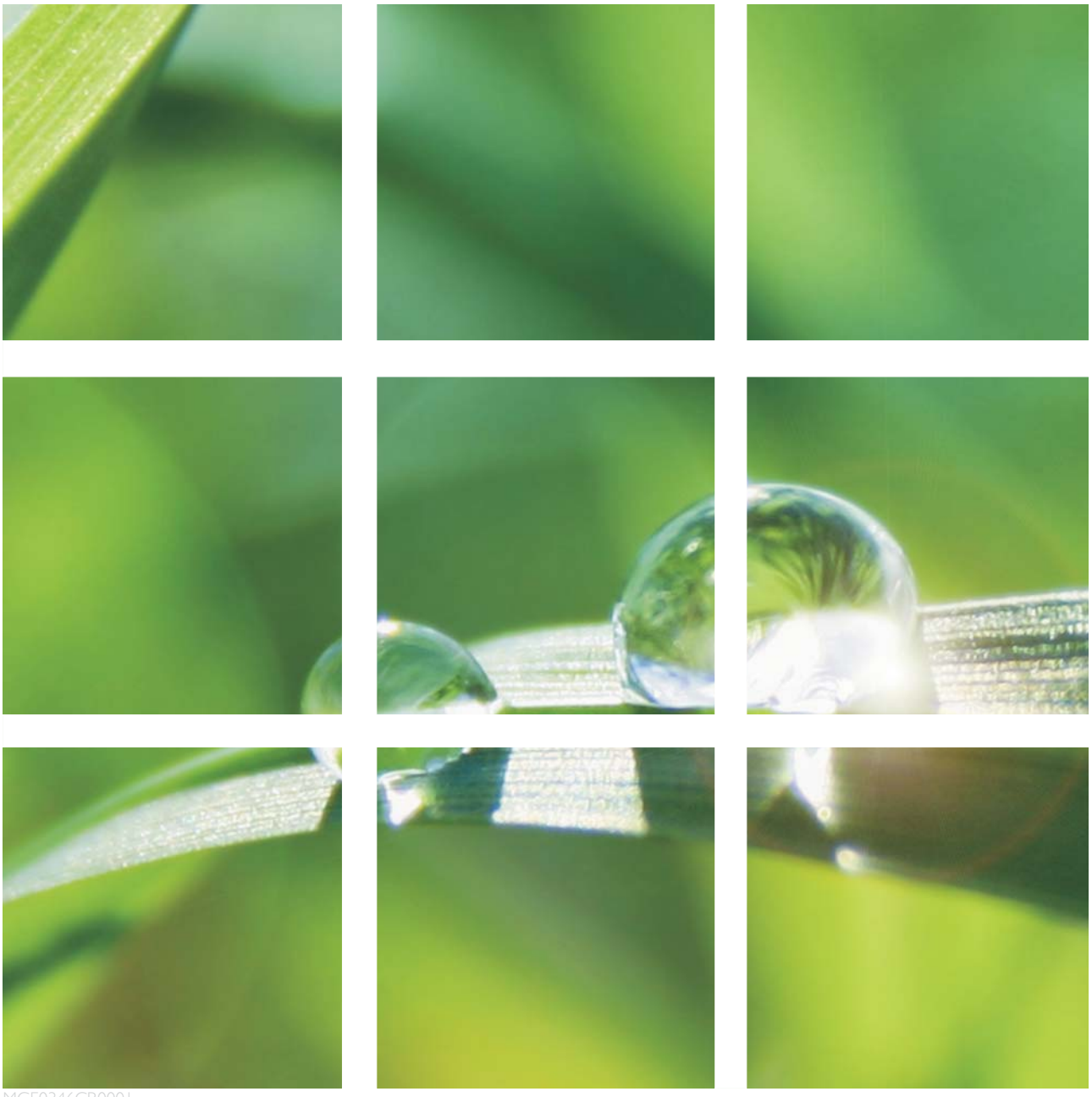
Gort Local Area Plan (2013 - 2019)
Screening for Appropriate Assessment and Natura Impact Report
Final report

August 2013



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Draft Gort Local Area Plan
2013 – 2019
Screening for Appropriate Assessment and Natura Impact Report
Final Report

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Summary

In February 2013 Galway County Council published a draft Gort Local Area Plan (LAP). The purpose of this Plan is to provide direction for the future growth, development and land use of the town of Gort from 2013 to 2019. The draft Plan included land use zonings that aim to direct appropriate development to relevant zonings within the lifetime of the Plan.

As part of the preparation of the draft LAP an Appropriate Assessment under the Habitat's Directive was undertaken. Initially a Stage 1 Screening Assessment was undertaken to evaluate whether or not the implementation of the plan without mitigation, was likely to result in significant effects to European Sites.

As part of this process all European Sites occurring within a 15km radius of the Plan area were identified. Once identified, an assessment was undertaken to determine which of these sites were located within the sphere of influence of the draft LAP. This was based upon identifying impact pathways linking the LAP to qualifying features of the European Sites. In total 28 European Sites were identified as occurring within a 15km radius of the LAP area and a number of these (i.e. including Lough Cutra SPA/cSAC and Coole-Garryland SPA/cSAC) were identified as occurring within the sphere of influence of the Plan. Once the European Sites occurring within the Plan's sphere of influence were identified the remainder of the Screening Assessment focused on establishing, in detail, how the Plan could potentially affect the qualifying features and conservation status of these European Sites.

The principal impacts identified included perturbations to the water quality of surface and groundwater as a result of inadequate capacity of the town's wastewater treatment plant.

The Screening Assessment concluded that, without mitigation, these potential impacts would have the potential to result in likely significant effects to the integrity and conservation status of European Sites.

The Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment followed on from the Screening Assessment by identifying which specific Policies and Objectives were likely to result in the types of negative impacts outlined in the Screening Assessments. Subsequent to this, other Policies and Objectives of the Plan whose function is to ensure that likely significant effects to the environment are avoided were outlined. These are referred to as Mitigatory Policies and Objectives and their presence in the draft LAP from the outset underpinned the precautionary approach that sought to avoid significant environmental effects during the development of the draft Plan. These mitigatory policies and objectives were reviewed to identify any gaps in the Plan where insufficient environmental safeguards where associated with potentially negative policies and objectives. Once reviewed, recommendations were made for the inclusion of further environmental safeguards within the Plan. These safeguards included recommended re-wording of existing mitigatory policies/objectives to further strengthen their protective environmental role or the recommendation of additional mitigatory measures in the form of new policies or objectives. Furthermore, recommendations were also made to re-word potentially negative policies and objectives so that their implementation would be subject to suitable environmental safeguards.

Upon completion of the draft Plan and supporting environmental assessments the Plan was put on public display in February/April 2013. Following the period of public display submissions were received from statutory consultees, private organisations and the general public. The issues raised during the submissions were considered and where appropriate recommended changes to the draft Plan and the NIR were outlined.

Following the review of submissions and the completion of the Manager's Report, Material Alterations to the draft Plan were proposed by Galway County Council. The Material Alterations were subjected to AA screening for likely significant effects on the conservation status of European Siteswhich resulted in one material alteration being considered to have the potential for significant effects on a European Site. A NIR Addendum was produced fully exploring the potential impacts on European Sites as a

result of the material alterations. The NIR Addendum is provided as **Annex A** at the end of this Final NIR.

The results of the Appropriate Assessment of the Material Alterations and the final Gort LAP concluded that the Plan will not result in likely significant effects to the conservation status of European Sites. Galway County Council's approach to land use in the Plan area, its commitment to the Habitats Directive and a range of mitigatory policies and objectives which form an integral part of the Plan provide sufficient environmental safeguards to ensure that the implementation of the adopted Gort LAP will not result in likely significant effects to European Sites or the environment in general.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

Galway County Council has prepared a Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2013 – 2019 to replace the Gort Local Area Plan, 2006-2012. The Plan has been prepared under the provisions of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2010 to develop and improve in a sustainable manner the environmental, social, economic and cultural assets of the town.

An important aspect of the development of the Local Area Plan is how the Plan may impact on European Sites designated for nature conservation, i.e. Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPA). Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora, better known as "The Habitats Directive", provides legal protection for habitats and species of European importance. Articles 3 to 9 provide the legislative means to protect habitats and species of Community interest through the establishment and conservation of an EU-wide network of sites known as Natura 2000. These are SACs designated under the Habitats Directive and SPAs designated under the Birds Directive (Conservation of Wild Birds Directive (79/409/ECC)).

Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive set out the decision-making tests for plans and projects likely to affect Natura 2000 sites (Annex 1.1). Article 6(3) establishes the requirement for Appropriate Assessment (AA):

'Article 6(3): *"Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the [Natura 2000] site but likely to have a significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subjected to an* ***appropriate assessment*** *of its implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives. In light of the conclusions of the assessment of the implications for the site and subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned and, if appropriate, after having obtained the opinion of the general public."*

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

This document provides a record of the Appropriate Assessment process for the Gort Draft Local Area Plan 2013 – 2019 and has been prepared with regard to the following guidance documents:

- Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities (2009). DEHLG,

- Managing Natura 2000 Sites – The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. European Commission (2000),

- Assessment of Plans and Projects Significantly Affecting Natura 2000 sites – Methodological Guidance of the Provisions of Articles 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats directive 92/43/EEC. European Commission (2001),

- Guidance on Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC – Clarification of the Concepts of: Alternative Solutions, Imperative reasons of Overriding Public Interest, Compensatory Measures, Overall coherence, Opinion of the Commission. European Commission (2007),

- Appropriate Assessment of Plans. Scott Wilson, Levett-Therivel sustainability Consultants, Treweek Environmental Consultants and Land Use Consultants (2006), and

- Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG) Circular Letter SEA 1/08 & NPWS 1/08 dated 15 February 2008.

1.2 STAGES OF THE APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

This document has been prepared in accordance with the European Commission Environment DG document "*Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Articles 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*". The guidance document provides a non-mandatory methodology for carrying out assessments required under Articles 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive and is viewed as an interpretation of the EU Commission's document "*Managing Natura 2000 sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC".* In addition, "*Appropriate Assessment Guidance for Planning Authorities"* was published by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in December 2009 (DEHLG, 2009) and amended in March 2010. Cognisance has been taken of this document in carrying out this assessment.

In complying with the obligations under Article 6(3) and with reference to the guidance documents mentioned above, this AA has been broadly structured as a stage by stage approach as follows:

1) Stage 1 – Screening for Appropriate Assessment

   - Description of the plan;

   - Identification of relevant Natura 2000 sites potentially affected;

   - Identification and description of individual and cumulative impacts likely to result from implementation of the Plan;

   - Assessment of the significance of the impacts identified above on site integrity. Exclusion of sites where it can be objectively concluded that there will be no significant effects.

2) Stage 2 –Appropriate Assessment

   - Description of the Natura 2000 sites that will be considered further in the AA;

   - Description of significant impacts on the conservation feature of these sites likely to occur from the Plan;

   - Mitigation measures; and

   - Conclusions.

The Habitats Directive promotes a hierarchy of avoidance, mitigation and compensatory measures. In the first instance, the Plan should aim to avoid any negative impacts on European sites by identifying possible impacts early in the plan-making, and writing the plan in order to avoid such impacts. Following that, mitigation measures should be applied, if necessary, during the AA process to the point where no adverse impacts on the site(s) remain. If the Plan is still likely to result in adverse effects, and no further practicable mitigation is possible, then it is rejected. If no alternative solutions are identified and the Plan is required for imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI test) under Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, then compensation measures are required for any remaining adverse effect.

1.3 TERMINOLOGY

A number of different terms have been used in the recent past to describe the process and outputs associated with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. These include Appropriate Assessment, Habitats Directive Assessment, HDA, Habitats Directive Assessment Report, Natura Impact Statement and Natura Impact Report.

In an effort to provide consistency and transparency in the planning process and to come into line with the terminology used in the most recent DEHLG guidance, it has been decided to use just two terms throughout this document.

For the purposes of this report the following terms have been adopted:

- **Appropriate Assessment (AA)** has been used to refer to the process and includes the various stages outlined in Section 1.2 above,

- **Screening for Appropriate Assessment** has been used to describe the first stage of the process where the information necessary for the competent authority to assess whether Appropriate Assessment of the Plan needs to be carried out,

- **Natura Impact Report (NIR**) has been used to refer to the output from the AA process and includes the information necessary for the competent authority to carry out an appropriate assessment of the implications of the Plan.

It should also be noted that the Local Area Plan also uses the term Habitats Directive Assessment (HDA) in addition to the terms Appropriate Assessment and Natura Impact Report to describe the process and outputs associated with Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive. These terms are used interchangeably throughout the Local Area Plan.

1.4 CONSULTATION & REVIEW

Written consultation has been undertaken with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DAHG), the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (DCENR), Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (DAFF), Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG) and Galway City Council (GCC) at the stage of publication of the Background Issues Paper in February 2012 prior to the development of the Draft Gort LAP.

A meeting was held with NPWS in order to highlight potential issues which may give rise to significant impacts on the conservation objectives of any relevant European sites.

The Draft Gort Local Area Plan process is an iterative process, and similarly, Appropriate Assessment is an iterative process, and has assessed the Plan at all pre-draft and draft stages. The above

mentioned consultees provide an independent formal review of the Appropriate Assessment process at all pre-draft and draft stages, and adjudicate and report on the Appropriate Assessment process and findings. As such, this Appropriate Assessment is not (and should not be viewed as) an audit at the end of the Local Area Plan process.

Following a review of this Assessment of the draft LAP further consultation will be undertaken with the above statutory bodies, the public and other interested organisations.

2 STAGE 1 - SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

2.1 SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF THE GORT LAP

The overarching policies and objectives of the Galway County Development Plan (CDP) will apply to development within the LAP boundary, including the development management standards set out in Chapter 11 of the CDP. The draft LAP identifies specific policies and objectives applicable to Gort in order to facilitate land use in a manner that will promote proper planning and sustainable development. Key issues comprise land use management, residential development, social and community development, economic development, transportation infrastructure, utility and environmental infrastructure, urban design and landscape, built and cultural heritage, and natural heritage and biodiversity.

The strategy for the future development of Gort will focus on the principles established in the Gort Local Area Plan 2006-2012 and the framework provided by the Regional Planning Guidelines and the Galway County Development Plan 2009-2015. The LAP establishes the framework to guide the development of Gort for the next 6 years. The plan period is for 6 years, from the date of adoption by Galway County Council, unless the timeframe is extended by resolution in accordance with Section 12(d) to (f) of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010. The development strategy is set out to be more focused on the sustainable development of the town over the next 15-20 years, thereby framing the policies and objectives set out in the LAP.

It is envisaged that Gort will plan for consolidated growth rates over the short to medium term, achieving a critical mass, which will support competitiveness, sustainability and create opportunities for local economic development. This growth pattern can also generate economies of scale to justify strategic investment into the town achieving sustainable levels of development through the provision of a range of residential, employment, recreational, cultural, retail and educational facilities appropriate for a town of its size.

The Core Strategy and Settlement Strategy in the Galway County Development Plan set out the additional population allocations for County Galway and the various tiers in the settlement hierarchy up to 2015, having regard to the population growth targets set out in the Regional Planning Guidelines. Gort is on the third tier of the settlement hierarchy and its role as a 'Key Town' is to sustain its growth in order to achieve Gort's potential as a self-sustaining town.

A key component of the draft Local Area Plan is to ensure that it aligns with the Core Strategy/Settlement Strategy in the Galway County Development Plan. The Core Strategy indicates that Gort has been assigned a population growth target of 820 persons by 2015 with a housing land requirement of 15.77ha, or 23.66ha with 50% over-zoning, in order to accommodate residential development over the Plan period. Under the previous Gort Local Area Plan 2006-2012, there was over 106.20ha of undeveloped zoned residential land within the development boundary. The current Local Area Plan considers various development zoning and phasing options so as to comply with the Core Strategy and to ensure that suitable lands are brought forward for development during the Plan period.

It will be a central element of the Local Area Plan to ensure that the population growth targets specified for Gort in the County Development Plan Core Strategy, and any updated version of same, will be adhered to and accommodated in a sustainable and plan led manner, on serviced residential zoned lands in accordance with the policies and objectives set out in the Local Area Plan and in a manner that is consistent with the principles and intention of the Core Strategy.

The draft LAP identifies specific policies and objectives applicable to Gort in order to facilitate land use in a manner that will promote proper planning and sustainable development.

