving housing developments will not be taken in charge.

s) Unfinished Estates

The 2013 National Housing Development Survey identified a number of unfinished housing estates within County Galway. Emphasis will be placed on successfully completing and consolidating these estates in line with any in place Site Resolution Plans. Appropriate density controls, phasing and high design standards will be required in all settlements for future residential developments.

t) Crèche & Childcare Facilities

The Council shall comply with the provisions and recommendations of the *Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Childcare Facilities 2001* (or any updated/superseding guidelines).

u) Overshadowing

The Council will require daylight and shadow projection diagrams to be submitted in all proposals where buildings of a significant height are involved or where new buildings are located very close to adjoining buildings. This will provide an element of control in situations where overlooking occurs. In general there should be a distance of 22 metres between opposing first floor windows. This separation distance will be increased for developments over two storeys in height.

v) Bin Storage

Each residential unit shall have adequate storage for three wheeled bins. Residential units with no rear access shall provide adequate storage for the bins to the front of the development, in appropriately designed contained units. For residential units without suitable private open space a set of three x 240 litre bins shall be provided for a block of 10 apartments. All external storage including bin storage, oil tanks etc. shall be visually screened from the public areas with adequate screening by fencing or walls of appropriate height.

w) Densities

Development of higher level densities shall be appropriate to the site context and shall be assessed based on the merits of the proposal and subject to good design, compliance with both qualitative and quantitative standards, location, capacity of the site and infrastructure to absorb development, existing character of the area, established densities on adjoining sites, protection of residential amenities, proximity to public transport, etc. The Planning Authority may use its discretion in varying these density standards to take account of the character and context of the settlement.

Residential Density	Dwelling Units/Ha	Dwelling Units/Acre	Possible Appropriate Locations
Medium to High	35-50	14-20	Town centre or immediately adjacent to public transport hubs.
Low to Medium	15-35	6-14	Neighbourhood centres (typically within 400m walking distance of centre point), inner urban suburbs.
Low	5-15	2-6	Urban periphery, outlying lands, areas with capacity/environmental constraints.

Table 13.1 Densities within Settlements

DM Standard 3: Multiple Housing Schemes (Urban Areas)

The design of apartment type development should be guided by the DoEHLG document *Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for Apartments* (2007) (or as updated/superseded) in relation to all issues in relation to apartment development. In general apartments are only considered appropriate in town centres.

DM Standard 4: Family Granny Flats (Urban & Rural Areas)

The creation of a family flat to be occupied by a member of the occupant family is generally acceptable. Generally speaking the granny flat must be attached to the family home unless there are exceptional circumstances to warrant a separate detached unit.

13.4 Rural Residential Considerations

DM Standard 5: Rural Housing

In order to substantiate a rural housing need the following documentation will be required:

- Justification for location as proposed;
- Land registry maps and associated documentation;
- Proof of local connection to an area;
- Any other details that may be deemed necessary at time of application by the Planning Authority.

DM Standard 6: Assimilation of Development into Landscape

All permissible buildings should avoid locally obtrusive elevated locations and should be located on mid slopes or lower slopes of rising ground where possible. Development should seek to preserve traditional field patterns and established hedgerow and woodland. A visual impact assessment may be required where the proposal is located in an area identified as "Focal Points/Views" in the Landscape Character Assessment of the County or in Class 4 and 5 designated landscape sensitivity areas.

DM Standard 7: Site Size for Single Houses Using Individual On-Site Waste Water Treatment Systems

A minimum site size of 2000m² is generally required for a single house so as to provide for adequate effluent treatment, parking, landscaping, open space and maintenance of rural amenity. For house sizes greater than 200m² the site size shall be increased by 10m² for each 1m² of house area above 200m². Special consideration will be given to existing houses and to proposed developments who can demonstrate Rural Housing Need and comply with EPA guidelines where the minimum size is not totally achievable.

DM Standard 8: Landscaping

All planning applications must be accompanied by a landscaping plan.

13.5 Guidelines for Employment Use

DM Standard 9: Industrial/Commercial/Enterprise/Retail (Urban Areas)

Industrial, commercial enterprise and retail development will be required to satisfy minimum requirements for design, layout, access, landscaping, tree planting, boundary treatment, water supply, surface water disposal, wastewater disposal, solid waste, screened storage areas, fire safety, odour control, emissions control, lighting, parking, manoeuvring space, loading and unloading space, energy

efficiency and biodiversity. Care should be taken in the laying out of parking areas to avoid conflict between the movements of customer's vehicles, goods vehicles and pedestrians.

Commercial Developments

Commercial developments shall be subject to the proper planning and development of the area, specifically the following requirements:

- *Advertising Signs* - Advertising signs shall be confined to the name of the establishment being painted on or affixed to the façade of the building and illuminated, if required, from an external light source so arranged as not to cause glare to road users or intrusion to adjacent property owners;
- *Operating Times* - In the case of permitted hot food "take aways" closing time shall be 12.30am;
- *Security Shutters* - Roll down shutters placed externally on the front façade shall not be permitted. Any necessary security screens shall be inside the shop windows;
- *Site Coverage*:
 - For single storey or 6m high, shall not normally exceed 75%;
 - For two storey or 9m high, shall not normally exceed 60%;
 - For three storey or 12m high, shall not normally exceed 50%.

Industrial Development

There shall be a presumption that only industrial processes of appropriate size and whose nature will not cause nuisance or injury to the predominant residential environment of towns and villages, shall be permitted. Industrial development shall be subject to the proper planning and development of the area, specifically the following requirements:

- *Hours of Operation* - The hours of industrial operation will be controlled where they are likely to result in harm to environmental amenities including residential amenity;
- *Noise Levels* - Noise levels shall not exceed 55 dB (a) Leq when measured at the boundary of the site;
- *Waste Management/Storage* - Provision shall be made on site in a screened compound for short-term waste and segregation storage pending collection and disposal. There must be adequate provision for storage of segregated waste (bio-waste/dry recyclables/residual waste) pending collection;
- *Advertising Signs* - Advertising signs shall be confined to the name of the establishment being painted on or affixed to the façade of the building and illuminated, if required, from an external light source so as not to cause glare to road users or intrusion to adjacent property owners;
- *Density* - Site coverage shall not normally exceed 75% nor shall plot ratio exceed 1:2;
- *Landscaping* - A comprehensive professionally prepared planting scheme for the site shall be necessary.

The Planning Authority shall also consult relevant Local Area Plans where appropriate that may relate to industrial/commercial/enterprise and retail sites including the site coverage, plot area ratio and public open space requirements.