A number of potential development options have been assessed, having regard to the Core Strategy, settlement hierarchy and town role envisaged in the Galway County Development Plan, the population and growth trends and potential of the town, the existing development pattern and character of the town, existing amenities and environmental sensitivities and the lands and services available for future development.

On the basis of this assessment, a preferred development option has been selected for Gort at this time (**Figure 2.1**). This option supports the consolidation of the town centre, promotes the infill and sequential development of the town and encourages street-oriented development along the existing urban street network. It also locates new Town Centre (C1) and Residential Phase 1 expansion potential to the east, adjacent to the Gort Railway station and along the N66 and recognises the area as a prime development quarter in terms of integrating land use and public transportation. This approach also integrates improvements in the public realm and smarter travel opportunities for the town.

The preferred development strategy option is informed by the statutorily required environmental assessments and aligns with and aims to deliver on the Core Strategy allocations set out for Gort in the Galway County Development Plan. It also supports the objectives of the Regional Planning Guidelines to provide for the sustainable, dynamic development of Key Towns to a level that can deliver the conditions for critical mass and drive overall regional development.

The overall strategic vision for Gort as set out in the LAP aims for Gort to be a "*sustainable, self-sufficient, vibrant, socially inclusive and innovative growth centre within the County, protecting and enhancing its attractive medieval character and natural environment, supporting an educated workforce, providing a range of supporting services/facilities/ amenities and with a high quality of life for the local community. This will be delivered through a managed and phased development strategy on appropriately zoned and serviced lands in a manner that is balanced and sustainable for Gort and the immediate environs that it serves*."

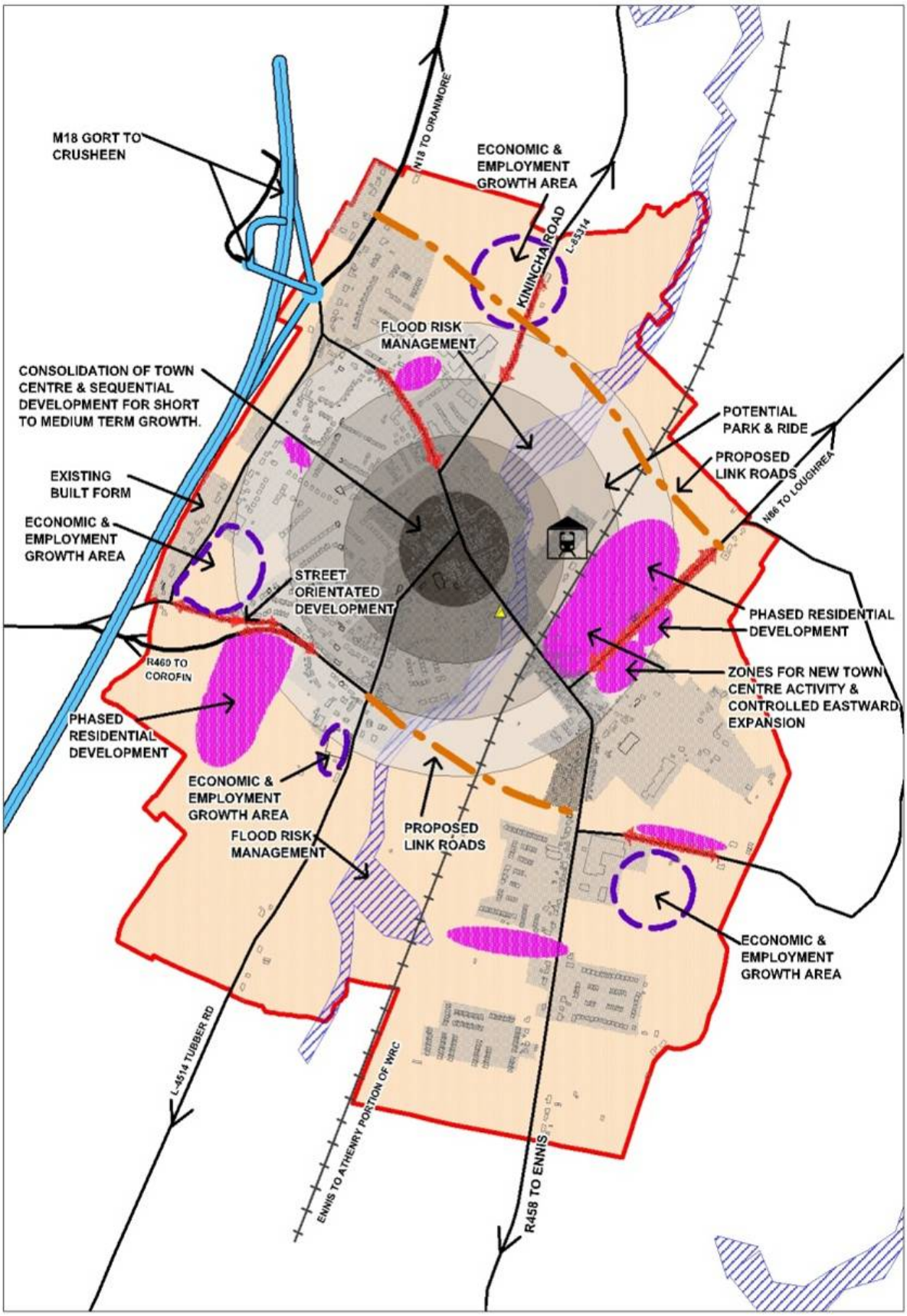


Figure 2.1 Preferred Development Option for Gort

2.2 GORT LAP AND NATURE CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT

The Plan sets out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of Gort. It is clear from this definition of the Plan that it is not necessary for the management of any Natura 2000 Site for nature conservation purposes. Therefore consideration was given to the Plan and whether it was likely to have a significant effect on Natura 2000 Sites and, if so, what the implications would be to the Conservation Objectives for these Sites.

2.3 SUMMARY OF ELEMENTS OF THE GORT LAP THAT COULD NEGATIVELY AFFECT NATURA 2000 SITES

The objectives and policies of the Plan that have the potential to negatively affect Natura 2000 Sites are outlined in full in **Appendix A** of this document. The main elements of the Plan with the potential to result in such impacts relate to the zoning of development land-use in undeveloped sites which contain habitats that might be used by mobile species such as bats and the potential for impacts associated with the Gort Wastewater Treatment Plant which if loaded to over-capacity could impact on water quality connected to Natura 2000 Sites.

The most serious threat to Natura 2000 sites in general arise from potential impacts on water quality as a result of projected population increases which are provided for in the proposed residential zonings in the town. Human pressure on Natura 2000 sites can be manifested in a number of ways either directly in the form of land take, trampling and disturbance by people themselves; or indirectly, for example, in the form of water quality deterioration resulting from sewage effluent. The relative importance of these potential impacts will vary from site to site depending on the particular circumstances of the site and of the human pressure in the vicinity.

The provision of social infrastructure is also a key consideration including wastewater treatment, drainage systems, and waste management facilities. Many of the Natura 2000 sites which potentially have pathway links to Gort LAP area are aquatic, with a complex interconnection of surface and groundwater. Above- and below-ground waterbodies provide a significant pathway to deliver pollution to these sensitive sites; therefore, it is essential that zonings take account of the indirect impacts on Natura 2000 sites where inadequate or insufficient wastewater treatment or drainage may be involved.

The zoning of particular parcels of undeveloped land for residential development in Lavally and Ballyhugh of the Plan area represent the most significant risks to Natura 2000 Sites.

Residential zonings in Lavally and Ballyhugh contain habitat features such as hedgerows and broadleaved woodland which may be used by lesser horseshoe bat which is a qualifying species of Lough Cutra cSAC and Kiltartan Cave cSAC both located within foraging/migration distance of the Gort LAP area. Potential pressures associated with increased housing within the Gort LAP area will be driven in the main by pressure on the Gort WwTP. Overloading of the capacity of the WwTP will potentially result in indirect effects on hydrologically connected Natura 2000 sites by increased pollutants to the aquatic system. It is noted that any pollution inputs from Gort WwTP has the potential to affect a number of hydrologically connected Natura 2000 sites, in particular Coole/Garryland Complex cSAC/SPA. The Coole/Garryland Complex is downstream of the Gort LAP area and connected through a series of surface and groundwater features.

The general impacts to the qualifying interests of Natura 2000 Sites associated with elements of the Plan will include:

- Run off of pollutants during construction and operational phases of development leading to reduced water quality and potential impacts at or downstream of the development. Given that Gort is potentially hydrologically linked to a number of Natura 2000 sites, this is a particularly vulnerable pathway for potential adverse impacts;

- Disturbance to habitats and species as a result of increased public access to protected sites, and increased recreational pressure, e.g. development of footpaths and cycleways particularly between Gort and Coole Park, etc;

- Inadequate wastewater treatment resulting in pollution of watercourses;

- Intensification and urbanisation leading to habitat fragmentation;

- A reduction in water quality in groundwater, springs and watercourses associated with the construction phase of new developments;

- Surface water runoff from impermeable surfaces leading to reduced water quality in groundwater, springs or surface waters affecting qualifying habitats and species downstream;

- Changes in the flow rate of watercourses arising from an increased footprint of impermeable surfaces within the Plan area. Increasing the extent of impermeable surfaces will result in a decrease in infiltration and an increase in runoff;

- Inadequate wastewater treatment resulting in pollution of groundwater, springs or surface watercourses;

- Disturbance to qualifying habitats and species from encroaching development and increased human presence; and

- Physical disturbance to karst formations resulting in impacts to groundwater dependent habitats downstream or within the vicinity of karst formations.

In addition to the above, Specific Objectives to support the development of a cycleway/walkway between the town and Coole Park will have the potential to disturb qualifying species of Coole/Garryland Complex cSAC/SPA.

Other aspects of the Plan which could impact on Natura 2000 sites include development in areas with existing habitat such as groups of broadleaved trees, hedgerows and other semi-natural habitat. This is particularly the case where protected species such as bats may be using these semi-natural habitats.

Table 2.1provides an assessment of the Plans influence on each Natura 2000 site within 15km of Gort LAP and determines which Sites are at risk of experiencing negative impacts as a result of implementing the Gort LAP.

A Source-Pathway-Receiver model was used to determine which Natura 2000 Sites are at risk of being negatively impacted by the Plan. In this model the Source represents the Policies/Objectives with the potential to result in negative impacts. The pathway represents the process by which such impacts might negatively affect the Receiver i.e. Natura 2000 Sites.

The types of Pathways that will link Sources to Receivers are divided into two categories:

1. Direct Impacts; and

2. Indirect Impacts.

Direct Impacts are impacts which occur within or immediately adjacent to Natura 2000 Sites and result in the:

- Physical loss of Qualifying Interests through habitat loss, habitat fragmentation, species disturbance or mortality; and

- Physical damage to Qualifying Interests through habitat degradation, habitat fragmentation, severance/barrier effects and edge effects.

There are no Natura 2000 Sites which occur within or immediately adjacent to the Plan area, therefore direct impacts are not considered to be relevant to the Gort Plan. Land-use measures proposed in the Plan will have the potential to directly impact these sites.

Indirect Impacts are impacts which occur as result of direct impacts, the interaction of effects or off-site from a project/ land use zoning area. Examples of indirect impacts include the effects of displaced species on the occupancy of alternative habitats; the effects of habitat degradation on species; the downstream effects of reduced water quality on riparian, lotic or transitional habitats.

Indirect impact pathways include:

- Physical proximity,

- Hydrological linkages,

- Mobile species linkages, and

- Aerial deposition.

The potential for the Gort LAP to indirectly influence or impact other Natura 2000 Sites will depend on whether these pathways link impact Sources (i.e. policies/objectives) with the Receiver (i.e. Natura 2000 Sites).

Where no such impact pathways link policies/objectives and Natura 2000 Sites then it is concluded that the Natura 2000 Sites do not occur within the sphere of influence of the Gort LAP and are not considered further.

2.4 CUMULATIVE AND IN COMBINATION IMPACTS

This step aims to identify at this early stage any possible significant in-combination or cumulative effects/impacts of the proposed LAP with other such plans and projects on the relevant Natura 2000 sites and their conservation interests. Other plans and projects specific to the relevant Natura 2000 sites are the following:

- Galway County Development Plan 2009-2015;

- Western Regional Planning Guidelines 2010 - 2022;

- National Spatial Strategy;

- Western River Basin District Management Plan;

- Coillte District Strategic Plan 2006-2010;
- Inland Fisheries Ireland Corporate Plan 2011-2015;
- Water Services Investment Programme 2010-2012 (extended to 2013);
- Gort Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) and Kinvara WWTP's discharge into surface and groundwater systems;
- Groundwater Pollution Reduction Programmes;
- Surface Water Pollution Reduction Programmes;
- Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study;
- Catchment Flood Risk Management Plans;
- M18 Gort/Tuam Motorway;
- Inner Relief Roads to the north and south of the Plan area; and
- Planning Applications (Galway County Council online planning query system was consulted for the following significant new developments which were granted permission in the past two years)
    - Daleoak Developments Ltd, 12127, to construct 26 dwelling houses and 2 apartments also outline permission for 122 dwelling houses and crèche and all associated site services (gross floor space 18,500sqm). This development has been refused but is being appealed to An Bord Pleanala. No decision date is available on the An Bord Pleanála website. An Appropriate Assessment Screening accompanying the application concluded that significant effects to Coole-Garryland were not likely and the development was not refused for reasons of adverse impacts on natural heritage;
    - Colman Roche, 1269, extension of duration permission sought for the retention of a dwelling house and garage on revised site boundaries and decommission the existing septic tank and percolation area and connect the same to the public mains and to construct twelve service dwelling houses with all associated site development works, previous planning reference no. 06/4682 (Gross floor area 1318.25 m2);
    - Gerry, Elisha, Gearoid & Fergal Lydon, 11239, extension of duration permission for a town centre mixed use development to include a. 48 no bedrooms nursing home, b. 10 no. 2 bed sheltered homes, c. 31 no townhouses comprising of 1 no one bed, 24 no two bed and 6 no three bed, d. medical centre, e. retail/commercial, f. offices all in 7 no blocks, varying from 1 to 2,3 and 4 storey with ancillary basement and surface car parking, stores, plant and bin stores and associated external works including flood protection quay wall (gross floor space 12,345sqm)(previous pl. ref. 05/3042);
    - Ballagh Developments Ltd. c/o Brendan O'Donoghue – receiver, 12574, extension of duration permission for changes to development from 4 no. detached dwellings and crèche with associated first floor apartment, as previously approved under Pl. Ref. No. 05/5063, 05/1339 and 04/3629 respectively to (a) retention of completed detached dwelling on reduced site area (b) provision of 6 no. dwellings consisting of 3 pairs of 2-storey semi-detached dwellings (c) provision of crèche together with two first floor apartments and associated parking facilities and (d) provision of 2 no. blocks each containing two ground floor and two first floor apartments together with associated roads and parking facilities, previous planning reference no. 07/1720 (Gross floor area 1670.5 m2);

- Pat Malone, 1122, extension of duration permission for 134 no. residential units (comprising of 23 no. 2 bedroom, 66 no. 3 bedroom and 45 no bedroom units) and 1 no. crèche and 1 no retail unit and all associated site works and services (gross floor space 14590.4sqm) (previous pl. ref. 05/4142);

- John Fordham, 121089, extension of permission to construct 8 No. industrial buildings of various sizes consisting of warehousing, storage, light industrial, wholesale with ancillary retail and ancillary offices, office based industry and precast concrete plant together with car parking and all associated services and site development works, previous planning reference no. 07/3857 (Gross floor area 12734sqm);

- J. J. Callahan, 11902, to construct dwellinghouse, sewage treatment plant, percolation area separate utility/garden store and domestic garage (gross floor space 326sqm).

No other pathwayhas been identified by which any of the plans and projects identified could have a significant 'in combination' effect on any of the Natura 2000 sites which show potential for likely significant effects. The Gort LAP contains an overarching objective, DS3, which states that:

'*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 a Habitats Directive Assessment where necessary, that:*

1. 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****);*'

Therefore any development which is proposed within the Plan area in the lifetime of the Draft Gort LAP 2013-2019 will be subject to an assessment of its effects alone or in combination with other plans and projects which impact Natura 2000 sites. The majority of the Plans and Projects identified above will not give rise to significant adverse impact on the integrity of any European site. The majority of the aforementioned Plans and Projects will provide a positive benefit.

A Natura Impact Statement was prepared for the M18 Gort/Tuam Motorway project which concluded that there would be no significant negative impact on the conservation objectives of relevant European (Natura 2000) Sites.