DM Standard 10: Shopfronts

Traditional shop front designs and name plates over shop windows should be preserved. The Council will generally require that new shop front designs be in keeping with the existing character, especially in town centres and villages. Large areas of glass shall be subdivided by vertical glazing bars and shop windows shall generally have a minimum stall riser height of 0.7m above the ground level. The Council will actively discourage the removal of features or alterations to existing shop fronts where they are considered to be of historical or architectural interest. A sympathetic well-designed modern intervention will usually be preferable to an ill proportioned imitation of a traditional shopfront. National chain shops, which have adopted a corporate image, will not necessarily be allowed to use their standardised shopfront design, corporate colours and materials. The Council shall encourage the retention and reinstatement of separate entrances to upper level residences.

DM Standard 11: Petrol Filling Stations

Petrol filling stations will be subject to the following requirements:

a) Location

The preferred location for petrol filling stations is within the 50-60kph speed limit of all settlements.

b) Road Frontage & Access

In general a minimum road/street frontage of 30 meters shall be required. This may be reduced where the development can demonstrate compliance with the required sight distances for various road categories at the entrances/exits of the proposed development.

- A low wall of an approximate height of 0.6 metres shall be constructed along the frontage with allowance for two access points each 8 metres wide;
- The pump island shall generally be not less than 7 metres from the footpath/road boundary.

c) Lighting and Signage

- All external lighting should be directed away from the public road and a proliferation of large illuminated signs will not be permitted;
- No signage cluster shall be permitted.

d) Car Wash

- Any car wash proposals will require a discharge licence.

e) Permissions

- All petrol filling station applications including improvement or extension will require Autotrack Analysis, TTA and Safety Audit & compliance with DM Standard 21: Building Lines.

13.6 Guidelines for Rural Enterprise and Rural Tourism

DM Standard 12: Rural Enterprise

The Council will consider rural enterprises, and resource development (such as agriculture, agri-food sector, agri-tourism, commercial fishing, aquaculture, marine tourism, forestry, bio-energy, the extractive industry, recreation, cultural heritage, marine enterprise sector, research and analysis) and renewable energy resources (such as wind/ocean energy) in rural and coastal areas within the County subject to considerations of proper planning and sustainable development and shall include the following:

a) Existing Buildings

The conversion of existing farm buildings in rural areas for small scale employment purposes will be considered subject to policy.

b) Agriculturally Related Industry

Agriculturally related industry, involving processing of farm produce where it is unsuited to an urban situation and is environmentally sustainable.

c) Farm-Related Business

Business directly related to farming, such as the servicing and repair of farm machinery, land reclamation, drainage work, agricultural contracting etc., where it will not give rise to adverse environmental effects, have safe access and not be prejudicial to residential amenity.

DM Standard 13: Tourism Infrastructure Development and Holiday Villages

While seeking to ensure that most tourism development locates in or close to towns and villages, the Council recognises that by its nature, some tourism development may require other locations. Developments that may be open to consideration outside settlement centres include: indoor and outdoor recreation facilities, e.g. golf courses, swimming, angling, sailing/boating, pier/marina development, equestrian and pony trekking routes, adventure/interpretative centres and associated ancillary uses, tourist related leisure facilities including walking and cycling.

In these circumstances the Council shall promote the reuse of existing buildings outside of settlements for holiday homes/guest accommodation where it can be demonstrated that the redevelopment work is bona fide (replicates and/or is similar in scale and design to the existing building) and will not have a significant adverse impact on the environment.

a) Tourism Infrastructure Development

The Council recognises that golf courses and certain other tourism infrastructure facilities may require ancillary facilities (e.g. club houses, hotel, holiday or short term letting residential accommodation/development) to ensure long term viability. Where the provision of such facilities meet the other requirements of the County Development Plan as set out and the requirements of proper planning and sustainable development, the Council will consider the provision of same subject to the submission of the following:

- Comprehensive justification of need for the facility;
- Overall master plan of the facility;
- Documentary evidence of compliance with the other requirements of the Development Plan.

b) Holiday Villages

Holiday villages shall have regard to the following:

- The scale of the development should be of modest proportions and should relate to the size of the settlement;
- The design of the scheme should be to a high standard and should include the preservation of boundary characteristics and significant site features as well as car parking provision, segregated waste storage area, public lighting;
- In general, stand alone holiday villages or new tourism facilities which cannot be demonstrated to be connected to existing settlements shall not be permitted in the open countryside. In exceptional cases, where it can be demonstrated that facility is dependent on physical or locational constraints which are site specific, consideration may be given to such facilities;
- All new developments must have regard to the *Galway Design Guidelines for the Single Rural House*.

DM Standard 14: Camping and Caravan Sites

Any proposed caravan or camping sites shall have regard, in scale and layout design, to the existing character of the village and its residential amenity. An operational management plan shall be submitted with the necessary planning application. The Planning Authority will consider appropriate extensions to existing facilities.

13.7 Guidelines for Community Facilities

The Council shall seek to ensure that community facilities are provided in tandem with housing developments as well as ensuring there is an adequate proximity to all essential services such as shops.

DM Standard 15: Schools

Applications for educational provision shall comply with the requirements of technical guidance documents published by the Department of Education and Skills (see www.education.ie) and the Local Authority including '*Provision of Schools and the Planning System: A code of Practice for Planning Authorities (DES, DEHLG, 2008)*).

Existing Educational Sites

Lands adjacent to existing schools should where possible be protected for possible future educational use to allow for expansion of these schools, if required, subject to site suitability and agreement of the various stakeholders.

DM Standard 16: Community Facilities

In assessing planning applications for example leisure facilities, sports grounds, playing fields, play areas, community halls, organisational meeting facilities, medical facilities, childcare facilities and other community orientated developments, regard will be taken of considerations such as:

- Overall need in terms of necessity, deficiency and opportunity to enhance or develop local facilities;
- Practicalities of site location in terms of relating to uses, impact on local amenities, desirability and accessibility;
- The potential multifunctional use of community facilities;
- Conformity with the requirements of appropriate legislative guidelines e.g. childcare facilities;
- The Planning Authority supports the retention of existing school sites for community use once the existing school has been relocated to an appropriate site. The existing site could be redeveloped as a multi-purpose community centre providing a range of facilities for the local community, including community meeting rooms, youth facilities, games rooms, senior citizens facilities, sports and cultural facilities. The facility should have safe access for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists. Safe public parking/ bus stop should be provided in close proximity as appropriate.

DM Standard 17: Nursing Home/Care Facilities & Specialist Housing

In general, nursing home and care facilities should be integrated wherever possible into the established residential areas, where there is adequate wastewater capacity and where residents can expect reasonable access to local services.

In determining planning applications nursing home developments and for change of use of a residential dwelling or other buildings to nursing/elder care home, a range of factors will be considered including:

- Whether located within appropriately zoned lands;
- Compliance with the standards as laid down in *Care Settings for Older People in Ireland 2009* (or any updated or superseding document);
- The effect on the amenities of adjoining properties;
- Adequate off street parking;
- Suitable private open space;
- Proximity to local services and facilities;
- The size and scale of the facility proposed – the scale must be appropriate to the area;
- The ambulant capacity of the residents.

13.8 Guidelines for Transportation, Roads, Parking, Loading and Storage

DM Standard 18: Access to National and Other Restricted Roads for Residential Developments

The provision of residential access to National and other Restricted Roads will have regard to the following:

- Chapter 5: Roads and Transportation of the GCDP 2015-2021 (and any other applicable policies, objectives, standards or guidelines in the plan) and to any specific objectives as contained within each of the Local Area Plans;
- Part 4, Article 28(j)(i) of the *Planning and Development Regulations 2001*;
- DECLG *Spatial Planning and National Road Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2012*;
- *Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines 2007*;
- *Road Link Design*, Volume 6, Section 1, Part 1, NRA TD9/12, Feb 2012.
- *Geometric Design of Major/Minor Priority Junctions and Vehicular Access to National Roads*, Volume 6, Section 2, Part 6, NRA TD 41-42/11, November 2011;
- *Guidance on Minor Improvements to the National Roads*, Volume 6, Section 1, Part 1, NRA TA 85/11;
- *Road Safety Audit*, Volume 5, Section 2, Part 2, NRA HD 19/12; and
- *Metric Handbook Planning & Design Data* (3rd Edition). Including any updated/superseding versions of the above listed documents that may be published during the lifetime of the plan.

Road construction and other services will generally be required to comply with the current edition of *Recommendations for Site Development Works in Housing Areas* published by DoEHLG.

The following requirements shall apply to the provision of residential access to National and other Restricted Roads:

Housing Need Eligibility

a) Residential development along National Roads will be restricted outside the 50-60kmp speed zones in accordance with the *DoECLG Spatial Planning and National Road Guidelines (2012)*.

Consideration shall be given to the need of farm families to live on the family holding on a limited basis and a functional need to live at this location must be demonstrated. Where there is an existing access, the combined use of same must be considered and shown to be technically unsuitable before any new access can be considered. Access via local roads shall always be the preferred access.

b) Proposed access onto any restricted Regional Road outside the 50-60kmp speed zones shall be restricted to members of the farm family on the family holding and must be accompanied by a justification for the proposed access including an assessment of the scope for sharing an access and/or achieving access onto an alternative minor road. In the case of multiple housing needs within the family, a housing layout which avoids ribbon development along a road and which provides for a single access only shall be considered and will only be permitted based on a safety assessment of traffic volumes and the nature of the receiving roads environment. This may require the upgrading and/or relocation of the existing entrance to serve the combined development. The Planning Authority shall be informed of the anticipated housing need of the farm family in the first instance to help determine the optimum location for the family cluster and the location of the access point.

c) An Enurement condition will be attached to grants of planning permission for the above

DM Standard 19: Access to National and Other Restricted Roads for Commercial & Other Developments

Commercial development along National Roads and Other Restricted Roads will be restricted outside the defined settlement centres or the Local Area Plan boundaries as follows:

a) Class I Control Roads

In general, commercial and industrial development shall be prohibited outside the 50/60kph speed limits of National Routes. Consideration will be given to substantiated cases for extension and intensification of existing establishments and to the provision of park and ride facilities. All existing and proposed National Roads are included under the Class 1 Control Roads designation.

b) Class II Control Roads

Commercial, industrial and community facilities development and land use shall be restricted to essential needs, in the particular locality, of agriculture, tourism infrastructure, fisheries, forestry, park and ride facilities or existing extractive industries, and where these cannot be in the opinion of the Planning Authority, be reasonably located along other non-listed regional or local roads. All restricted regional roads are included under the Class 2 Control Roads designation. Restricted Regional Roads are listed hereunder:

	Road Description	Route No.
1	N6 - Ballinasloe to City Boundary North of Oranmore	R446
2	N18 - County Boundary to Gort	R448
3	Tuam-Bearnaderg-Horseleap	R332
4	Galway – An Spidéal-Ballinahown Cross	R336
5	Galway – Carnmore-Monivea	R339
6	Derrydonnell-Athenry	R348
7	Headford -Tuam	R333
8	Ballinalsoe - Portumna	R355
9	Ballinalsoe - Portumna	R358

Table 13.2 Restricted Regional Roads

DM Standard 20: Sight Distances Required for Access onto National, Regional & Local Roads

Vehicular entrances and exit points must be designed by the developer as part of a planning application with adequate provision for visibility so that drivers emerging from the access can enjoy good visibility of oncoming vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians. Where a new entrance onto a public road is proposed, the Planning Authority must consider traffic conditions and available sight lines. Road junction visibility requirements shall comply with *Geometric Design of Major/Minor Priority Junctions and Vehicular Access to National Roads*, Volume 6, Section 2, Part 6, NRA TD 41-42/11, November 2011 (including any updated/ superseding document).

The Sight Distances required for Access onto National Primary and Secondary Roads are set out below:

Design Speed and Sight Distance	Sight Distance required for the following Design Speed on The Major Road in kph(mph)						
	100	85	70	60	50	42	
Design Speed	(62)	(53)	(44)	(37)	(31)	(25)	
Y Distance on National Primary and Secondary Roads	215	160	120	90	70	50	

Table 13.3 Sight Distances required for Access onto National Primary and Secondary Roads

Sight Distances required for Access onto Regional Roads are set out below:

Design Speed	100	85	70	60	50	40	30
Y Distance	160	120	90	70	60	45	33

Table 13.4 Sight Distances required for Access onto Regional Roads

DM Standard 21: Building Lines

A setback of buildings is required in the interests of residential amenity, rural amenity, public safety and to allow for any future road widening or realignment. In general, the following minimum building lines are necessary for the various routes:

a) Motorways/Interchanges

90 metres from the existing or proposed realigned carriageway surface edge.

b) National Primary and Secondary Routes

35 metres from the existing or proposed realigned carriageway surface edge and former national routes which are now classified as regional routes.

c) Regional Routes

25 metres from the existing or proposed realigned carriageway surface edge.

d) Local Roads

15 metres from the existing or proposed realigned carriageway surface edge.

e) Urban Roads and Streets

Building lines will be related to the location of the building in the town or village, i.e. village streets, housing estate, cluster development.

f) General

In general, where the capacity, width, surface condition or alignment of the road is deemed inadequate, development will not be favoured.

DM Standard 22: Parking Standards

Car parking should be located to the rear of building lines where possible. Large areas of car parking should be accompanied by a landscaping plan to mitigate the visual impact of same. In assessing applications for change of use or for replacement buildings within towns and villages, an allowance will be given for former site use in calculating the car parking requirements generated by the new development. In relation to infill sites and sites adjacent to public transport corridors or civic parking facility, a flexible application of standards will be considered. In addition to car parking, sufficient space will be required within a development site for all service vehicles necessary for the operation of the business or building, including drop-off areas, loading/unloading areas etc. In relation to Car Parking Design Standard Dimensions refer to Section 16 of the DoEHLG/DoT/DTO *Traffic Management Guidelines* and to the *Metric Handbook Planning and Design Data* (3rd Edition).