The majority of local planning applications that have been granted recently are extensions of duration to permissions which were granted previously. As part of these original planning applications significant effects on the environment have been ruled out. However in the unlikely event that all existing planning permissions are granted there would be an added population equivalent input of at least 500PE (based on 200 dwellings with 2.5 persons per dwelling) to Gort WWTP. Gort WWTP has at present a spare capacity of 469PE. Therefore if all developments currently with permission were to proceed then the WWTP would be operating over, or at least very close to, capacity.

2.5 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE NATURA 2000 SITES

This section of the screening process describes the Natura 2000 sites within a 15km radius of the LAP area. A 15km buffer zone has been chosen as a precautionary measure to ensure that all potentially affected Natura 2000 sites are included in the screening process. **Table 2.1** lists the Natura 2000 sites that are within 15km of the Plan area. This is in line with Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities, produced by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

There are a total of 28 Natura 2000 sites within 15km of the Gort LAP boundary. Coole-Garryland Complex SAC and Coole-Garryland Complex SPA are the Natura 2000 sites closest to Gort LAP boundary with the nearest point of the SAC being approximately 400m from the boundary and the nearest point of the SPA being approximately 800m from the boundary. Lough Cutra SAC/SPA and

the East Burren Complex SAC are approximately 2km from the LAP boundary. Carrowbaun, Newhall and Ballylee Turloughs SAC and Lough Coy SAC are approximately 4km from the LAP boundary. **Figure 2.1** shows the locations of SACs in relation to the Plan boundary while **Figure 2.2** shows SPAs in relation to the Plan boundary.

Table 2.1 below lists the 28 Natura 2000 sites which are within 15km of Gort LAP boundary, with their respective site codes, distances from the LAP boundary and the potential pathway through which the qualifying interests or features of ecological integrity might be affected by the Plan. The majority of those Natura 2000 sites within 15km of Gort are water dependent including many turloughs. Given the location of Gort in a limestone region and a regionally important aquifer in proximity it is considered that any potential risks to water quality might negatively impact on many of these Natura 2000 sites. In addition, the qualifying interests of Natura 2000 sites within 15km most likely to be affected by development within the Plan area are considered to be otter and lesser horseshoe bat which have migration ranges which can extend up to a number of kilometres from their roost or holt and are likely to be close to the Gort area. There are records for otter both upstream and downstream of the Plan area and records for lesser horseshoe bat (LHB) from the north end of the Plan area. It is also considered that bird species, which can have large ranges and/or cover long distances, and which are listed as qualifying interests might potentially be affected by the LAP therefore they are also considered under potential for impacts.

Table 2.1: Natura 2000 Sites within 15km of the Gort Local Area Plan Area Including Potential Impact Pathways

Natura 2000 Site	Distance from Gort LAP Boundary	Hydrological Pathway?	Aerial Pathway?	Disturbance Pathway?	To be considered under Stage II AA?
000252 Coole-Garryland Complex SAC	400m	Yes. This site is linked to Plan area through the Gort/Cannahowna River.	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to create aerial.	No. Qualifying interests of this site do not include mobile species.	Yes
004107 Coole-Garryland SPA	800m	Yes. This site is linked to Plan area through the Gort/Cannahowna River.	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to create aerial.	Yes. Whooper Swan could potentially forage within the LAP area.	Yes
000299 Lough Cutra SAC	2km	No. This site is over 1km upstream of the LAP boundary.	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to create aerial.	Yes. LHB* from this site are likely to forage within the LAP area.	Yes
004056 Lough Cutra SPA	2km	No. This site is over 1km upstream of the LAP boundary.	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to create aerial.	No. Cormorants are unlikely to forage or roost within the LAP area.	No
001926 East Burren Complex SAC	2km	No. This site is over 1km upstream of the LAP boundary.	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to	Yes. LHB* and Otter from this site are likely to forage within the LAP	Yes

Natura 2000 Site	Distance from Gort LAP Boundary	Hydrological Pathway?	Aerial Pathway?	Disturbance Pathway?	To be considered under Stage II AA?
			create aerial.	area.	
000286 Kiltartan Cave (Coole) SAC	2.5km	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to create hydrological impacts.	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to create aerial.	Yes. LHB* provide full title/text from this site could forage within the LAP area.	Yes
001321 Termon Lough SAC	3km	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to create hydrological impacts.	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to create aerial.	No. Qualifying interests of this site do not include mobile species.	No
000238 Caherglassaun Turlough SAC	4km	Yes. This site is linked to Plan area through the Gort/Cannahowna River.	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to create aerial.	No. Qualifying interests of this site do not include mobile species.	Yes
002295 Ballinduff Turlough SAC	4km	Yes. This site may be linked to Plan area through the Gort/Cannahowna River.	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to create aerial.	No. Qualifying interests of this site do not include mobile species.	Yes
002117 Lough Coy SAC	4km	Yes. This site may be linked to Plan area through the Gort/Cannahowna River.	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to create aerial.	No. Qualifying interests of this site do not include mobile species.	Yes
002293 Carrowbaun, Newhall and Ballylee Turloughs SAC	4km	Yes. This site may be linked to Plan area through the Gort/Cannahowna River.	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to create aerial.	No. Qualifying interests of this site do not include mobile species.	Yes
004168 Slieve Aughty Mountains SPA	4km	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to create hydrological impacts.	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to create aerial.	No. Qualifying bird species from this site are highly unlikely to forage or nest within Plan area.	No
002317 Cregg House Stables, Crusheen SAC	7.5km	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to create hydrological impacts.	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to create aerial.	No. LHB* from this site are highly unlikely to forage or nest within Plan area.	No

Natura 2000 Site	Distance from Gort LAP Boundary	Hydrological Pathway?	Aerial Pathway?	Disturbance Pathway?	To be considered under Stage II AA?
002180 Gortacarnaun Wood SAC	5km	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to create hydrological impacts.	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to create aerial.	No. Qualifying interests of this site do not include mobile species.	No
002181 Drummin Wood SAC	5km	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to create hydrological impacts.	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to create aerial.	No. Qualifying interests of this site do not include mobile species.	No
002294 Cahermore Turlough SAC	5km	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to create hydrological impacts.	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to create aerial.	No. Qualifying interests of this site do not include mobile species.	No
000318 Peterswell Turlough SAC	7km	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to create hydrological impacts.	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to create aerial.	No. Qualifying interests of this site do not include mobile species.	No
000057 Moyree River System SAC	10km	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to create hydrological impacts.	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to create aerial.	No. The LAP boundary is likely to be outside the range of the qualifying mobile species of this site.	No
000268 Galway Bay Complex SAC	10km	Yes. This site at Kinvara Bay is hydrologically linked to Plan area.	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to create aerial.	No. The LAP boundary is likely to be outside the range of the qualifying mobile species of this site.	Yes
000019 Ballyogan Lough SAC	10km	No. This site is not hydrologically connected to the Plan area.	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to create aerial.	No. Qualifying interests of this site do not include mobile species.	No
004031 Inner Galway Bay SPA	10km	Yes. This site at Kinvara Bay is hydrologically	No. This site is at a distance	No. The LAP boundary is likely to be	Yes

Natura 2000 Site	Distance from Gort LAP Boundary	Hydrological Pathway?	Aerial Pathway?	Disturbance Pathway?	To be considered under Stage II AA?
		linked to Plan area.	considered unlikely to create aerial.	outside the range of the qualifying mobile species of this site.	
002244 Ardrahan Grassland SAC	10km	No. This site is not hydrologically connected to the Plan area.	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to create aerial.	No. Qualifying interests of this site do not include mobile species.	No
001285 Kiltiernan Turlough SAC	11km	No. This site is not hydrologically connected to the Plan area.	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to create aerial.	No. Qualifying interests of this site do not include mobile species.	No
000242 Castletaylor Complex SAC	11km	No. This site is not hydrologically connected to the Plan area.	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to create aerial.	No. Qualifying interests of this site do not include mobile species.	No
001913 Sonnagh Bog SAC	11km	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to create hydrological impacts.	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to create aerial.	No. Qualifying interests of this site do not include mobile species.	No
000606 Lough Fingall Complex SAC	11km	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to create hydrological impacts.	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to create aerial.	No. The LAP boundary is likely to be outside the range of the qualifying mobile species of this site.	No
001912 Glendree Bog SAC	12km	No. This site is not hydrologically connected to the Plan area.	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to create aerial.	No. Qualifying interests of this site do not include mobile species.	No
000322 Rahasane Turlough SAC	15km	No. This site is not hydrologically connected to the Plan area.	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to create aerial.	No. Qualifying interests of this site do not include mobile species.	No

Natura 2000 Site	Distance from Gort LAP Boundary	Hydrological Pathway?	Aerial Pathway?	Disturbance Pathway?	To be considered under Stage II AA?
004089 Rahasane Turlough SPA	15km	No. This site is not hydrologically connected to the Plan area.	No. This site is at a distance considered unlikely to create aerial.	No. Habitats within the Plan area are unlikely to support qualifying species of this SPA.	No

As outlined in **Table 2.1** eleven Natura 2000 Sites are at risk of experiencing likely significant effects. The following sites are therefore considered to be at risk of being negatively impacted by the Gort LAP.

- Coole-Garryland Complex **cSAC** (Site Code: 000252)
- Coole-Garryland **SPA** (Site Code: 004107)
- Lough Cutra **cSAC**(Site Code: 000299)
- East Burren Complex **cSAC** (Site Code: 001926)
- Kiltartan Cave (Coole) **cSAC** (Site Code: 000286)
- Caherglassaun Turlough **cSAC** (Site Code: 000238)
- Ballinduff Turlough **cSAC** (Site Code: 002295)
- Lough Coy **cSAC** (Site Code: 002117)
- Carrowbaun, Newhall and Ballylee Turloughs **cSAC** (Site Code: 002293)
- Galway Bay Complex **cSAC** (Site Code: 000268)
- Inner Galway Bay **SPA** (Site Code: 004031)

Figure 2.3 shows the location of the above Natura 2000 Sites in relation to the Plan area. **Section 2.5.5** below presents a description of these potential risks to these sites following the Assessment Criteria outlined in the APP Guidelines (2002). Indirect impacts will have the potential to result in likely significant effects to these Natura 2000 Sites.

2.5.1 Priority Species and Habitats

A number of species and habitats are given 'Priority' status in the Habitats Directive by the EU because they are considered to be particularly vulnerable and are mainly, or exclusively, found within the European Union.

There are no 'Priority Species' known to be present in Ireland.

Priority Habitats are present in Ireland and a number of them are present within Natura 2000 sites which have been recognised as having the potential to be affected by Gort LAP. In particular, Turlough habitat is considered to be one of the most prevalent priority habitats in the vicinity of Gort LAP with a complex of turloughs being present at Coole/Garryland cSAC. Priority habitats are prefixed with an asterisk (for example, '*Turloughs (3180)') in **Table 2.1** and all tables in this report. The importance of Priority Habitat is emphasised at several places in the Directive (Articles 4 and 5 and Annex III), not only in terms of the selection of sites, but also in the measures required for site protection (Article 6) and surveillance (Article 11).

2.5.2 Conservation Objectives

A Natura 2000 site's Conservation Objectives are defined by DEHLG and are, "*intended to ensure that the relevant Annex I habitats and Annex II species present on a site are maintained in a favourable condition*" (DEHLG, 2010). The DEHLG guidelines state that, "*The Conservation Objectives derive from the qualifying interests, the Natura 2000 standard data form, and the management plan for the site, with summary information also available in the site synopsis*." Whilst the Natura 2000 standard data forms and site synopses do present details of the qualifying features of Natura 2000 sites, and list the generic threats to those features, they do not define the Conservation Objectives of the site. Whilst management plans have been produced for some of Ireland's Natura 2000 sites, Management Plan for any of the Natura 2000 sites discussed in this report have not yet been published (February 2013) on the NPWS website:

http://www.npws.ie/protectedsites/conservationmanagementplanning/conservationplans/

In the absence of management plans, the Conservation Objectives of each Natura 2000 site must be inferred by the Appropriate Assessment practitioner based upon available information, i.e. the following:

- Published information on the Annex I and Annex II qualifying features of the site; including the documented generic 'threats' to the habitats and species available on the NPWS website (see **Appendix B**);
- Documented threats to the sites themselves, which are discussed in a descriptive way in the Natura 2000 standard data forms;
- Consultation with NPWS; and
- Additional, largely descriptive, information available in the Site Synopsis.

For the purposes of this assessment, information on the Conservation Objectives for the sites has been gained from consultation with NPWS relating to the Water Framework Directive River Basin Management Plans and NPWS generic Conservation Objectives for Natura 2000 Sites where no Management Plan is yet available.

Generic Conservation Objectives for SPAs are as follows:

- To maintain the bird species of special conservation interest for which the SPA has been listed, at favourable conservation status.

For cSACs, generic Conservation Objectives are as follows:

- To maintain Annex I habitats and Annex II species for which the cSAC has been selected at favourable conservation status;
- To maintain the extent species richness and biodiversity of the entire site; and
- To establish effective liaison and co-operation with landowners, legal users and relevant authorities.

The favourable conservation status of a species can be described as being achieved when population data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself, and the natural range of the species is neither being reduced or likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future, and there is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.

Favourable conservation status of a habitat can be described as being achieved when its natural range, and area it covers within that range, is stable or increasing, and the ecological factors that are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future, and the conservation status of its typical species is favourable as defined below.

2.5.3 Documented Threats to the cSACs and to their Qualifying Features

Documented threats to Habitats Directive Annex I habitats and Annex II species in Ireland are presented in the 'Backing documents' and 'Form' for each habitat and species which are available at:

http://www.npws.ie/publications/euconservationstatus/

Not all of these threats will apply to all cSACs in which these habitats and species are present; however gathering information on the documented perceived threats to the qualifying features of the sites (and therefore to the Conservation Objectives of the sites and the integrity of the sites) is an important prerequisite for assessing what are the 'likely significant effects' on the sites resulting from the Plan. No such information is available for Birds Directive Annex I bird species, and hence this method of inferring Conservation Objectives cannot be applied to SPAs.

Appendix B presents details of those threats, identified by NPWS, which it is considered likely will apply to the cSACs that are included in this assessment.

It is important to realise that many of these threats do not necessarily represent activities that occur within the boundary of the Natura 2000 site. This applies in particular to aquatic features and systems which can be affected by impact sources that occur at some distance from the site. For example, the threat of 'nutrient enrichment' is identified for turlough habitat in Coole-Garryland cSAC, which is as likely to occur through inputs from surface and groundwater entering the site where the nutrient enrichment has occurred outside the site itself.

2.5.4 Documented Threats to Special Protection Areas

Similar threats will apply to many of the SPAs that often correspond geographically to the cSACs. Generally speaking, the threats to the Annex I habitats and Annex II species of the cSAC will also apply to the Annex I bird species and bird populations in general that are the qualifying features of the SPAs. However, the birds that constitute the qualifying features of the SPAs are subject to a number of additional threats that do not generally apply to the qualifying features of the cSAC such as hunting pressure (both legal and illegal); and disturbance from noise and visual cues such as movement of pedestrians and vehicles. **Appendix B** provides details of the Qualifying Features and identified generalised threats to the Natura 2000 sites relevant to the Gort Local Area Plan.

2.5.5 Assessment of Effects

Table 2.2 below provides an assessment of effects following the Assessment Criteria outlined in the APP Guidelines (2002).

Table 2.2 Assessment of Effects

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Assessment Criteria</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Describe the individual elements of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) likely to give rise to impacts on the Natura 2000 Sites:</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">

The elements of the plan that will have the potential to give rise to impacts on Natura 2000 Sites relate to land use change within the Plan area. The development of land which contains habitats such as hedgerows, scrub and stands of broadleaved trees will have the potential to result in effects on lesser horseshoe bats which is a qualifying species of Lough Cutra SAC and Caherglassaun cSAC.
As Gort WWTP is nearing its carrying capacity and substantial cumulative increase in inputs, through additional residential or commercial development, or increase in intensity of land use have the potential to lead to a deterioration in water quality leading to impacts on qualifying habitats and species of Natura 2000 sites, in particular Coole-Garryland cSAC which is located approximately 400m from the Plan boundary. Coole-Garryland cSAC is identified within the Gort LAP as being the most important turlough in Ireland and a wetland system of global significance. A full Appropriate Assessment which accompanied the Discharge Licence Application for Gort WWTP concluded that significant effects on Natura 2000 sites were not likely as long as strict protocols were adhered to and mitigation measures were agreed upon.
The development of inner relief roads and a riverside walk area may require the removal of semi-natural habitat. Such site clearance work may result in the removal of broad-leaved woodland and other semi-natural habitat which could be used by lesser horseshoe bat as foraging areas. In addition both relief roads would require the construction of watercourse crossings which have the potential to affect adversely water quality and to impact on species such as Otter.