The following parking requirements will be applied for different types of development:

a) Dual Use Parking and Mixed Use Developments

The Council will encourage the provision of dual use parking areas where peak times of users do not coincide. In mixed use developments it may therefore not be necessary to meet full parking standards where it can be shown that shared parking is viable.

b) School Parking

All applications for new schools and where possible extensions to schools will be required to prioritise access safety and will indicate safe access and egress to the school for pupils, parents and students. A Road Safety Audit which should cover the public-private interface will be required in some cases. Drop off facilities will be required in accordance with Department of Education & Skills Guidelines. Off road parking for teachers and bus/car collection will be indicated in all cases as well as secure bicycle parking facilities.

c) Parking in Residential Areas

In general, residential layouts should not be dominated by car parking along access roads. New residential development should take account of the following criteria:

- Car parking for detached and semi-detached housing should be within the curtilage of the individual house site;
- Car parking for apartments and terraced housing should be within the curtilage of the individual house site.

d) Car Parking Standards

The Table 13.5 illustrates the car parking standards for different types of development:(It should be noted that a flexible approach to these standards may be applied where such a case is substantiated, there is no traffic safety issue, and it is clearly demonstrated to the Planning Authority in the interest of proper planning and development, that the standard should be adjusted to facilitate the site specific context).

Development	Car Parking Standard
Dwellings/Apartments (1-3 bedrooms)	1.5 Spaces Per Dwelling
Dwellings/Apartments (4+ bedrooms)	2 Spaces Per Unit
Shops (<250 sq.m gross)	1 car space per 24m ² of gross floorspace
Shops (250 -1000 sq m gross)	1 car space per 18m ² of gross floorspace
Large Stores (>1000 sq m gross)	1 car space per 12m ² of gross floorspace
Banks, Financial Institutions	1 car space per 14m ² of gross floorspace
Offices (Town Centre)	1 car space per 25m ² of gross floorspace
Office Park	1 car space per 20m ² of gross floorspace
Industry/Manufacturing/Light Industry	1 car space per 33m ² of gross floorspace
Warehousing	1 car space per 100m ² of gross floorspace
Garages	1 car space per 50m ² of gross floorspace
Car Show Rooms	1 car space per 50m ² of gross floorspace
Cash & Carry	1 car space per 100m ²
Theatre/Cinema/Church/Stadium	1 car space per 3 seats
Hotels/Guest Houses (Excluding Function Rooms)	1 car space per bedroom
Hostel/Motel	1 car space per bedroom or 1 car spaced per 10 bed dormitory.
Lounge/Bar	1 car space per 10m ² or public floorspace
Restaurants	1 car space per 10m ² or public floorspace
Leisure Centre	1 car space per 50m ² of gross floor area
Cafe	1 space per 10m ² dining area+
Takeaways	1 car space per 18m ² gross floor area
Conference Centres	1 car space per 25m ²
Function Room/Dance Halls/Clubs	1 car space per 3m ²
Playing Fields/Sports Clubs	20 car spaces per pitch/2 spaces per court
Swimming Pool	5 car spaces per 100m ²
Gym	1 car space per 10m ²
Community Centre	1 car space per 10m ²
*Primary Schools	1 car space per classroom
*Secondary Schools	2 car spaces per classroom
Nursing Homes	1 car space per 2 bedrooms
Hospitals	To be agreed with the Council
Funeral Home	1 space per 6m ²

*Childcare Facilities	1 car parking space per staff member + 1 car parking space per 4 children
Clinics and Group Medical Practices	2 car spaces per consultant
Churches/Religious Buildings	1 space per 6 seats

Table 13.5 Car Parking Standards

*A setdown area may be appropriate in certain circumstances.

e) Disabled Parking Requirements

Car parking provision shall be provided for the disabled and mobility impaired in all car-parking developments and should be located in the most convenient locations for ease of uses. The minimum criteria for such parking provisions are detailed in the National Disability Authority Guidelines *Building for Everyone* published in 2002 (including any updated/superseding document).

f) Bicycle Parking Standards

In compliance with Smarter Travel Policies, secure cycle parking facilities shall be provided in new office, residential, retail and employment generating development. Larger developments should provide a broad range of facilities for cyclists to encourage increased cycle usage, including cycle parking facilities, lockers, changing rooms and shower facilities.

Bicycle parking shall be located in a prominent position within 30m of the facility served. A bicycle parking bay shall be 0.8m wide and 1.8m long. The bicycle park should have a shelter and be signposted. Provision must be made in the development for bicycle parking spaces in accordance with the standards outlined within *The National Cycle Manual, by the National Transport Authority*, in particular Section 5.5.7 which deals with the allocation of cycle parking for developments.

DM Standard 23: Controls for Signage along Public Roads

The following requirements will be applied in respect of signage along public roads:

a) Licensing System

The Planning Authority will operate a licensing system for all signs and structures on public roads.

b) Rural Areas

Advertising signs will not be permitted along roads in rural areas outside the boundaries of towns and villages save for a limited number, which relate to heritage or tourist attractions and which are of national interest.

c) Towns, Villages & Settlements Areas

Within towns, villages and settlement areas, no signage will be permitted where it may constitute a hazard or obstacle for pedestrians or road users or where the location of such signage may obscure sight distances at junctions or cause undue or necessary distraction to road users. The proliferation of non-road traffic signage on and adjacent to all roads outside of the 50-60kmh speed limit area shall be avoided in the interest of traffic safety and visual amenity, in accordance with the *Spatial Planning and National Road Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2012* (or any updated/superseding document). Signs should not impair the setting of any archaeological or historical site or any proposed or protected building or structures within an Architectural Conservation Area (ACA).

d) Fingerpost Signs

The system for fingerpost signs, which relate to premises, and are located away from major routes will operate on the basis of any future policy document prepared by Galway County Council in relation to finger post signs. Signage in the Gaeltacht shall be in the Irish Language only.

DM Standard 24: Traffic Impact Assessment, Traffic & Transport Assessment, Road Safety Audit & Noise Assessment

All significant development proposals, or those that the Planning Authority consider would pose a safety risk or traffic impact shall be accompanied by road safety audits and transport and traffic assessments. These shall include a consideration of the cumulative impact of development on the road network.

This shall be guided by the following:

a) Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA) & Road Safety Audit (RSA)

Require all planning applications for significant development proposals to be accompanied by a TTA and RSA to be carried out by a suitably competent consultant, which are assessed in association with their cumulative impact with neighbouring developments on the road network.

Guidelines in relation to the TTA are provided in the *Traffic Management Guidelines* as published by the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government (DoEHLG) Dublin Transportation Office (DTO) and the Department of Transport (DoT). Guidance as provided in the *NRA Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines 2007* (and any updated/superseding documents). In relation to a Road Safety Audit guidance is provided in the NRA's *DMRB HD19/12 Road Safety Audit*. The Guidelines also include recommendations on the requirement for sub-threshold traffic and transport assessments.

(Refer to the NRA website www.nra.ie).

b) Noise Assessment

Require all new proposed developments, within 300m of roadways with traffic volumes greater than 8,220 AADT to include noise assessment and mitigation measures if necessary with their planning application documentation.

DM Standard 25: Mobility Management Plans

All new developments and proposed extensions to existing developments should give consideration to limiting traffic generation as far as possible. Where medium to large scale residential, commercial, mixed use, business/enterprise or industrial developments are proposed a Mobility Management Plan will be required and should incorporate proposals for use of public transport, cycling, walking, car sharing, car pooling etc. as appropriate.

DM Standard 26: Pavement Finish of a Surface Abutting a Public Road

To prevent damage to the structure of a public road, Galway County Council require a developer to provide adequate road base with bitumen finish where the private access joins the public road surface. These works may require a road opening licence.

13.9 Guidelines for Infrastructure and Services

DM Standard 27: Surface Water Drainage & Flooding

Developments will be subject to the following requirements with regard to surface water drainage and flood prevention and management:

a) Surface Water Drainage

Drainage from paved surfaces may, after suitable treatment, be discharged to available watercourses or to adequate soakage areas on site. In any event, surface water shall not be permitted to flow on to the public road from any proposed development. Accesses and road frontage should be designed in such a manner as to deal with surface water and ensure that it does not impact on the public road. For rural houses, existing roadside drainage shall be maintained by the incorporation of a suitably sized drainage pipe. Each application shall be accompanied by design calculations or appropriate evidence to support the size of the pipe selected.

b) Surface Water Run-Off

Land uses shall not give rise to increases in the run-off characteristics above those that currently exist.

c) Sustainable Drainage Systems

The use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) shall be encouraged in new developments to minimise the risk of flooding and contamination and to protect environmental and water resources. The Council will seek to ensure applicants incorporate sustainable drainage systems for significant developments in both urban and rural areas and will encourage them for other developments.

SuDS is an approach that seeks to manage the water as close as possible to its origin by various engineering solutions that replicate natural drainage processes, before it enters the watercourse. The incorporation of SuDS techniques allows surface water to be either infiltrated or conveyed more slowly to water courses using porous surface treatments, ponds, swales, filter drains or other installations. SuDS should be designed to be cost-effective and require minimum maintenance.

d) Flooding

Development should not itself be subject to an inappropriate amount of flooding or exacerbate the risk of flooding at other locations. Development must so far as is reasonably practicable incorporate the maximum provision to reduce the rate and quantity of run-off. In particular, where appropriate:

- Hard surface areas (car parks. etc.) should be constructed in permeable or semi-permeable materials;
- On site storm water ponds to store and/or attenuate additional run-off from the development, should be provided.

e) Flood Risk Assessment

Where flood risk may be an issue for any proposed development, a flood risk assessment should be carried out that is appropriate to the scale and nature of the development and the risks arising. This shall be undertaken in accordance with the *DoEHLG Flood Risk Assessment Guidelines 2009* (or any superseding document). Applicants are requested to refer to the OPW National Flood Hazard Mapping Website, to the County Stage 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment undertaken for the County Development Plan and Stage 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessments undertaken for recently adopted and/or amended Local Area Plans where appropriate prior to submitting proposals for development.

f) Floodplains

Appropriately designed development that is not sensitive to the effects of flooding may be permissible in floodplains, provided it does not reduce the floodplain area or otherwise restrict flow across floodplains. Examples of such development might include park areas, sports pitches, certain types of industry warehousing, etc. designed to be flood resistant and/or sensitive. Such developments should only be permitted provided it incorporates adequate measures to cope with the over-existent flood risk, for example, adequate drainage systems, safety measures, emergency response facilities and/or warning and response systems, and where it is considered that flooding would not result in significant hardship/ financial loss or cost.

g) Watercourses

For developments adjacent to all watercourses of a significant conveyance capacity or where it is necessary to maintain the ecological or environmental quality of the watercourse, any structures (including hard landscaping) must be set back from the edge of the watercourse to allow access for channel clearing/ maintenance/vegetation. A minimum setback of 5-10m is required either side depending on the width of the watercourse.

Development consisting of the construction of embankments, wide bridge piers or similar structures will not normally be permitted in or across floodplains or river channels, as these structures restrict/obstruct flow and increase the risk of flooding to property and land upstream. It is considered necessary in exceptional cases to permit such structures, however they should be designed to minimise and/or compensate for any potential negative effects.

h) Flood Design Standards

All new development must be designed and constructed to meet the following minimum flood design standards:

- For urban/built up areas or where developments (existing, proposed or anticipated) are involved – the 100 year flood;
- For rural areas or where further developments (existing, proposed or anticipated) are not involved - the 25 year flood;
- Along the coast and estuaries – the 200 year tide level;
- Where streams, open drains or other watercourses are being culverted - the minimum permissible culvert diameter is 900mm (access should be provided for maintenance as appropriate).

DM Standard 28: Water Supply

The provision of a safe and reliable water supply is a requirement of development. If the water is supplied by a group water scheme, any planning application must be accompanied by a letter of consent to connection from the secretary of the scheme and in certain circumstances; the developer may be required to extend the main to the site. Where a bored well is necessary or more feasible, details of separation distances from treatment systems shall be in compliance with the standards in the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), *Code of Practice for Wastewater Treatment Systems for Single Dwellings*.

Private Bore Holes should comply with the Guidelines from The Institute of Geologist of Ireland publication 'Water Well Construction' www.igi.ie

The following should be submitted to the Planning Authority:

- A record of an appropriate test of the sustainable yield of the well;
- Documentation of the well construction, its yield and its water quality including a list of tested chemical and bacteriological parameters;
- A detailed account of the water treatment system that will be installed if necessary.

DM Standard 29: Effluent Treatment Plants

The suitability of a site for the treatment of wastewater shall be determined, in accordance with the criteria set down in the EPA Wastewater Treatment Manuals (1999, 2009) or any revision or replacement of these manuals or any guidelines issued by the EPA concerning the content of these manuals.

- For single houses the *EPA Wastewater Treatment Manuals-Treatment Systems for Single Houses 2009* (including any updated or superseding document) shall apply;
- For larger developments the *EPA Wastewater Treatment Manuals-Treatment Systems for Small Communities, Business, Leisure Centres and Hotels* shall apply.

The following requirements shall apply with respect to effluent treatment facilities:

a) Single Houses

Each dwelling house shall be serviced by its own septic tank or treatment plant and shall not share this facility with any other dwelling other than in exceptional circumstances.

b) Clustered Housing

In the case of clustered housing schemes, wastewater treatment plants shall be permitted provided that they are designed and built in accordance with EPA Treatment Manuals.

c) Certification

Certification will be required that septic tanks have been de-sludged in accordance with EPA Guidelines.