</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on the Natura 2000 sites by virtue of:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Size and Scale</td><td>
The Gort Plan Area is approximately 312.12ha in size with approximately 214.47ha of undeveloped land occurring within this area. This undeveloped land is characterised by improved agricultural grassland and amenity grassland, scrub, treeline and hedgerows.

The undeveloped land zoned for future residential development within the LAP amounts to 95.67ha. The following development zoning within the Plan contribute to this total:
<table>
<tr><th>Plan Zonings</th><th>Total Area</th><th>Undeveloped Zoned in Ha</th></tr>
<tr><td>Town Centre /Commercial (C1)</td><td>34.26</td><td>12.80</td></tr>
<tr><td>Residential (R):

Existing Developed
R Phase 1
R Phase 2</td><td>(Total: 150.88)

55.21
23.65
72.02</td><td>(Total: 95..67)

23.65
72.02*</td></tr>
<tr><td>Business & Enterprise (BE)</td><td>5.27</td><td>5.09</td></tr>
<tr><td>Industrial (I)</td><td>35.04</td><td>27.36</td></tr>
<tr><td>Community Facilities (CF)</td><td>11.98</td><td>2.71</td></tr>
<tr><td>Agriculture (A)</td><td>13.47</td><td>10.32</td></tr>
<tr><td>Open Space/Recreation &</td><td>60.33</td><td>60.33</td></tr>
<tr><td>Public Utilities (PU)</td><td>0.89</td><td>0.19</td></tr>
<tr><td>Totals</td><td>312.12</td><td>214.47</td></tr>
</table>
Note:
</td></tr>
</table>

Assessment Criteria	
	1. **Transport Infrastructure (TI)** provides for the provision/maintenance of all roads and rail transportation infrastructure and appears as white land on the Land Use Zoning Maps 1A/1B in Appendix A (areas not estimated). 2. *Assuming all Residential Phase 2 are undeveloped. No European (Natura 2000) Site is located within the Plan area.
Land-take	The Gort LAP will not involve land-take of Natura 2000 sites therefore there will be no direct impacts in this regard.
Distance from Natura 2000 sites or key features of the site	The Gort Plan area is located approximately 400m from Coole-Garryland cSAC. Distance to other Natura 2000 sites are given in **Table 2.1**. The Gort/Cannahowna River runs through Gort Town and receives treated effluent from Gort WWTP plant downstream of the town. This river is connected to underground systems in the area and is a potential pathway for pollutants to Coole-Garryland cSAC which is a water-dependent system. Therefore there is the potential for indirect impacts as a result of development within the Plan area which has been proposed in the draft LAP.
Resource requirements	Gort Water Supply Scheme (WSS), which is sourced from the Gort/Cannahowna River, services the Gort Plan area. This water supply has recently been upgraded and removed from the EPA remedial action list. It is unclear as to the potential impact of the Gort RWSS on the Gort/Cannahowna River and potential indirect impacts on Coole-Garryland cSAC. There is an estimated spare capacity of 469PE at Gort Wastewater Treatment Plant. The Gort Local Area Plan includes a specific objective which states that any development within the town must be preceded by sufficient capacity in the WWTP and water supply. However, if all existing permissions, including those on appeal to An Bord Pleanála, were constructed then the capacity of Gort WWTP would be reached. Therefore development permitted as a result of Gort LAP has the potential to indirectly impact water quality of the Gort/Cannahowna River and thereby indirectly result in the damage of Turlough habitat.

Assessment Criteria	
Emissions	**Surface Water Run-off and Pollution Events during the Construction of Lands Zoned for Development in Proximity to the Gort/Cannahowna River** Surface water run-off from construction site areas adjacent to the Gort/Cannahowna River will have the potential to increase the rates of sedimentation within the river. The storage of fuels, lubricants and other polluting materials on construction sites adjacent to the Gort/Cannahowna River will present a risk of a pollution incident occurring in the Gort/Cannahowna River. The ingress of such polluting materials to the Gort/Cannahowna River will have the potential to result in significant perturbations to the water quality of this river and could affect the conservation status of qualifying habitats and species downstream in Coole-Garryland cSAC. The mitigation policies of the Plan and particularly Policy UI2 and Objective UI4; NH6 and NH7 will ensure that the water quality of the Gort/Cannahowna River is protected from any adverse impacts during the construction of lands zoned for development in proximity to the Gort/Cannahowna River. The implementation of an Environmental Management Buffer as outlined in Objective NH7 will ensure that potential impacts associated with the ingress of surface water runoff or polluting materials are minimised. **Wastewater** Wastewater is discharged to the Gort/Cannahowna River. The favourable conservation status of the Coole-Garryland, Galway Bay and other European Sites is partly determined by water quality. The discharge of wastewater to the Gort/Cannahowna River and the potential downstream effects on European Sites relates principally to the nutrient enrichment and eutrophication of the river and of the European Sites into which it discharges. Changes in the trophic status of Gort/Cannahowna River and the water quality of connected waterbodies may affect habitats leading to deterioration in the status of habitats and a reduction in species densities. Although the proposed draft Gort LAP has set out a number of policies and objectives (see Policy UI1, Objectives DS5, UI1 and UI2) to prevent wastewater discharges resulting in perturbations to water quality it is unclear as how these policies and objectives will be practically implemented in order to prevent overloading of the WWTP and therefore the potential for adverse impacts to Coole-Garryland and other European sites exists. **Air and Noise Emissions** The inclusion of a policy and related objectives to maintain good air quality within the town (see Policy UI 7, Objective UI 23 and Objective UI 24) will ensure that emissions to air will not represent a significant impact. Objective TI18 establishes measures within the LAP to control potential impacts arising from possible increases in noise levels associated with development throughout the life time of the Plan. The control of noise levels for proposed new developments will ensure that the development policies and objectives of the LAP will not result in changes to the current baseline noise levels that will result in significant effects to the surrounding environment.
Excavation requirements	The Plan does not propose any excavations that will result in likely significant effects to Natura 2000 Sites. The potential impacts of excavations associated with the construction phase of developments within the Plan area are assessed above in relation to

Assessment Criteria	
	emissions from construction of lands zoned for development.
Transportation requirements	The Gort Plan land use zoning map identifies the indicative route of proposed Inner Relief Roads to the north and south of the town. As outlined in the emissions section above there will be a potential for significant impacts in the form of pollution and changes to hydrological regime and hydraulic loading during the development of the Inner Relief Roads and associated watercourse crossings. These routes are indicative at present and therefore a detailed assessment of their impact is not possible. The mitigation policies and objectives in the Plan which aim to protect the water quality and riparian corridor of the Gort/Cannahowna River will ensure that these potential negative impacts do not arise. As with all developments, the Inner Relief Roads will be subject to Policy NH1 and Objective DS3 and NH1, NH2, NH4 and NH6 of the Plan. Furthermore, it is noted that any future road development within the Plan area will conform to the National Roads Authority's Environmental Assessment Guidelines and environmental design requirements.
Describe any likely changes to the European (Natura 2000) site arising as a result of:	
Reduction of habitat area	There will be no direct loss of any Natura 2000 Site lands as a result of the adoption of the Gort LAP.
Disturbance of key species	Elements of the proposed plan such as construction activity during new development and potential for excessive loading to the Gort WWTP will have the potential to negatively affect key qualifying species that rely on good water quality. Changes in the trophic status of the Gort/Cannahowna River could also lead to eutrophication effects in hydrologically connected sites such as Coole-Garryland and Kinvara Bay. The eutrophication of these waterbodies could potentially interfere with the structure and function of these habitats resulting in negative impacts to the distribution or densities of qualifying species. Gort LAP has set out a number of policies and objectives, particularly Objective DS3, UI2, UI4, UI5, UI10, UI11, NH1, NH2, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7 and NH11 which seek ensure that negative impacts do not arise as a result of the construction of new developments or the overloading of the WWTP.
Habitat or species fragmentation	The Gort LAP will not result in the fragmentation of qualifying habitats or the fragmentation of habitats upon which qualifying species of the European Sites under the sphere of influence of the Plan rely. Development adjacent to the Gort/Cannahowna River will be restricted by the zoning of an Environmental Management Buffer which will restrict development 10m from all watercourses.
Reduction in species density	Developments arising as a result of the Plan will have the potential to adversely affect water quality of the Gort/Cannahowna River. Poor construction practices during project-level developments could result in perturbations to the water quality of this watercourse. Any perturbation to the water quality of this river will have the potential to result in a reduction in key species densities occurring within hydrologically connected European Sites. Policies of the Plan which protect the water quality of the Gort/Cannahowna River and establish an Environmental Management Buffer along the river corridor adjacent to development land use zonings will ensure that such impacts are avoided to qualifying species.

Assessment Criteria	
Changes in key indicators of conservation status	The European Commission (2006) Explanatory Notes and Guidelines for the Assessment, Monitoring and Reporting under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive outlines key indicators for assessing the conservation status of designated sites. The key indicators for assessing the conservation status of key species are: *Range:* as outlined above the elements of the Gort LAP will not result in direct or indirect impacts to European Sites under consideration. Therefore the distribution of key species, for which these sites are designated, will not be altered by the proposed zoning variation in the new Plan. *Population:* Development resulting from the Gort LAP will not be granted planning permission should likely significant effects to populations of key species be identified. Therefore, as only projects which will not result in direct or indirect impacts to the SAC or SPA will be permitted, the populations of key species will not be affected as a result of the proposed zoning variation in the new Plan. *Habitat for the specie*s: The mitigation policies and objectives set out in the Plan will ensure that the conservation status of the habitats which support the qualifying species of the Natura 2000 sites is maintained *Future Prospects*: The mitigation policies and objectives of the Plan and the recommendations set out in this Assessment will ensure that the adoption of the Plan will not jeopardise the future prospects of qualifying species supported by the Lough Corrib and other Natura 2000 Sites. The key indicators for assessing the conservation status of Annex 1 qualifying habitats are: *Range:* Policies and objectives outlined in the Plan will ensure that no elements of the Plan represent a risk to the current range of qualifying habitats supported by European Sites. *Area covered by habitat type within range*: Area of qualifying habitats occurring within European Sites will not affected by the Plan. *Specific structures and functions:* Turloughs are the Annex 1 habitat most commonly designated as European sites within the sphere of influence of the Plan area. The structure of Turlough habitat and other hydrologically influenced habitats which are connected to the Plan area is dependent on the connectivity and quality of surface and groundwater systems. These habitats function as breeding and foraging habitats for a range of “key species”. This function is maintained by ensuring the hydrological integrity (which includes structure and water quality) of European Sites and their associated water bodies/features. Measures outlined in the Plan seek to ensure that the specific structure and function of these habitats and the European Sites as a whole are maintained however it is unclear as to the full potential for adverse impacts on structures and functions. *Future prospects*: The Plan policies and objectives and the approach of the Plan to ensuring adverse impacts to the environment are avoided will ensure that Plan will not negatively influence the status of Annex 1 habitats which occur within hydrologically connected European Sites.
Climate change	There is currently insufficient information to predict the effects of climate change on the plan area. It is predicted that on a national level winters will become wetter and summers drier but the effect on local precipitation is unknown.
Describe any likely impacts on the Natura 2000 Site as a whole in terms of:	

Assessment Criteria	
Interference with key relationships that define the structure of the site	As mentioned above, the surface and groundwater influences of hydrologically connected sites and associated watercourses are the key features that define the structure Natura 2000 sites. Any impacts to qualifying habitats; instream habitats; or the connectivity of the freshwater ecosystems will have the potential to negatively impact on the structure of hydrologically connected European sites. For reasons outlined above the Plan will not result in adverse effects to the qualifying Annex 1 habitats or instream habitats; or interfere with the connectivity of Coole-Garryland and other hydrologically connected European sites.
Interference with key relationships that define the function of the site	Potential impacts which could result in adverse effects to the water quality of surface watercourses will in turn have the potential to negatively impact Annex 1 habitats and/or populations of qualifying species for European Sites. The relationship of species and habitats with the abiotic factors that determine the structure and function of aquatic European Sites are the key relationship that defines the function of the relevant European Sites. For reasons outlined above, the proposed Plan will not result in interference to these key relationships that define the function of the relevant Natura 2000 sites.
Describe from the above, the elements of the project or plan or combination of elements, where the above impacts are likely to be significant or where the scale of magnitude of impacts is not known:	
Potential impacts associated with the Gort LAP include: • the impact of water abstraction from the Gort/Cannahowna River on Turloughs and other hydrologically connected water-dependent aquatic habitats downstream, • the impact on water quality of the Gort/Cannahowna River and consequently Coole-Garryland cSAC and hydrologically connected water-dependent habitats of other Natura 2000 sites, should Gort WWTP operate at or over capacity in the event of all granted development and potential lands zoned Phase 1 being developed, and • The impact of removal habitat features such as hedgerows, stands of broadleaved trees on lesser horseshoe bat populations which as a qualifying species of Lough Cutra cSAC and Caherglassaun Turlough cSAC potentially migrate or forage within the LAP area. The scale of magnitude of impacts to European, Natura 2000 Sites is currently unclear; t**herefore a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment with supporting Natura Impact Report (NIR) is required.**	

2.6 SCREENING CONCLUSIONS

The likely impacts that will arise from the Plan have been examined in the context of the key environmental factors that could potentially affect the integrity of the Natura 2000 network, e.g. disturbance, habitat loss, etc. and the results of the Screening Assessment, as presented in **Table 2.1**.

Following the screening stage of the process, nine cSACs and two SPAs have been brought forward for Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment and are considered under the Natura Impact Report.

3 STAGE 2 – NATURA IMPACT REPORT

This Natura Impact Report (NIR) records the assessment carried out on the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2013-2019. It should be noted that an assessment of the potential impacts of the Plan during each stage of its development, i.e. Alterations and Modifications, will also be carried out and will be included as appendices in or an alteration of the final NIR.

In all, eleven sites were brought forward for Stage 2 – Appropriate Assessment and are therefore assessed in this Natura Impact Report. Each individual objective in the Plan was reviewed with respect to each identified Natura 2000 site and a determination was made as to whether there was potential for any aspect of the objective, either alone or in combination with other related objectives, to impact on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site.

The qualifying habitats of Natura 2000 sites under consideration in this NIR considered most likely to be at risk are water-dependent habitats which are hydrologically connected to the Plan area while the qualifying species most likely to be at risk are mobile species which might migrate through, forage or rest in the Plan area.

3.1 DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE NATURA 2000 SITES

3.1.1 Detailed Description of Natura 2000 Sites

A site synopsis of all eleven Natura 2000 Sites brought forward to Stage 2 is provided in **Appendix D** to this document. A more detailed description of Coole-Garryland cSAC/SPA and Lough Cutra cSAC which occur in proximity to the Plan area is provided in this section. The qualifying habitats and species of these sites are detailed as a representative sample of all qualifying habitats and species which might potentially be affected by the implementation of Plan i.e. given that there are no Natura 2000 sites within the Plan boundary it is considered that potential impacts are likely to be limited to impacts on water-dependent habitats/species hydrologically linked to the area and mobile species which migrate through or forage within the Plan area. The eleven Natura 2000 sites which have the potential to be affected as a result of implementation of the Plan are listed as follows;

- Coole-Garryland Complex cSAC (Site Code: 000252);
- Coole-Garryland SPA (Site Code: 004107);
- Lough Cutra cSAC (Site Code: 000299);
- East Burren Complex cSAC (Site Code: 001926);
- Kiltartan Cave (Coole) cSAC (Site Code: 000286);
- Caherglassaun Turlough cSAC (Site Code: 000238);
- Ballinduff Turlough cSAC (Site Code: 002295);
- Lough Coy cSAC (Site Code: 002117);
- Carrowbaun, Newhall and Ballylee Turloughs cSAC (Site Code: 002293);

- Galway Bay Complex cSAC (Site Code: 000268); and

- Inner Galway Bay SPA (Site Code: 004031).