The following will be a requirement of Planning Permission:

- Design Details - Design calculations supporting the selection of a particular type and size of system;
- Maintenance - A maintenance agreement specifying associated terms and conditions;
- Certification - Certification that septic tanks have been de-sludged in accordance with EPA Guidelines.

DM Standard 30: Wind Farm Developments

Planning applications for wind farm development shall be in compliance with *DoEHLG Wind Energy Development Guidelines 2006* (including any new guidelines when issued) and the *County Galway Wind Energy Strategy (WES)*.

DM Standard 31: Electricity Transmission Lines

Electricity transmission lines are an essential and inevitable element in providing the necessary energy for economic and social progress. The development of electricity transmission lines shall be subject to the following:

a) Landscape Sensitivity

Seek to locate electricity transmission lines in non scenic amenity areas where possible, having regard to the Landscape Sensitivity Rating Assessment of the County. In instances where their location in a Class 4 (Special) or 5 (Unique) landscape category areas or in proximity to a National Monument, Protected Structure, Architectural Conservation Area (ACA) or within a focal point/view is essential, it shall be necessary to minimise their obstructiveness in as far as is practically possible. A Visual Impact Assessment (VIA) shall be required to be submitted with planning applications for these locations.

b) Amenity Impacts

New transmission lines should have regard to existing residential amenity and environmental designations and should mitigate against any significant diminution of views of special amenity value.

c) Applications

Applications for new transmission lines shall be accompanied by a justification statement of the regional importance of, and demonstrated need for, the proposed development in strengthening the electricity network in the region.

DM Standard 32: Telecommunications Masts

In order to facilitate the evaluation of development proposals for the erection of antennae and support structure with regard to the *DoEHLG, Planning Guidelines for Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures* (1996 including any updated/superseding document) and *DECLG Circular Pl 07/12* regarding the 1996 Planning Guidelines. While the current state of technology requires the construction of masts and antennae in the countryside the following standards will apply:

a) Landscape Sensitivity

In instances where telecommunications masts are essentially required in landscape sensitivity Class 4 (Special) or Class 5 (Unique), a Visual Impact Assessment shall be required with all planning applications for these locations.

b) Amenity Impacts

Masts and associated base station facilities should be located away from existing residences and schools.

c) Landscape Impacts

Masts should be designed and located so as to cause minimum impact on the landscape. If possible, sites

should be located within forest plantations. Access roads shall be permitted only where essential. Where provided, they should not scar the landscape on which they are located. Roads should follow the natural contours of the site in order to minimise their visual intrusion, and should be bordered with shrubs after construction.

d) Co-Location

Licensees shall be required to co-locate their services by sharing a single mast or, if necessary, locating additional masts in cluster form.

e) Security

Mast compounds should have security fencing and anti-climbing devices designed to local aesthetic and safety requirements.

f) Redundancy

In the event of the discontinuance of any mast installation the mast and its equipment shall be removed from the site and the land shall be reinstated.

All planning applications shall be required to furnish a statement of compliance with the International Radiation Protection Association (IRPA) Guidelines or the equivalent *European Pre-Standard 50166-2* in the interest of health and safety.

13.10 Guidelines for Agriculture, Mariculture, Forestry and Extractive Development

DM Standard 33: Agricultural Buildings

In dealing with planning applications for such buildings the Planning Authority will have regard to:

a) Design and Layout

The quality of design and layout of the farm complex. Where possible new buildings, shall be located within or adjoining the existing farmyard complex. Buildings shall be of minimum scale and use of muted coloured materials shall be encouraged.

b) Residential Amenity

The proximity of any existing dwelling house.

c) Public Road Access

The safe access to public roads.

d) Rural Landscape

The assimilation of the buildings into the rural landscape by means of appropriate siting, external colouring, screening and shelter belting.

DM Standard 34: Agricultural Effluent

The European Union (*Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters*) Regulations 2014 set out the requirements for storage of farm effluents and the minimum holding periods for storage of farm wastes. All soiled liquid waste shall be collected before being further treated or spread on land in suitable weather conditions.

The following will be a requirement of planning permission:

- Design calculations;
- Design calculations supporting the selection of a particular volume of storage and details of the spread area.

DM Standard 35: Agri-Tourism

The development of agri-tourism shall be subject to the following:

a) Ownership

Accommodation and supplementary businesses shall remain in the ownership of the farm family.

b) Location

In general, new buildings shall be proximate to the existing farmhouse.

c) Effluent Treatment

Adequate effluent treatment facilities shall be installed.

d) Access and Parking

Adequate on-site parking shall be provided and safe access shall be available to the public road.

e) Waste Management

Ensure the proper recovery and disposal of waste arising from agri-tourism.

DM Standard 36: Forestry Development

The provision and maintenance of the trees shall comply with the requirements of *Irish National Forestry Standard 2000* (including any updated/superseding document). Any proposals for forestry development should have regard to the following guidelines published by the Forest Service:

- Forestry and Landscape Guidelines;
- Forestry and Water Quality Guidelines;
- Forestry and Archaeology Guidelines;
- Forestry Biodiversity Guidelines;
- Forestry Harvesting and Environmental Guidelines.

DM Standard 37: Extractive Development

The following details shall be considered central to the determination of any application for planning permission for extractive development:

a) Guidelines

Compliance with the provisions and guidance, as appropriate, contained within Section 261 of the *Planning and Development Act, 2000* (as amended), by Section 74 and Section 75 of the *Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010*, the *DoEHLG Quarries and Ancillary Facilities Guidelines 2004* and the *EPA Guidelines for Environmental Management in the Extractive Sector 2006*. Where extractive developments may impact on archaeological or architectural heritage, regard shall be had to the *DAHG Architectural Conservation Guidelines 2011 and the Archaeological Code of Practice 2002* (including any updated/superseding documents) in the assessment of planning applications. Reference should also be made to the *Geological Heritage Guidelines for the Extractive Industry 2008* (including any updated/superseding documents).

b) Land Ownership

The extent of land ownership. Details should be submitted showing the proposed site in relation to all lands in the vicinity in which the applicant has an interest.

c) Deposits

The nature of all deposits. Details to be submitted to include: depths of topsoil, subsoil, over burden and material, at various points on the site; an indication of the type of minerals, which it is intended to extract; a statement as to whether the parent rock from which the mineral is extracted is suitable for other uses; and the estimated total quantity of rock and mineral, which can be extracted commercially on the site.

d) Methods

The methods of excavation and machinery to be used. Details to be submitted to include all proposed site development works, including; the proposed method of working; any existing or proposed areas of excavation; stages of work proposed; locations of any settling ponds, waste material and/or stockpiling of materials; methods for removing and storing topsoil, subsoil and overburden; etc.

e) Production

The quantification of production in a given time. Details to be submitted to include the proposed production process to be employed, all requirements for water, electricity and/or other inputs to the production process and any proposals for chemical or other treatments.

f) Mitigation

Methods to reduce environmental impact. Details to be submitted to include an assessment of potential impacts on water resources, residential and visual amenity (including noise, dust and vibration impacts), biodiversity and any other relevant considerations together with appropriate proposals for their mitigation.