The qualifying features for each site have been obtained through from the 'SAC Datasheets' available through the NPWS website at:

http://www.npws.ie/protectedsites/

The full name of the habitat type and details of its characteristics, distribution in Ireland and its conservation status in Ireland can be found in the 'Status of Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland' Volumes 1 to 3, available to download from the NPWS website at:

http://www.npws.ie/publications/euconservationstatus/

3.1.1.1 Coole-Garryland cSAC/SPA

Coole-Garryland Turlough Complex is both a cSAC and a SPA and the site is located at its closest point approximately 400m northwest of the Plan boundary. This is a series of turloughs which is unusual due to their existence in close proximity to woodland. The site contains a wide variety of habitats and species and is a popular visitor attraction in the region.

Coole-Garryland Complex cSAC is designated for the presence of the following six habitats, two of which are priority habitats: [**3150**] Natural eutrophic lakes with *Magnopotamion* or *Hydrocharition*-type vegetation; [**3180**] * Turloughs; [**3270**] Rivers with muddy banks with *Chenopodion rubri* p.p. and *Bidention* p.p. vegetation; [**5130**] *Juniperus communis* formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands; [6210] Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (*Festuco Brometalia*)(* important orchid sites); and [**8240**] * Limestone pavements.

Coole-Garryland SPA is designated for the presence of the *Cygnus cygnus* [wintering].

The qualifying habitats and species most likely to be impacted as a result of implementation of the Plan are water-dependent. The Cannahowna/Gort River which runs through Gort town is connected to the Coole-Garryland system via a series of surface and underground systems in the area. Therefore the Cannahowna/Gort River is a potential pollutant pathway to the Coole-Garryland turlough complex from the Plan area.

Therefore there is the potential for indirect impacts as a result of development within the Plan area which has been proposed in the draft LAP. The Gort Wastewater Treatment Plant is considered to be significant potential threat to Coole/Garryland and is discussed in detail in **Section 3.2.3**.

3.1.1.2 Lough Cutra cSAC

Lough Cutrais both a cSAC and a SPAand the site is located at its closest point approximately 2km from the Plan boundary. Lough Cutra SPA was screened out and is not considered in this NIR. This site comprises a large lake with associated wetland habitats and adjacent woodland. Lough Cutra Castle is located on the shores of Lough Cutra and is used an event venue which caters for visitor pike fishing in the lake and also duck and pheasant shooting.

Lough Cutra cSAC is designated for the presence of an internationally important colony *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, the Lesser Horseshoe Bat (LHB). A series of connected woodlands on the western side of the lake is included within the cSAC as foraging habitat for these bats. There are records for a

number of LHB roosts within 15km of the Plan area, including Caherglassaun Turlough cSAC, where a summer roost is present, Kiltartan Cave north of the Plan area, which is a Natural Heritage Area hibernation roost, and Pollduagh Cave, which is a proposed Natural Heritage Area for the species.

It has been suggested that conservation management of LHB should be concentrated within 2.5km of a nursery roost (Bontadina 2002) therefore either removal or enhancement of suitable LHB habitat within the Plan area may impact LHB populations. Bats and, in particular lesser horseshoe bats, require field boundaries to commute in the landscape and LHB's are particularly sensitive to gaps in such commuting routes tending not to tolerate gaps of more than 5m.

3.2 EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

3.2.1 Introduction

A summary of relevant existing environmental information which relate to the Gort Local Area Plan are and its environs is included. This includes issues such as existing water quality in the area, the current capacity of Gort Wastewater Treatment Plant and its potential to cater for the projected population increase of Gort over the lifetime of the Plan, Flood Risk Management and Assessment issues in the area, and records of habitats and/or species which are qualifying interests of nearby Natura 2000 sites and which may be present in the area.

In this section, the relevant baseline environmental information is considered to be information on either environmental conditions necessary for the maintenance of Natura 2000 conservation status, records of Natura 2000 qualifying habitats or species and information on the status of existing or proposed utilities infrastructure in the town.

3.2.2 Water Quality

Gort lies within the Western River Basin District for which a River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) 2009-2015 and Programme of Measures (POM) has been prepared in accordance with the Water Framework Directive (WFD). The Gort LAP area is located within the Kinvara Main Water Management Unit.

Gort is found in a regional important karst aquifer underlain by limestone rock. The Groundwater Protection Scheme identifies that approximately 40% of the area within the LAP is rated as having groundwater vulnerability of 'Extreme' (including bedrock at surface), 50% is rated as 'High' vulnerability and 10% is rated as at 'Moderate' vulnerability.

Waterbodies directly hydrologically connected to Gort are outlined in **Table 3.1**.

Table 3.1: Waterbodies in the Gort LAP Area

Code	Waterbody Name (and Type)	Status	Objective
IE_WE_29_2	**Beagh (River), Cannahowna and Gort (River)**	Good	Protect
IE_WE_29_679	**Loch Outlet, Trib of Kinvara (River)**	Poor	Restore_2015
IE_WE_29_37	**Lough Cutra (Lake)**	Moderate	Restore_2015
IE_WE_29_196	**Coole Lough (Lake)**	Moderate	Restore_2021
IE_WE_29_179	**Lough Nacarriga (Lake)**	Good	Protect
IE_WE_29_168	**Lough Mannagh (Lake)**	Good	Protect
IE_WE_G_0091	**Caherglassaun (Groundwater)**	Good	Protect

3.2.2.1 Rivers

Beagh and Ceannahowna/Gort: The Beagh River flows from Lough Cutra, sinking at the Punchbowl and emerging at the Cannahowna River southwest of Gort. Its current status is rated as 'Good' under the WFD but this is based on monitoring of the Cannahowna near Gort. The Cannahowna forms part of the current water supply for Gort. It flows north through Gort being renamed the Gort River before sinking north of Gort and emerging as part of the Coole River. Both sections of river have been classed as at 'Good' status by the EPA (on the basis of biological monitoring data). This river system is complex in hydrological structure, rising and sinking at several points between Lough Cutra and Lough Coole. It is not a designated Salmonid Water nor is it used as a drinking water abstraction below the site of the WWTP discharge.

LochOutlet, Trib of Kinvara - IE_WE_29_679:The west of the town is in this watercourse catchment which has been classed as at 'Poor' status by the EPA.

3.2.2.2 Lakes

Lough Cutra is located approximately 2km from the Plan boundary and is classified at 'Moderate' status with 'Good' ecological status (GES) to be achieved by 2015.

Coole Lough in the Coole/Garryland cSAC is also classified at 'Moderate' status and must achieve GES by 2021.

Lough Nacarriga and Lough Mannagh are classified at 'Good' ecological status which must be protected.

Part of the Western portion of the LAP area is considered to drain towards Lough Nacarriga and the Coole Lake outlet and that river water body area (WE_29_679 Kinvara_Coole_Loch outlet) has been assigned Poor status with target to restore to 'Good' status by 2021.

Monitoring by Galway County Council and other agencies of all water sources is carried out for the purpose of implementing the Water Framework Directive. It is a policy of the Council to ensure that the EU Water Framework Directive is implemented. Further, it is a policy of the Council to ensure that the specific relevant objectives and measures for individual water bodies set out in the Western River Basin Management Plan and associated Programme of Measures are implemented.

Many of the abovementioned waterbodies are hydrologically connected to Coole-Garryland cSAC and therefore all development within and adjoining the Gort area will be screened for Appropriate Assessment of its potential to impact on the Natura 2000 network, in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.

3.2.2.3 Groundwater

Gort is situated entirely within the Caherglassaun groundwater waterbody. The overall status of this waterbody is "Good" and the overall objective is to protect the waterbody in line with WRBMP and POM. Gort is underlain by limestone and a regionally important karst aquifer and the Groundwater Protection Scheme identifies the majority of the Plan area as having a vulnerability rating of extreme high and medium. The Geological Survey of Ireland has completed a Groundwater Protection Scheme for County Galway. The overall aim of the Groundwater Protection Scheme is to preserve the quality of groundwater, particularly for drinking water purposes, for the benefit of present and future generations. The scheme is not intended to have any statutory authority, but provides a framework for decision-making and guidelines for the Council in carrying out its functions.

Given the highly karstified nature of the Gort landscape, groundwater is particularly at risk of contamination and pollution from diffuse sources such as septic tanks. The operation of the WWTP within its capacity reduces the potential leaching of contaminants from septic tanks to the groundwater of the area.

There are a number of water abstraction points which may potentially receive waters sourced from the Cannahowna/Gort River (**Figure 3.1**). Due to the groundwater flowing in a north-westerly direction the discharge into Gort River will not have a significant effect on Abstraction Points No. 1, No. 2 and No. 3 as the Gort River goes underground downstream from these Abstraction Points. However the remaining Abstraction Points (No's. 4-15) could be effected by the Discharge. Monitoring results were available for the Group Water Schemes supplied by Abstraction Points No. 5 (Ballinastaig/Killomoran GWS), No.10 (Moy GWS), No. 11 (Moy GWS) and No. 14 (Parkroe, Kinvara GWS). These results were deemed satisfactory. Galway County Council samples these Group Water Schemes twice yearly and so any contamination at these abstraction points due to Gort WWTP would be identified through the sampling process.

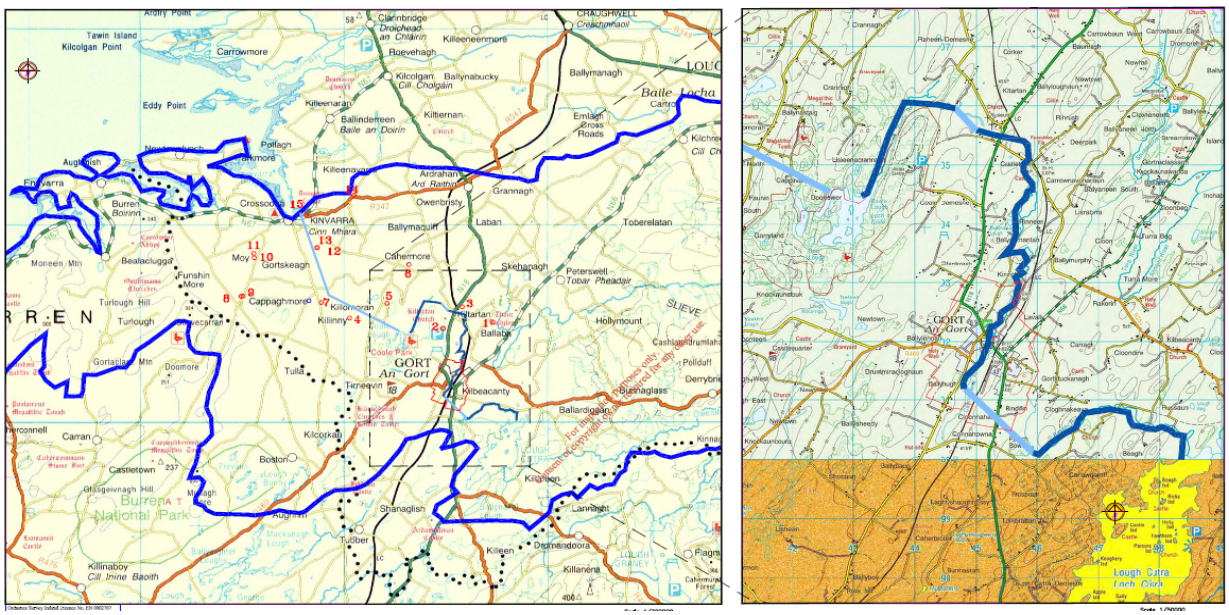


Figure 3.1 Drinking Water Abstraction Points Downstream of Gort WWTP (Source: Galway County Council AA Screening of Wastewater Discharge Licence for Gort WWTP)

3.2.3 Wastewater Facilities

Gort is serviced by a public wastewater collection network with both primary and secondary treatment. The Gort Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) is located on the Kinincha Road to the north of the town. The treated effluent from the WWTP is finally discharged into the Cannahowna/Gort River which goes underground at Kiltartan before finally draining into Corranroe Bay south of Kinvara.

The current WWTP is operating with 469PE spare capacity. The system is a combined system (i.e. surface and waste) and often overflows in very wet weather. Unserviced areas include Ennis Road, Gallagher's Lane and the Galway Road which have private septic tanks. Problem areas include flooding on Crowe Street which is the lowest point on the system.

There has been significant improvement within the plant within the last two years and further improvements are being reviewed by the Water Services Section of Galway County Council. A WWTP plant upgrade is being considered with a possible 3000 design P.E. within the existing site footprint, and including an upgrade/network extension.

According to the Kinvara WMU Action Plan document the risks to water quality from Gort WWTP include insufficient future WWTP capacity, insufficient assimilative capacity for BOD and nutrients, and historical deterioration of Q value downstream of the discharge. The WMU document also states that the plant requires capital works, implementation of a performance management system and that it should be ensured that the capacity of treatment plant is not exceeded. Gort WWTP has been prioritised for capital works upgrades as this scheme is necessary to ensure compliance with the Water Framework Directive.

The EPA submission on the '*Background Issues Paper*' for the Gort LAP (Galway County Council, 2012) notes that the WWTP is operating at close to design capacity and comments that adequate and appropriate infrastructure should be established.

The current WWTP was designed with the following design parameters; PE = 3000 persons, Dry Weather Flow = 795m^3/day, BOD5 = 20mg/l, Daily BOD load = 214 kg/day, Suspended Solids = 30mg/l. Galway County Council applied for an EPA Discharge Licence for Gort WWTP in October 2009. There are no plans to increase capacity within the lifetime of the Gort LAP 2013-2019.

The discharge for the WWTP (SW1 shown in **Figure 3.2** below) occurs at a wide section of the Gort River which becomes significantly narrower and fast flowing approximately 50m downstream of the point. Based on the population recorded in Census 2011 there is an existing spare capacity of 469PE for the Gort WwTP.

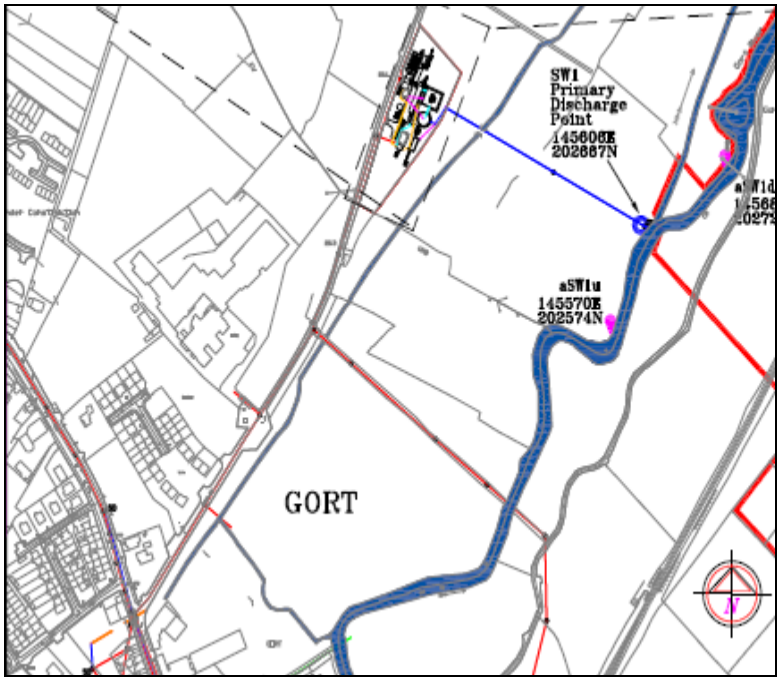


Figure 3.2Primary Discharge Point of Gort WWTP (Source: GCC application for Waste Water Discharge Licence)

3.2.4 Flood Risk Management and Assessment

The OPW has 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. Galway County Council has also carried out a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) for County Galway, including a specific assessment for the Gort Plan Area. As part of the SFRA, the historic flood risk areas have been identified and a number of local level assessments have also been carried out, including local knowledge of flood events and site walkovers. The SFRA has confirmed the flood extents identified in the OPW PFRA mapping for the Gort Plan Area and identified

additional flood risk areas near along the Cannahowna/Gort River south of the L4514 Tubber Road and south of the L85314 Kinincha Road to the north east of the Town Centre.

The Local Area Plan takes due consideration of the national *Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009*, the flood risk mapping available from the PFRA and the recommendations emanating from the Stage 2 SFRA. The Plan identifies Flood Zones in accordance with the Guidelines using data from the PFRA and SFRA (shown on ***Maps 3A/3B – Flood Risk Management***), designates land use zones (see ***Maps 1A/1B – Land Use Zoning***) considered appropriate to each Flood Zone and includes policies and objectives dealing with flood risk assessment and management (see also ***Maps 2A/2B – Specific Objectives***). Flood zones are identified in the map below (**Figure 3.3** below).

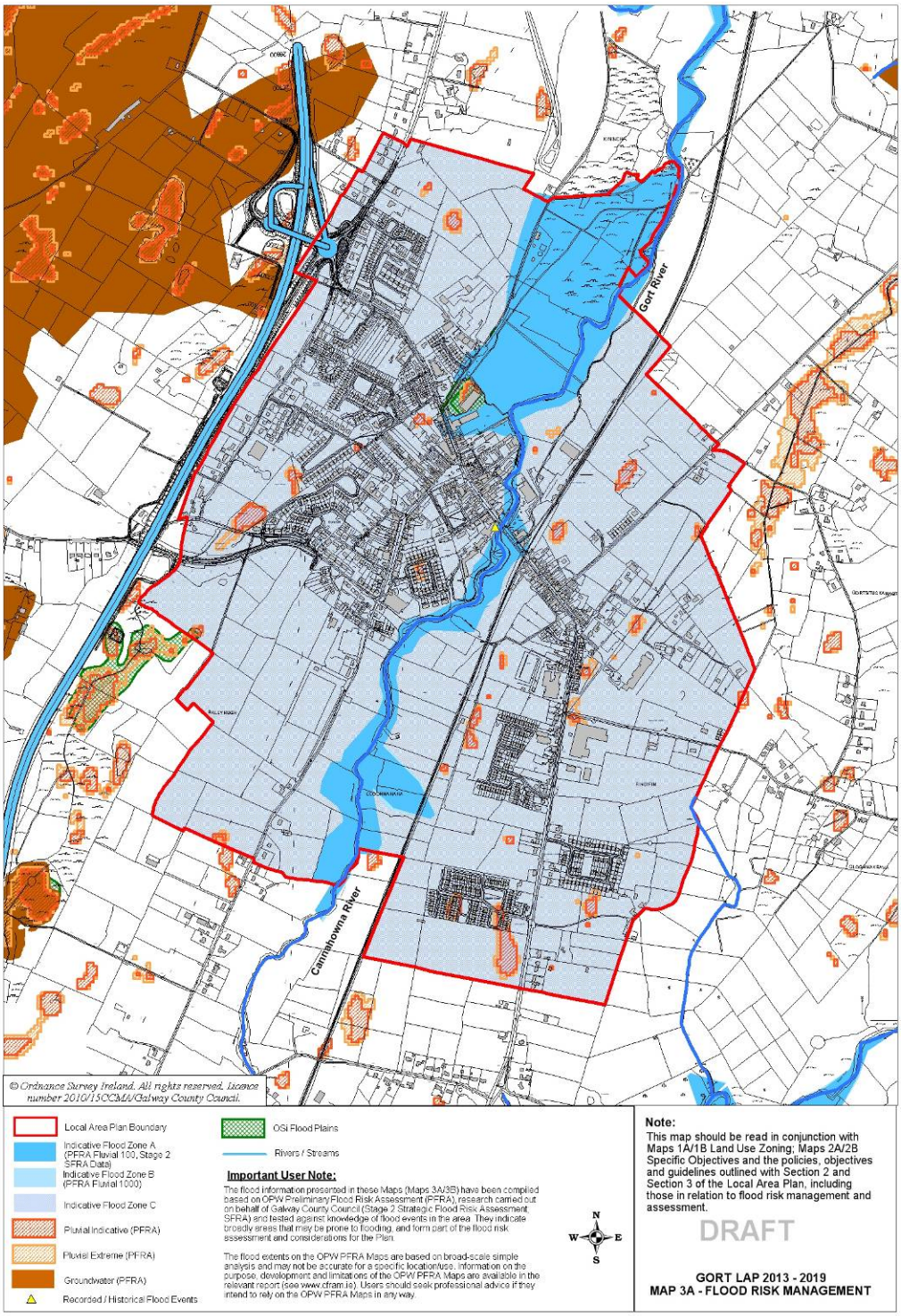


Figure 3.3 Flood Risk Management (Source: Galway County Council)[1]

[1] It should be noted that the Flood Risk Management map has been changed since this map was produced and can be viewed in the Addendum to the NIR and in the Adopted Gort LAP 2013-2019

3.2.5 Habitats and Species

3.2.5.1 Habitats

There are no terrestrial or aquatic habitats which are listed as qualifying interests of Natura 2000 sites located within the Gort LAP boundary. The hydrological system in the area is highly interconnected with the Cannahowna/Gort River running through the centre of Gort Town and feeding through a series of overground and underground waterbodies into Coole/Garryland cSAC/SPA. Coole/Garryland cSAC/SPA is a turlough complex and therefore water quality is an important factor in the maintenance of ecological integrity. In Gort, there are many undesignated areas of natural and semi-natural vegetation which potentially provide habitat for the qualifying interests of Natura 2000 sites which are linked to the Plan area. These include woodland, semi-natural grassland, scrub and treelines and hedgerows.

3.2.5.2 Otter

There are records of Otter spraint from the 'Punchbowl' which is located to the south of the Plan area where the Beagh River flows underground (Otter Survey of Ireland 1982). It is highly likely that Otter use the Cannahowna/Gort River as a navigation path and as foraging habitat and it is possible that otter holts exist within the Plan area.

The female otter range in Ireland is approximately 7km (Bailey and Rochford, 2006) therefore any cSAC with otter listed as a qualifying interest within 7km of the Plan boundary should be considered when assessing potential impacts within the Plan area. The East Burren Complex SAC is the only cSAC within 7km which has Otter as a qualifying interest (**Figure 3.4**).

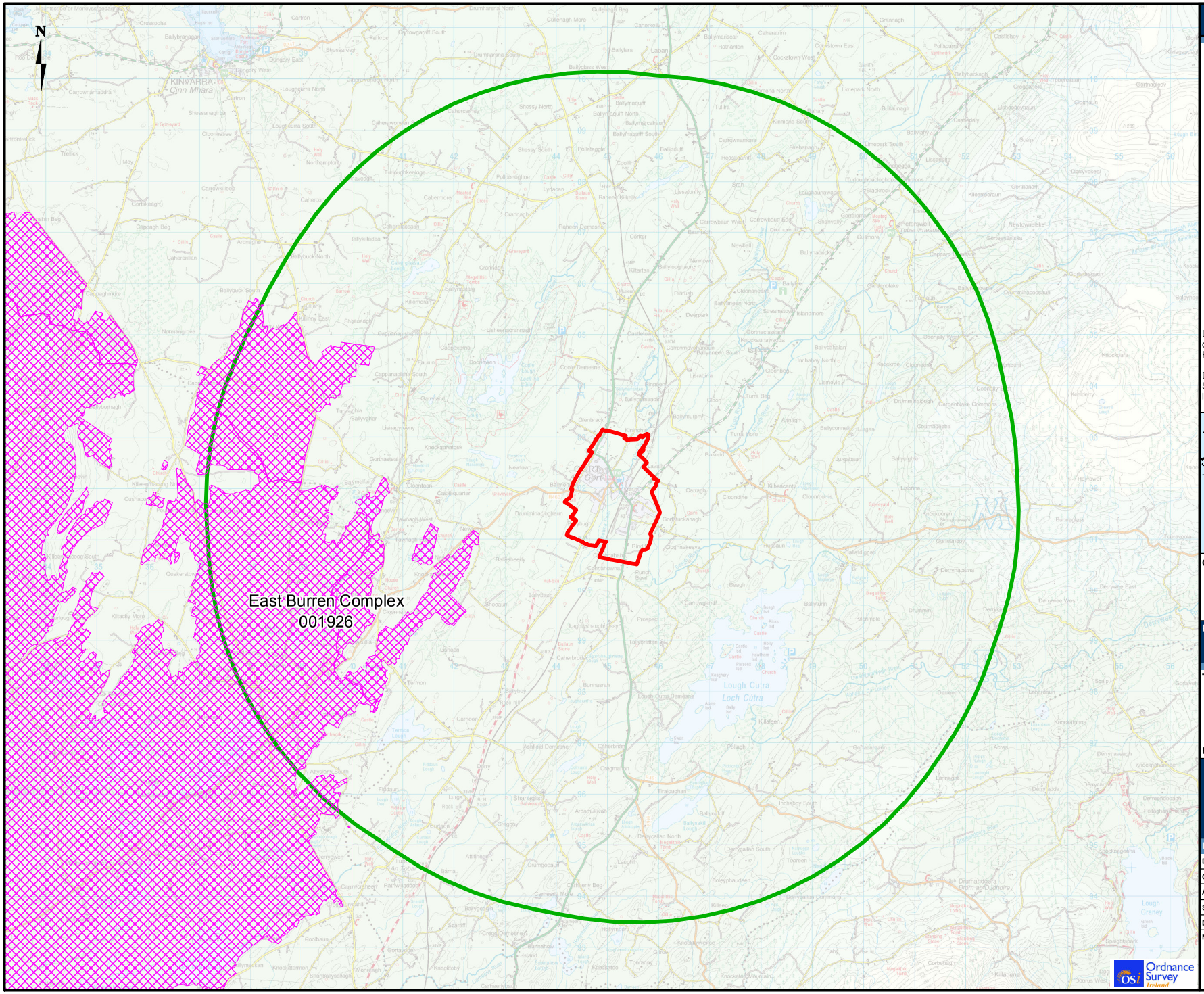
As well as being listed under Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive Otter is also listed under Annex IV of the EU Habitats Directive which is gives strict protection to individual bats and their breeding and resting places.

3.2.5.3 Bats

There are a number of records from within and around the Plan area for the lesser horseshoe bat (LHB) (National Lesser Horseshoe Database). It has been recognised that conservation management of this species should be concentrated within 2.5km of a nursery roost (Bontadina 2002). LHB roosts have been recorded: south of the Plan area at Lough Cutra cSAC and Caherglassaun cSAC, both approximately 2km from Plan boundary; north of the Plan area at Kiltartan Cave cSAC, approximately 2.5km from the Plan boundary; and south of the Plan area at Pollduagh Cave pNHA, approximately 500m from the Plan boundary (see **Figure 3.5** for cSACs and known roosts within 2.5km of the Plan area).As well as being listed under Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive Otter is also listed under Annex IV of the EU Habitats Directive which is gives strict protection to individual bats and their breeding and resting places.

3.3 HABITATS OF UNDEVELOPED LANDS AFFECTED BY PLAN POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES

A number of land use zonings, including Residential, Industrial, Business & Enterprise, Community Facilities as well as Specific Objectives such as the Inner Relief Roads and riverside walkways may be located in greenfield sites immediately which have the potential to impact on qualifying species of Natura 2000 Sites which may be present in the Plan area. In general these greenfield sites are characterised by improved agricultural grassland, dry calcareous and neutral grassland, dry meadows

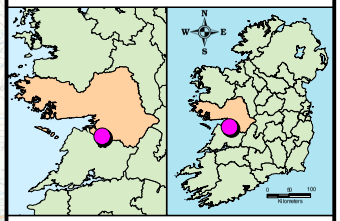


Legend

- Gort LAP Administrative Boundary
- Gort LAP 7 km Buffer
- SAC

Data Source: Gort LAP Administrative Boundary comes from Gort Draft LAP 2012.
File provided by Galway County Council.

Designation data: National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). Data for SAC was last updated on 17/08/2012



Client Galway County Council

Project
Gort LAP (2013-2019) SEA

Title
Designated Sites with Otter Activity

Figure 3.4

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Issue Details

Drawn by:	JF	Project No.	MGE0346
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Approved by:	WM		
Scale:	1:100,000 @ A4	Drawing No.	Rev.
Date:	January 2013	MI0030	F01

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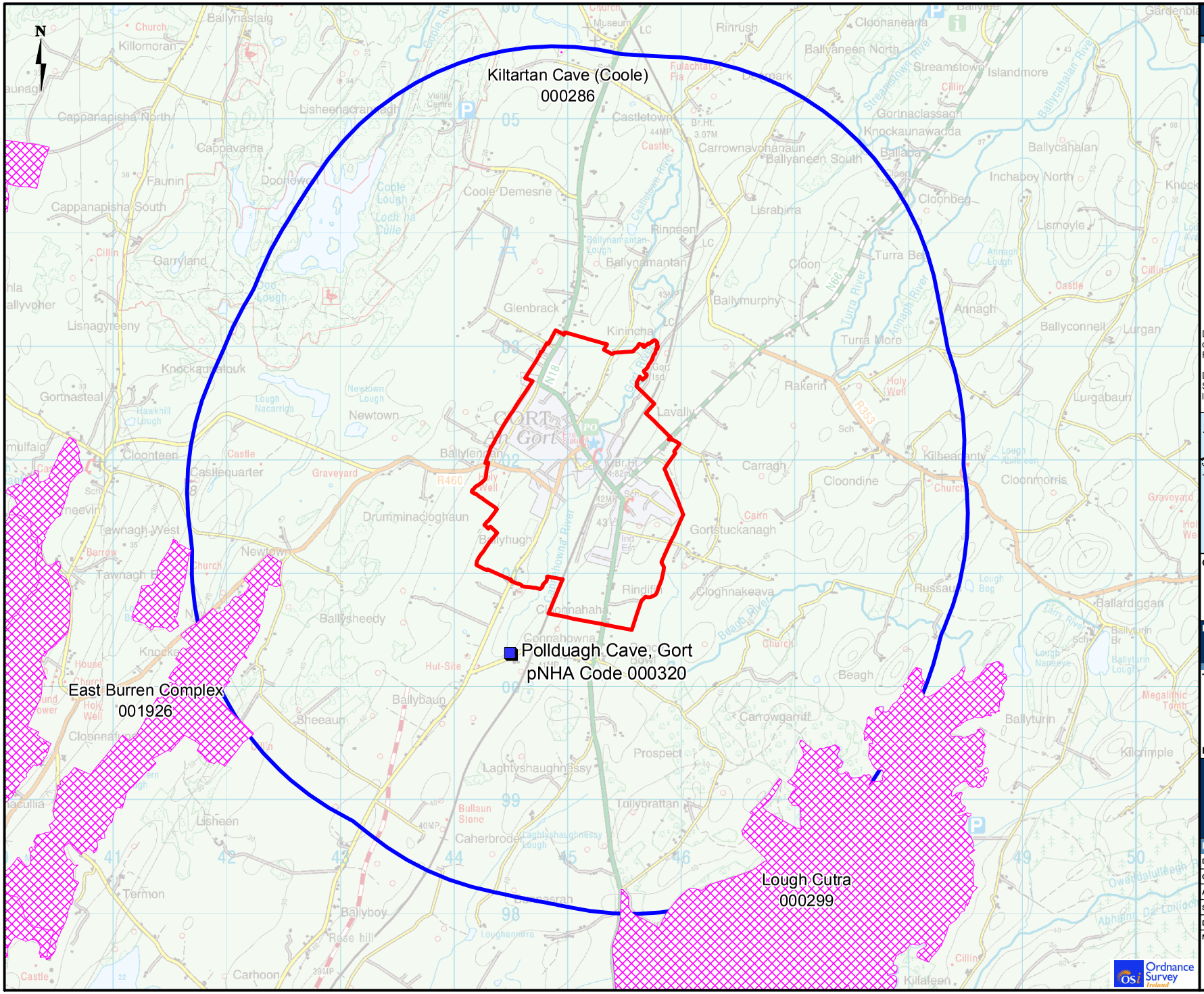
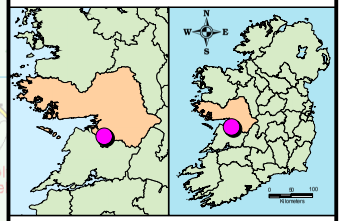


Legend

- Gort LAP Administrative Boundary
- Gort LAP 2.5 km Buffer
- SAC

Data Source: Gort LAP Administrative Boundary comes from Gort Draft LAP 2012.
File provided by Galway County Council.