Proposals for development, where appropriate should be accompanied by:

- A Surface Water Baseline Study of water courses in the vicinity of the site;
- A Hydro-Geological Assessment of the impact of groundwater flows in the area and the impact of well waters supplies in the area.

g) Access

Vehicle routes from site to major traffic routes and the impact on the adjoining road networks. Details should be included on the mode, number and weight of trucks or other vehicles being used to transport materials and any truck sheeting or washing proposals.

The Council may require a Traffic Impact Assessment and Road Safety Audit (to be prepared by an approved assessor) for all new development. The Council may require a Special Contribution in accordance with Section 48 of the *Planning and Development Act, 2000*, as amended, for upgrade/improvement works along the route corridor of the quarry, to facilitate the proposed development.

h) Rehabilitation

A scheme of rehabilitation and after care. Details to be submitted should include a report with plans and sections detailing: the anticipated finished landform and surface/landscape treatments, both of each phase and the whole excavation; quality and condition of topsoil and overburden; rehabilitation works proposed; the type and location of any vegetation proposed; proposed method of funding and delivery of restoration/reinstatement works; etc.

The Council will require that all proposals for development are accompanied by a detailed restoration plan and aftercare proposals which shall be progressed on a phased basis. The restoration plan shall ensure the landscape is restored with regard to its original character and with reference to the Landscape Character Assessment for County Galway 2002 and as incorporated within this plan. The restoration plan shall be accompanied by a detailed costing of the work by a qualified quantity surveyor.

The Council will apply a bond, as appropriate for the satisfactory completion of the restoration works. The site may be adapted for a variety of uses depending on the level of extraction and shall be in agreement with the Planning Authority and consideration of the local community.

i) Environmental Impact Study (EIS)

Any Environmental Impact Study including any remedial EIS required by statute. An EIS should ensure that all impacts in relation to heritage, environment, biodiversity, groundwater protection, etc are clearly addressed and appropriate mitigation measures are included.

j) Proximity

Proximity to other developments. Details to be submitted to include location of all existing developments in the vicinity of the site that might be affected by site development works, extractive operations and/or traffic movements generated.

k) Landscaping and Screening

Landscaping and screening proposals. Details to be submitted to include an indication of existing trees or other screening to be retained or removed and any proposed screening, grassing or planting of trees or shrubs and proposals for their maintenance.

l) Heritage and Biodiversity

Proposals in relation to heritage and biodiversity would include any recommendations for the site to be considered as part of the geological heritage of the County and any proposed measures with regard to the protection and promotion of the environment and biodiversity, including any proposals for rehabilitation. The Council will require an Ecological Impact Assessment for all proposals within or in the vicinity of an SPA, SAC or NHA. Where a quarry development falls within a conservation designation, the developer is advised to consult with the DECLG prior to making an application. Evidence of such consultation should be submitted to the Planning Authority at application stage. It shall also be a requirement that all new proposals that are likely to have an impact on SAC or SPA shall be screened for the need to undertake a Habitats Directive. The Council will require that the operator of the quarry shall put in place an Environmental Monitoring System, to monitor all environmental standards (noise, dust, blasting etc.) on an on-going basis.

m) Security of the Site

Security boundary/fence. Full details regarding securing the perimeter boundary of quarries shall be submitted and agreed by the Planning Authority as part of the planning process.

DM Standard 38: Construction and Demolition Waste

Where significant C&D waste is envisaged arising from a proposed development, the Council will seek the submission of a waste management plan for the construction phase of the development for the written agreement of the Council, which shall be in compliance with the *Best Practice Guidelines on the Preparation of Waste Management Plans for Construction & Demolition Projects*, by the DRHLG. All waste materials generated during both the construction and operational phases of development must only be collected by appropriately licensed waste contractors and disposed of in licensed waste facilities.

13.11 Guidelines for Heritage, Landscape and Environmental Management

DM Standard 39: Compliance with Landscape Sensitivity Designations

Subject to the provisions of the plan but in particular the settlement policies of Chapters 2&3 and the consequent restriction on development in rural areas, the control of permissible development shall be in accordance with the policies as they relate to the five sensitivity classes of landscape in Section 9.10.2.3 of this plan. It will deem the following types of development generally to be acceptable in the various areas of sensitivity as follows:

Class 1 – Low Sensitivity	All developments consistent with settlement policies.
Class 2 – Moderate Sensitivity	Various developments, which are of appropriate scale and design and are in compliance with settlement policies.
Class 3 – High Sensitivity	Few developments, including those with substantiated cases for such a specific location and which are in compliance with settlement policies.
Class 4 – Special	Restricted to essential residential needs of local households, family farm business and locally resourced enterprises.
Class 5 – Unique	Negligible alterations will be allowed only in exceptional circumstances.

The Council shall provide for the consideration of strategic infrastructure in all Classes.

It is accepted that the Islands around our coastline are special and require protection while at the same time accommodating local needs. Currently the landscape sensitivity rating for all of the Islands is Class 5 – Unique. However, consideration will be given to accommodating local housing needs, where the development would be in conformity with the provisions of the plan.

DM Standard 40: Environmental Assessments

The following measures shall be applied in respect of designated environmental sites:

a) Appropriate Assessment

Screening for Appropriate Assessment and/or Appropriate Assessment will be required with all applications where it is considered that the proposed development may impact (directly and indirectly), or in combination with other projects, on a Natura 2000 designated site i.e. a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) or a Special Protection Area (SPA), to inform decision making. The appropriate assessment shall be carried out in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and the *European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011* and shall identify and evaluate the direct and indirect effects, which the development would be likely to have upon the designated site.

b) Ecological Assessment

An Ecological Assessment may be required for small scale projects in other areas e.g. (proposed) Natural Heritage Areas, Ramsar Sites, Nature Reserves, National Parks) that may be considered environmentally sensitive and may have direct/indirect impacts on the natural heritage value of the area. The need for an ecological assessment should be discussed with the Planning Section prior to the submission of an application. The assessment should include consideration of impacts in relation to biodiversity, ecological linkages, water quality and drainage.

c) Environmental Impact Statement/Assessment

Under the EIA Directive the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment is required. The thresholds for such an assessment are listed in the *Planning and Development Regulations 2001* (as amended). An EIS may also be required for development proposals below the statutory thresholds; *EIA Guidance for Consent Authorities on Sub Threshold Development (2003)* is available in this regard. The Planning Authority may require the submission of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in accordance with the provisions of Part 10 of *Assessment the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended)*.