Designation data: National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS). Data for SAC was last updated on 17/08/2012



Client: Galway County Council

Project: *Gort LAP (2013-2019) SEA*

Title: **Designated Sites with Bat Activity**

Figure 3.5

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Issue Details			
Drawn by:	JF	Project No.	MGE0346
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Approved by:	WM		
Scale:	1:45,000 @ A4	Drawing No.	Rev.
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and grassy verges, hedgerows, broadleaved woodland, and scrub. The majority of these areas are underlain by karst geology with groundwater systems that directly influence the status of qualifying habitats e.g. turlough habitat in Coole-Garryland cSAC. Any development in these greenfield sites connected via surface watercourses or groundwater flows to Natura 2000 qualifying habitat such as Turlough will have the potential to negatively impact this habitat through the discharge of nutrient-enriched or contaminated water. Some of these areas have hedgerow networks and broadleaved woodland or scrub which may potentially be used by lesser horseshoe bat populations as migratory pathways or for foraging or temporary roosting habitat.

3.3.1 Development Land Use Zonings

In order to deliver on the preferred option, a number of scenarios have been considered in relation to land use management and zoning:

1. Rezoning of lands.
2. Specifying/introducing phased development on a number of zonings as appropriate.
3. De-zoning of lands.

The phasing of residential development and the rezoning of certain lands for environmental reasons is considered the most appropriate approach at this point in time. Residential lands have generally been phased in a sequential manner and Phase 1 residential lands have been identified for short to medium term growth in suitable locations that are serviced and accessible and which avoid significant environmental sensitivities. This includes urban infill sites, sequential extensions to the existing residential fabric and a significant growth area to the east of the Plan Area. The phasing as applied also allows for some flexibility, as detailed in the policies and objectives of the Plan.

In general, undeveloped lands located within identified flood risk areas (in particular Flood Zones A and B) have been rezoned as Open Space in accordance with the *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2009* in order to avoid inappropriate development in high to moderate flood risk areas and to address the potential impacts of climate change. The Plan also includes policies and objectives to ensure that the sensitivities of the various environmental and flood risk areas adequately considered, protected and managed as appropriate, in the development management process.

Large scale employment uses remain focused on Industrial zoned lands primarily to the north of the Plan, with smaller areas to the south and southwest, centred on Industrial and Business and Enterprise zonings. The town centre remains the primary focus for the location of new retail development, with the land use zoning matrix providing further guidance on other appropriate uses. **Table 3.2** outlines the capacity of zoned lands within the draft Plan area.

Table 3.2: Capacity of Zoned Lands within the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2013 - 2019

Plan Zonings	Total Area Zoned in Ha	Undeveloped Zoned in Ha
Town Centre/Commercial **(C1)**	34.26	12.80
Residential **(R)**: Existing Developed R Phase 1 R Phase 2	(Total:150.88) 55.21 23.65 72.02	(Total: 95.67) 23.65 72.02*
Business & Enterprise **(BE)**	5.27	5.09
Industrial (**I)**	35.04	27.36
Community Facilities **(CF)**	11.98	2.71
Agriculture **(A)**	13.47	10.32
Open Space/Recreation &	60.33	60.33
Public Utilities **(PU)**	0.89	0.19
Totals	312.12	214.47

***Note**:*

1. **Transport Infrastructure (TI)** provides for the provision/maintenance of all roads and rail transportation infrastructure and appears as white land on the Land Use Zoning Maps 1A/1B in Appendix A (areas not estimated).
2. *Assuming all Residential Phase 2 are undeveloped.

Without development policies and objectives within the Draft Plan which seek to protect water quality, maintain semi-natural habitats and adhere to relevant EU guidelines the Plan might have the potential to negatively affect local biodiversity including designated sites, habitats, species and migratory and foraging features in the landscape.

The following section discusses the habitats and potential environmental receptors associated with each land use zoning type which were identified at an early stage of development of the draft Plan. No part of the Plan area contains any part of aNatura 2000 site however the Cannahowna/Gort River is hydrologically connected to a number of European sites, in particular Coole/Garryland Turlough Complex which is recognised as an important turlough complex and is designated as both a cSAC and SPA. Therefore in **Section 3.3.2** mobile species such as lesser horseshoe bat and otter and impacts to water quality are considered. Land use zoning map 1a from the Draft Gort LAP is provided in **Figure 3.6** and shows where proposed zonings are to be located within the Plan boundary. In addition, maps which isolate specific locations for zoning types are included in **Appendix C**.

The application of a range of policies and objectives contained in the Draft LAP including Objective DS3 Natura 2000 Network and Habitats Directive Assessment and Objective DS4: Development Management Standards and Guidelines (amongst others) will assist in ensuring these issues are considered should development applications present for these areas.

3.3.1.1 Town Centre/Commercial

The Town Centre/Commercial zonings are concentrated in the existing centre of town and include undeveloped lands, totalling 12.80ha, adjacent to the railway line thereby supporting the sequential and phased development of the town centre. For much of this zoning, the lands are established urban areas; the main undeveloped land zoned town centre, adjacent to the railway line, is composed of improved agricultural grassland, with some hedgerows, scrub, copses of mature broadleaved trees and scattered trees and is likely to be used by lesser horseshoe bat as either migration routes or foraging habitat.

3.3.1.2 Residential Phase 1

The Core Strategy in the Galway County Development Plan has identified a target population growth of up to 820 persons for Gort to 2015, which results in a requirement for 23.65ha of zoned land for residential purposes. Residential Phase 1 lands are generally on agricultural grassland (**Appendix C, Figure 1**). However there is some potential habitat for lesser horseshoe bat including one area in the northeast of the Plan areas between the N66 and the Railway line which has some mature hedgerows and scrub woodland. The proposed increase in the population of Gort by 820 persons within the lifetime of the Plan would overload the capacity of Gort WWTP. Therefore if all lands zoned Residential Phase 1 were developed prior to upgrade of the WWTP then potential pollution of Cannahowna/Gort River is likely.

3.3.1.3 Residential Phase 2

The majority of Residential Phase 2 lands are located in the south portion of the Plan area(**Appendix C, Figure 2**). These zoned lands are not generally considered available for development within the lifetime of the Plan except for certain restricted circumstances and taking into account all planning and environmental considerations. These lands are dominated by agricultural grasslands of varying levels of improvement. Field boundaries within these areas are dominated by stone walls and with occasional hedgerows. There are no records for karst features within the lands zoned for Residential Phase 2.

3.3.1.4 Business and Enterprise (BE)

There is one parcel of land which is zoned Business and Enterprise within the Plan area and a total of 5.09ha of this land has not yet been developed. This is located in the west of the Plan area, adjacent to the M18 Motorway (**Appendix C, Figure 3**). This land is dominated by agricultural grassland with some hedgerow habitat and a mature treeline along the Glenbrack Road.

3.3.1.5 Industrial (I)

There is a total of 27.36ha of industrial land use zoned on undeveloped land within the Plan area, mostly concentrated in the northwest and southeast area of the Plan (**Appendix C, Figure 4**). Both areas are characterised by agricultural grassland and arable cropland with some boundary hedgerows and scattered trees. There is some existing industrial development in both the main areas zoned as industrial. Without a requirement that trees and hedgerows be retained where possible and if removed compensatory planting be carried out it is unclear whether this zoning might impact lesser horseshoe bat populations.

3.3.1.6 Community Facilities (CF)

There are a number of areas within the Plan boundary which are zoned for Community Facilities (CF) with a total of 2.71ha of this undeveloped (**Appendix C, Figure 5**). Land which has not yet been developed generally consists of agricultural grassland with some hedgerows. Development within these areas has the potential to impact lesser horseshoe bat populations through the removal of habitat such as hedgerows.

3.3.1.7 Agriculture (A)

There is 10.32ha of undeveloped land proposed for agriculture within the draft LAP. The main agricultural zonings are the lands along the western boundary of the Plan are adjacent to the M18 Gort to Crusheen Motorway (**Appendix C, Figure 6**). Much of this land had previously been zoned for agricultural use. Most of this land is agricultural grassland however there are some gappy hedgerows

which are found along field boundaries. These hedgerows may be used by species as lesser horseshoe bat.

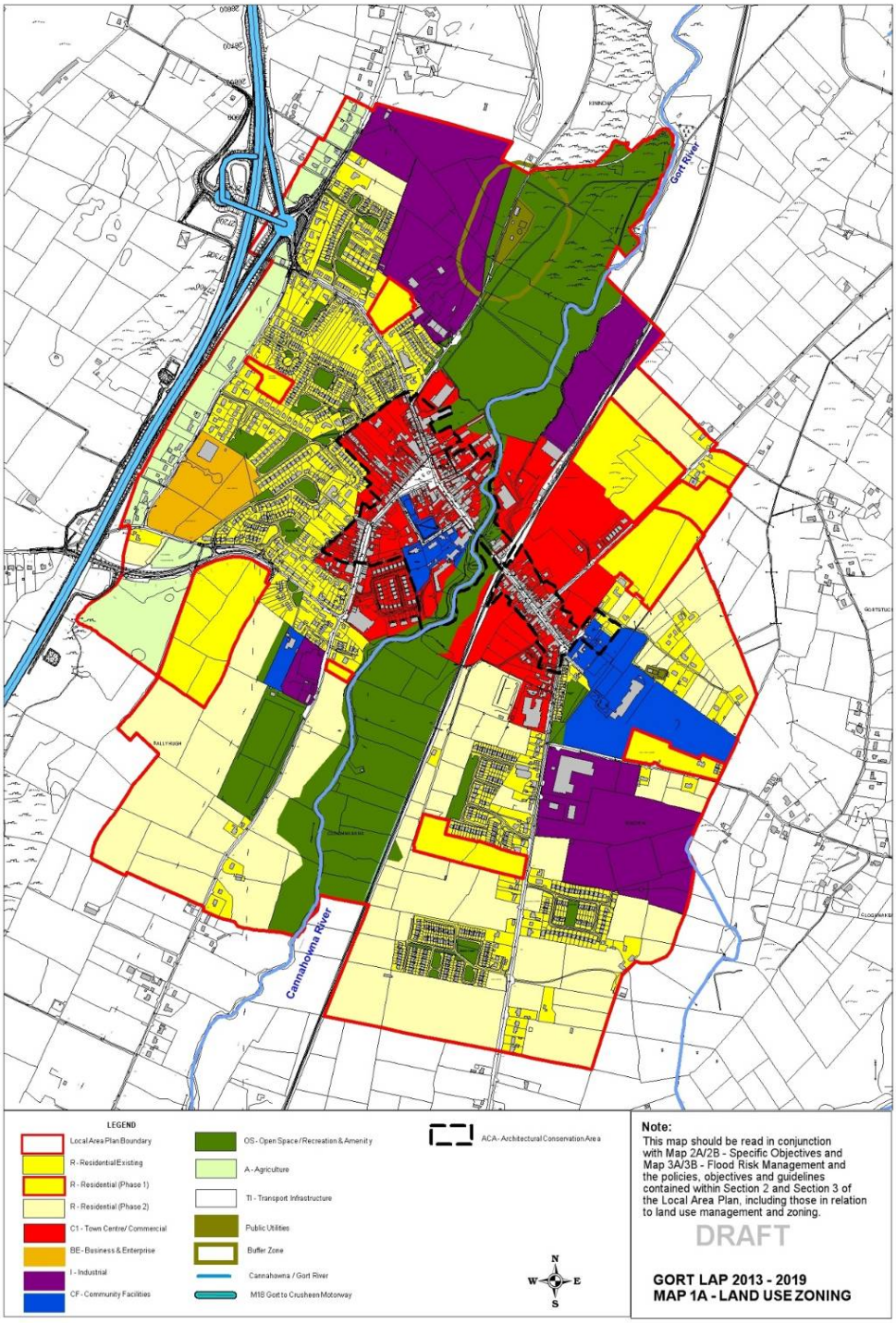

Figure 3.6 Land Use Zoning Map for Gort LAP[2]

[2] It should be noted that the Land Use Zoning Map has been changed since this map was produced and can be viewed in the Addendum to the NIR and in the Adopted Gort LAP 2013-2019

3.3.1.8 Open Space/Recreation and Amenity (OS)

There is 60.33ha proposed for open space/recreation and amenity in the draft LAP. Much of this land is zoned along the Cannahowna/Gort River in addition to smaller areas that have areas of existing open green space associated with residential development (**Appendix C, Figure 7**). Other areas have been zoned either following the Flood Risk Assessment or because of semi-natural features such as broadleaved woodland.

Impacts identified with such zonings include disturbance to species through increased access and accompanying noise or human presence. However, the land use matrix has curtailed a range of potential uses for this zoning and a limited number of uses are open for consideration (none are permitted in principle). It is unclear as to the potential impacts of increased recreational access along the Cannahowna/Gort on species such as Otter and Bats.

3.3.1.9 Public Utilities (PU)

PU zoned lands include the existing Gort Wastewater Treatment Plant. Gort WwTP is located in the north of the Plan area in the townland of Kinincha and is surrounded by lands zoned Open Space and Recreation. This area is dominated by wet grassland with pockets of Yellow Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*) and an area of low scrub comprised of Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*), Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) and occasional Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and has also been classified as Indicative Flood Zone A.

3.3.1.10 Flood Risk

The majority of areas identified as Flood Zones A or B under the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for County Galway are zoned 'Open Space' within the plan area (see **Figure 3.2** and **Figure 3.4**), thus avoiding incompatible uses and directing inappropriate development away from these zones. Limited uses are open for consideration for the open space zoning. Such developments would be assessed in accordance with the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines (2009). There are small numbers of existing developments that lie within Flood Zones A or B; again any redevelopment activities associated with these existing structures would also require application of the above guidelines.

3.3.2 Potential Impacts of Policies and Objectives

3.3.2.1 Water Quality Impacts

Qualifying habitats and species sensitive to changes in water quality occur in hydrologically connected sites adjacent to the Plan area. Development within the Plan area which facilitates the increase of population to over the capacity of the WwTP could adversely affect water quality. The existence of inadequate wastewater treatment facilities for new developments could give rise to surface water and groundwater pollution resulting in downstream impacts to water-dependent qualifying habitats e.g. turloughs and species e.g. otter. Elevations in nutrient levels and eutrophication are likely to be the principal impacts arising from the discharge of inadequately treated wastewater arising from overcapacity of the WwTP due to new developments.

Any new water abstractions particularly from Lough Cutra or the Cannahowna/Gort River to service future development will require an Appropriate Assessment in advance of any additional abstractions. Although in the past Lough Cutra has been identified as a potential source for Gort's drinking water supply this scenario has been suggested in the current Draft LAP and is not listed on the Water Services Investment Programme for Galway County, 2010 – 2012 (which has been extended to 2013). As detailed plans for future changes to abstraction rates are not outlined in the LAP the potential effects of such abstractions cannot be assessed at this stage. Policies and objectives of the LAP (i.e. Policy NH1 etc.) and CDP will ensure that any future plans or projects detailing proposals to a new abstraction from Lough Cutra will undergo Appropriate Assessment Screening and full Appropriate

Assessment if necessary and will only take place where a risk of likely significant effects does not arise.

3.3.2.2 Impacts to Karst Features

Karst features are prevalent outside of the Gort Plan area, particularly to the south. Although there are no records of Karst features within the Plan area (GSI, 2013) given the geology of the area, there exists the potential for such features to be located within the Plan area. Any future proposed development developments in areas of currently undeveloped land zoned. The presence of karst features within new development sites will present particular risks to the water quality of groundwater and groundwater-dependent/influenced habitats such as turloughs and springs and for the water quality generally within the area.

Development on karst formations can give rise to ground instability leading to risks of collapse and the blocking of subterranean channels for groundwater flow. The blocking of groundwater channels could lead to a disruption of flow to hydrologically connected Natura 2000 sites. This is of particular relevance for Coole/Garryland Complex cSAC/SPA which is connected to the Plan area through above and below ground hydrology.

3.3.2.3 Disturbance Impacts to Qualifying Species

Aside from potential disturbance issues arising from water quality issues, qualifying species such as lesser horseshoe bat and otter could also be disturbed as a result of improved access either through the riverside walkway or the cycleway/walkway connecting the Plan area to Coole/Garryland.

3.3.2.4 Air Emissions

It is considered that air emissions as a result of development with the Plan area are unlikely to result in impacts to Natura 2000 sites owing to the distance between the Plan area and the nearest Natura 2000 sites.

Appendix A to this report outlines the potential impact of individual Policies and Objectives to Natura 2000 Sites at risk from the Plan's implementation.

3.3.3 Mitigation Measures

From the outset the Plan has sought to provide a template for the sustainable development of the Plan area while at the same time protecting the integrity of Natura 2000 Sites. As outlined in Section 1 of the Plan a key consideration during its preparation has been the statutory provisions of the EU Habitats Directive. The Strategic Vision Statement of the Plan aims for Gort to be a sustainable, self-sufficient, vibrant, socially inclusive and innovative growth centre within the County, protecting and enhancing its attractive medieval character and natural environment.