DM Standard 41: Field Patterns, Stone Walls, Trees and Hedgerows

Field patterns and associated stone walls, trees and hedgerows are an important part of the visual and environmental quality of rural areas and their removal and replacement with block walls and fencing leads to urban features in a rural environment. It can also have an effect on wildlife and lead to the removal of valuable hedgerows upon which wildlife depends. New developments will accordingly be subject to the following requirements in this regard:

a) Existing Features

Retain and incorporate existing field patterns and associated stone walls, trees and hedgerows into new development layouts wherever feasible.

b) Intervention

In general, only the minimum interference with existing field patterns, stone walls, trees and hedges shall be permitted.

c) Planting

The Council will also encourage the planting of native trees and hedgerows along all boundaries.

d) Hedgerows

Include consideration of native hedgerow with post and rail fencing along roadside frontages where existing hedgerow is being removed. Employ the appropriate management methods for the maintenance of roadside habitats to minimise damage (in particular to hedges) and observe the hedge cutting closed season.

DM Standard 42: Coastal Management and Protection

The following requirements shall be considered and applied where appropriate with respect to coastal management and protection:

a) Natural Processes

Where possible, developments shall ensure that the landward migration of coastal features, such as dunes and marshes, shall be facilitated as these features form an integral part of the coastal system - both physically and ecologically - and provide protection against wave energy through dissipation.

b) Sea Level Change and Flooding

New developments shall generally comply with the following approach to coastal management for sea level change:

- No new building or new development within 100m of 'soft' shoreline;
- No further reclamation of estuary land;
- No removal of sand dunes, beach sand or gravel;
- All coastal defence measures to be assessed for environmental impact.

c) Coastal Edge

In addition to the above, a general minimum horizontal setback of 30m from the foreshore field boundary line, for new development, or along the 3m natural contour line, whichever is the greatest, is to be created. Any planning applications within this setback must demonstrate that any development would not be subject to potential rising sea levels as a result of climate change including global warming, and must address any issues with regard to rising sea levels, with regard to the siting of any development. New developments should not restrict opportunities for providing public access to the foreshore. The coastal edge and coastal habitats shall be protected from destruction and degradation to ensure their roles as ecological corridors, coastal flooding and storm surge buffers are retained and enhanced, and developers proposing developments in the vicinity of this area will be requested to carry out an ecological plan that incorporates the natural vegetation and topography of the area.

DM Standard 43: Protected or Proposed Protected Structures

As a minimum requirement, the Planning Authority will require planning applications for works to protected structures or proposed protected structures to have regard to the following:

- Galway County Council's *Architectural Survey & Assessment Best Practice Guide*;
- *DAHG Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2011*;

The inclusion of a structure in the Record of Protected Structures does not preclude appropriate use or development. However, no works which would affect the character of the structure, or any element of it, which contributes to its special architectural heritage interest may be carried out to a protected structure without planning permission.

The following requirements shall be applied with respect to protected or proposed protected structures, as appropriate:

a) Conservation Measures

Proposals for development, which include a protected structure, will be required to incorporate measures to protect, conserve and enhance the character and appearance of the structure.

b) Development Works

Proposals for development involving material alteration or additions to a protected structure require planning permission and will be required to show that:

- It is compatible with and will not detract from the special character of the structure and its setting;
- It complements and reflects the design and character of surrounding buildings and area;
- Features of architectural or historic interest and the historic form and structural integrity of the structure are retained;
- Architectural features shall match those or be in keeping with the traditional detailing of the structure;
- Proposals for development that compromise the setting of protected structures or which will result in material alteration or demolition of structures will only be permitted where:
 - The structure is not capable of repair.
 - There is no compatible or viable alternative use for the structure.

c) Adjoining Development

Development on sites adjoining a protected structure will be required to demonstrate that:

- It will have no adverse impacts on the character or integrity of the protected structure or views to and from it;
- Owners and prospective owners of protected structures or proposed protected structures or structures located in Architectural Conservation Areas should consult with the Planning Authority in good time as to the appropriateness of proposed works or other developments, and seek competent advice on best practice for carrying out such works.

DM Standard 44: Architectural Conservation Areas

Owners and prospective owners and occupiers of protected structures or proposed protected structures or structures located in Architectural Conservation Areas should consult with the Planning Authority in good time as to the appropriateness of proposed works or other developments, and seek competent advice on best practice for carrying out such works.

The following requirements shall apply with respect to Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs):

a) Development Works

Proposals for development in an ACA that involves a new building, reuse or change of use and extensions will be required to:

- Conserve and enhance the character and appearance of the ACA;
- Respect the scale, massing, proportions, design and materials of existing structures;
- Retain important exterior architectural features that contribute to the character and appearance of the ACA.

b) Demolition

The demolition of a building within an ACA will be restricted unless the Council is satisfied that the structure or building does not contribute positively to the character or appearance of the ACA, or building or structure is beyond viable repair or reuse.

DM Standard 45: Archaeological Conservation and Preservation (Urban & Rural Areas)

The *National Monuments Acts 1930-2004* provide for the protection of archaeological heritage, including the establishment of a Record of Monuments and Places (RMP), which is a national inventory of archaeological sites and monuments. Some archaeological sites and monuments may also be of significant architectural heritage value and afforded dual protection as a Recorded/National Monument under the National Monuments Acts and as a protected structure under the *Planning and Development Acts*.

The Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht's full database of archaeological monuments can be accessed at www.archaeology.ie

In considering proposals for development, applicants are advised to consult the Archaeological Constraints Maps (available for viewing in the Planning Department) in order to ascertain whether their development is located in an area of archaeological potential. Developers are strongly advised to have pre-application discussions if their site is located in such an area. All planning applications for new development, redevelopment, any ground works, refurbishment and restoration, etc. within areas of archaeological potential or within close proximity to Recorded Monuments or within the historic towns of County Galway (Ardrahan, Athenry, Dunmore, Eyrecourt, Loughrea and Tuam) will take account of the archaeological heritage of the area and the need for archaeological mitigation. Any persons proposing to carry out works at or in relation to a recorded monument must give 2 months written notice to the Minister for Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht (DAHG).

Developers should give due consideration to the following:

- *Archaeology & Development: Guidelines for Good Practice for Developers*

DM Standard 46: Energy Efficiency in Buildings

Proposals for residential and commercial development to specify at planning application stage, proposals for a target percentage of electricity usage in new developments to be derived from renewable energy resources.

Require a performance based Building Energy Rating (BER) target for all new building developments greater than 10 dwellings or greater than 1,000m² floor area for non-residential and mixed developments.

Accordingly, it will be a requirement that all planning applications submitted to the Planning Authority shall include a statement from a competent and qualified person certifying that the proposed development conforms to the energy rating outlined above.

DM Standard 47: Mariculture

The following details shall be required as part of a planning application where appropriate with respect to coastal management and protection;

- The capacity of the shoreline to absorb its onshore facilities;
- Access roads;
- Car parking;
- Scale of traffic and size of vehicle using facility;
- Turning space required;
- Impact of traffic on public road;
- Waste disposal i.e. reject produce;
- Slipways;
- Moorings;
- Lighting;
- Cranes;
- Amenities in the area; and
- Any visual aids necessary to measure the impact.