The preferred development strategy option is for a Local Area Plan that is informed by Environmental Assessment and Development Strategy Objective DS 3 sets out the intention of the Plan to protect Natura 2000 Sites. This Objective sets out a firm commitment to ensure that the provisions of Article 6 of the EU Habitats Directive are fully implemented.

Section 3.9 of the Plan sets out a number of Objectives that further reinforces the approach of the Plan to protect Natura 2000 Sites. These Objectives will ensure that all plans or projects that have the potential, either alone or in combination with other plans and project, to result in likely significant effects on Natura 2000 Sites and on natural heritage in general will undergo assessment.

In addition to these overarching Objectives, which aim to protect Natura 2000 Sites and implement the provisions of the EU Habitats Directive, a number of specific Policies and Objectives are included within the Plan to ensure that the Plan affords protection to Natura 2000 Sites. In addition to this, recommendations to strengthen the wording of a number of objectives are outlined in **Table 3.3** below. This precautionary approach to development within this zoning in conjunction with the mitigatory objectives of the Plan will ensure that likely significant effects arising from development within this zoning are avoided.

Appendix B of this NIR presents all the Policies and Objectives contained in the Plan and assesses their potential impact on Natura 2000 sites. A summary list of all Policies and Objectives affording protection to Natura 2000 Sites is provided in **Table 3.3** below and where necessary recommendations for the strengthening of these Policies and Objectives are outlined.

3.3.3.1 Mitigatory Policies and Objectives in the Plan

The existing mitigatory policies and objectives of the Plan are outlined in **Table 3.3** below. An assessment of how these Policies and Objectives will ensure the protection of Natura 2000 Sites is provided and where necessary additional recommendations to strengthen these measures to further protect the integrity of Natura 2000 Sites are also outlined. In addition to the mitigatory Policies and Objectives outlined in **Table 3.3** recommendations to reword a number of specific Policies/Objectives with the potential to result in negative impacts are provided in **Table 3.4** below. The rewording of these Policies/Objectives seeks to specifically target and annul their potential negative environmental implications. It is noted that only a selection of the potentially negative Policies/Objectives associated with the Plan are included in **Table 3.4**. A full list of all potentially negative Policies/Objectives is contained within **Appendix A**. The majority of these potentially negative Policies/Objectives have not been included in **Table 3.4** for specific recommendations as the mitigatory measures outlined in **Table 3.3** are deemed sufficient to ensure potential likely significant effects associated with this Policies/Objective are avoided. Any accepted text in blue is alternative text which has been added by Galway County Council.

Table 3.3: Mitigatory Policies and Objectives within Gort LAP

Original or Newly Proposed Mitigation Policy/Objective	Description of how Mitigatory Policy/Objective will Protect N2K Sites	Recommended Changes to Policies/Objectives	Accepted Wording of Mitigatory Policy/Objective in the Draft Plan
Development Strategy			
Policy DS – Development Strategy It is the overarching policy of Galway County Council to support and facilitate the sustainable development of the Plan Area in line with the preferred development strategy option, Option 2 – Consolidate Existing Town Centre, Sequential Development around Established Urban Core and Controlled Eastward Expansion, and in a manner that maintains and enhances the quality of life of local communities, promotes opportunities for economic development, social integration and sustainable transport options, protects the cultural, built and natural heritage and environment and complies with relevant statutory requirements**.**	It is the overarching policy of the Council to support and facilitate the sustainable development of the Plan Area which furthers the development of Gort in a manner that maintains and enhances and protects the natural heritage and environment and complies with relevant statutory requirements.	No recommended changes to this Policy	As original policy
Objective DS 3 – 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/superseding guidance). A plan or project (e.g. proposed development) within the Plan Area will only be authorised after	This Objective directs the Development Strategy for the Gort LAP to ensure that the conservation management objectives, conservation status and integrity of Natura 2000 Sites will not be negatively impacted by elements of the LAP.	No recommended changes to this Policy	Additional text added by Galway County Council: …EU Birds Directive (2009/147/EC), **the Environmental Liability Directive,** 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…

Original or Newly Proposed Mitigation Policy/Objective	Description of how Mitigatory Policy/Objective will Protect N2K Sites	Recommended Changes to Policies/Objectives	Accepted Wording of Mitigatory Policy/Objective in the Draft Plan
the competent authority (Galway County Council) has ascertained, based on scientific evidence, screening for Appropriate Assessment, and a Habitats Directive Assessment where necessary, that: 1. 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 2. 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 3. The plan or project will have significant adverse effects on the integrity of any European site (that hosts 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, 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			

Original or Newly Proposed Mitigation Policy/Objective	Description of how Mitigatory Policy/Objective will Protect N2K Sites	Recommended Changes to Policies/Objectives	Accepted Wording of Mitigatory Policy/Objective in the Draft Plan
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.			
Objective DS 5 – Service Led Development Ensure that development is preceded by sufficient capacity in the public waste water and potable water infrastructure.	This Objective will ensure that adequate wastewater services are in place prior to permitting new development. This approach will avoid a potential scenario where wastewater treatment services cannot adequately treat the hydraulic loads being received, resulting in the discharge of polluting wastewater to the aquatic environment and potential impacts to water quality and qualifying habitats and species of all water-dependent Natura 2000 sites.		As original objective
Land Use			
Policy LU1 – Land Use Management (refer to Maps 1A/1B) It is the policy of Galway County Council to provide a land use zoning framework for the Plan Area to direct the type, density and location of development in a manner that contributes to the consolidation of the town centre, that allows for the orderly and sequential development of the town, that protects and enhances the existing landscape setting, character and unique identity of the town	The Policy sets out an approach to land use management which will in itself have a neutral effect on Natura 2000 Sites. The measures within this Policy to protect and enhance the existing landscape setting and environmental quality of the Plan area will have a	No changes required or proposed	As original policy

Original or Newly Proposed Mitigation Policy/Objective	Description of how Mitigatory Policy/Objective will Protect N2K Sites	Recommended Changes to Policies/Objectives	Accepted Wording of Mitigatory Policy/Objective in the Draft Plan
and that complies with the statutory requirements in the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). The land use zoning framework is supported by a residential phasing framework to ensure compliance with the Core Strategy and to promote the orderly and sequential development of the town.	positive effect for Natura 2000 Sites.		
Objective LU 6 – Open Spaces/Recreation & Amenity (OS) (Refer to Map 1A/1B) Promote the development of open spaces and recreational activities in accordance with best practice and on suitable lands with adequate access to the local community and retain existing open space and recreational facilities unless it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of Galway County Council that these uses are no longer required by the community. Ensure that any flood risk areas within the OS zone are appropriately managed to avoid, reduce and/or mitigate, as appropriate, the risk and potential impact of flooding.	The retention of open space and appropriate management of biodiversity will assist in the preservation of habitat for mobile species which are qualifying species of Natura 2000 sites and will contribute to reduction in the potential for water pollution as a result of the Plan.	No changes required or proposed	As original objective
Residential Development			
Policy RD1 Residential Development It is the policy of Galway County Council to support the creation of sustainable communities and high quality residential areas at appropriate locations with a range of housing options and adequate support services, facilities and amenities, having regard to the guidance contained in the following policy documents or any	This Objective contains measures to ensure that higher residential densities are located in appropriate areas where such developments "will not….impact adversely on the integrity of Natura 2000 Sites.	No changes required or proposed	As Original Policy

Original or Newly Proposed Mitigation Policy/Objective	Description of how Mitigatory Policy/Objective will Protect N2K Sites	Recommended Changes to Policies/Objectives	Accepted Wording of Mitigatory Policy/Objective in the Draft Plan
updated versions: • Joint Galway County Council and Ballinasloe Town Council Housing Strategy 2009-2015. • Sustainable Residential Developments in Urban Areas: Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2009 and the accompanying guidance document Urban Design Manual: A Best Practice Guide – A Companion Document to the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas, 2009. • Galway Clustered Housing Guidelines, where appropriate, in the assessment of any proposals for new multiple unit housing developments within the Plan Area. • Galway County Council Traveller Accommodation Programme. • Smart Travel "A Sustainable Transport Future 2009 – 2020", including the National Cycle Policy Framework 2009-2022, and any other related national policy documents. • Water Framework Directive and the Planning System and Flood Risk Management, Guidelines to Planning Authorities 2009.			
Policy RD2 Phased Development on Residential Zoned Lands (refer to Maps 1A/B) It is the policy of Galway County Council to encourage orderly, sequential and phased residential development in accordance with the Preferred Development Strategy and the land use management and zoning provisions set out in this	The phasing of residential development which will ensure development is prioritised in suitably serviced lands will reduce the likelihood for potential indirect impacts (as outlined for Objective LU3	No changes required or proposed	As Original Policy

Original or Newly Proposed Mitigation Policy/Objective	Description of how Mitigatory Policy/Objective will Protect N2K Sites	Recommended Changes to Policies/Objectives	Accepted Wording of Mitigatory Policy/Objective in the Draft Plan
Local Area Plan. This shall include a positive presumption in favour of the sequential development of suitably serviced Residential (Phase 1) lands in order to align the Local Area Plan with the Core Strategy/Settlement Strategy in the Galway County Development Plan, subject to compliance with the policies and objectives in this Local Area Plan and the principles of proper planning and sustainable development. There will be a general presumption against residential development on lands zoned Residential (Phase 2) within the lifetime of the Local Area Plan, subject to the exceptions provided for under Objective RD1.	above) associated with residential development in un-serviced lands from occurring.		
Utilities Infrastructure			
Policy UI 1 – Water Supply, Wastewater And Surface Water Infrastructure It is the policy of Galway County Council to support the provision and maintenance of adequate wastewater disposal, water supply and surface water drainage infrastructure, in accordance with EU Directives, national legislation and applicable standards. This will include the provision of adequate capacity in the public wastewater, wastewater treatment plant and storm-water sewer network, an adequate quantity and quality of water supply and the promotion of Sustainable Drainage System approaches and techniques for developments within the Plan Area.	The aim of this policy is to ensure adequate wastewater treatment and surface water drainage infrastructure are available to meet the need of new development within the lifetime of the Plan. The provision of adequate infrastructure will ensure adverse impacts to surface water resulting from inadequate wastewater treatment or surface water drainage are avoided. The provision of adequate water supply infrastructure will also have a positive effect in terms of water conservation	No changes required or proposed	As Original Policy

Original or Newly Proposed Mitigation Policy/Objective	Description of how Mitigatory Policy/Objective will Protect N2K Sites	Recommended Changes to Policies/Objectives	Accepted Wording of Mitigatory Policy/Objective in the Draft Plan
	by reducing water loss.		
Objective UI 1 – Water Services Infrastructure (Refer to Maps 2A/2B) Support the maintenance, improvement and monitoring of the public water supply, wastewater disposal and surface water drainage infrastructure, as necessary to address any deficiencies in infrastructure capacity and/or service the development needs of the town. This will include the following and any other projects approved during the period of the Plan: a) Continue to carry out improvements to the existing infrastructure and quality of the town's water supply system, including the partial network and reservoir upgrade works under the Water Conservation Rehabilitation works as proposed to commence in 2014/2015. b) Monitor the capacity of the updated wastewater treatment plant as development takes place. c) Ensure that trade effluent from new development is managed properly and discharged to sewer in accordance with relevant discharge licenses, where appropriate. d) Progress the upgrading of the existing wastewater treatment plant and the sewer network for the town under the Water Services Investment Programme. e) Improve and maintain an adequate surface water drainage system throughout the Plan Area.	See Policy UI 1 above regarding water supply infrastructure.	1. Recommendation to include intention to prepare a water conservation strategy for the area during the lifetime of the Plan. 2. b) As development takes place monitor the **adequacy of the existing wastewater treatment facility(ies) in terms of both capacity and performance as well as potential risk to human health and water quality.** **Implement the recommendations in the Kinvara Water Management Unit Action Plan requiring capital works, implementation of performance management systems of the Gort Wastewater Treatment Plant.** 3.Recommended that the following text included within the Gort Town LAP. **The waste water treatment plant upgrade will be carried out in accordance with the Waste Water Discharge (Authorisation) Regulations**	1. A Water Conservation Strategy has been prepared and will commence in 2014/2015. Suitable text inserted in part a) 2. Text not accepted 3. Accepted with altered wording in part d) The majority of this objective has been modified to provide the new wording below: **Support the maintenance, improvement and monitoring of the public water supply, wastewater disposal and surface water drainage infrastructure, as necessary to address any deficiencies in infrastructure capacity and/or service the development needs of the town. This will include the following and any other projects approved during the period of the Plan:** **a) Continue to implement the Water Conservation Strategy within Gort and carry out improvements to the existing**

Original or Newly Proposed Mitigation Policy/Objective	Description of how Mitigatory Policy/Objective will Protect N2K Sites	Recommended Changes to Policies/Objectives	Accepted Wording of Mitigatory Policy/Objective in the Draft Plan
		2007, S.I. No. 684 of 2007.	**infrastructure, including the partial network and reservoir upgrade works under the Water Conservation Rehabilitation works as proposed to commence in 2014/2015.** **b) Continue to implement the water leak detection programme including the use of a strategic metering system to aid in leak detection and reduction in unaccounted for water.** **c) Ensure that trade effluent from new development is managed properly and discharged to sewers in accordance with relevant discharge licenses.** **d) Progress the upgrading of the existing wastewater treatment plant and the sewer network for the town under the Water Services Investment Programme in accordance with the Waste Water Discharge (Authorisation) Regulations 2007, S.I. No. 684 of 2007.** **e) Improve and maintain an adequate surface water drainage**

Original or Newly Proposed Mitigation Policy/Objective	Description of how Mitigatory Policy/Objective will Protect N2K Sites	Recommended Changes to Policies/Objectives	Accepted Wording of Mitigatory Policy/Objective in the Draft Plan
			system throughout the Plan Area.
New objective recommended promoting Integrated Constructed Wetlands within the administrative boundary of the LAP. **Objective UI XX - Integrated Constructed Wetlands** **Promote the appropriate use of Integrated Constructed Wetlands (ICWs) within the Gort area were appropriate which follows the guidance provided by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.**	By adopting and implementing a strategy that integrates the management of land, water and biological resources, whilst promoting conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way, the ICW concept addresses the objectives of the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD)	Recommended new objective	Not accepted.
Objective UI2– Water Services for New Developments Require all new developments to be adequately serviced with water supply, wastewater disposal and surface water drainage in accordance with applicable legislation, standards and guidelines and to submit the necessary documentation with their planning applications to confirm same. Encourage only as much development, both in terms of quantity and type of development that can be provided for based on the utility services available and prohibit any proposed development that cannot be adequately serviced, that would lead to a significant environmental effects or that would pose an unacceptable threat to the capacity of water, wastewater or surface water	This approach which is consistent with the approach to new development outlined in the Galway County Development Plan will ensure wastewater generated during the construction and operation of new developments will not result in a deterioration of water quality thus ensuring impacts to associated Natura 2000 Sites are avoided. This is a very important mitigatory objective. It serves to protect Natura 200 sites on two fronts:	No changes required or proposed	As original objective

Original or Newly Proposed Mitigation Policy/Objective	Description of how Mitigatory Policy/Objective will Protect N2K Sites	Recommended Changes to Policies/Objectives	Accepted Wording of Mitigatory Policy/Objective in the Draft Plan
infrastructure in the Plan area.	1. Water Supply – The town's supply is currently sourced from the Cannahowna River and is at capacity[3]. Although Lough Cutra has in the past been proposed as a new water supply for the town as it is not currently listed on Galway County Council's Water Service Investment Programme 2010-2012. Irish Water will take over responsibility for water supply in June 2013 and any future supply will be assessed by Irish Water. 2. Wastewater Treatment – The Gort WwTP has spare capacity of 439PE which is 381PE less than the projected population increase in the Core Strategy. Although unlikely to reach this population target given current economic conditions Galway County Council must ensure strict monitoring of the		

[3] See Table 3.8 of the SEA Environmental Report for Variation No. 1 to the Galway County Development Plan which states there is no spare capacity in the current water supply to Gort, and Table 3.9 which states that there is a predicted shortfall of 443m^3/day by 2016 based on the population increase in the Core Strategy

Original or Newly Proposed Mitigation Policy/Objective	Description of how Mitigatory Policy/Objective will Protect N2K Sites	Recommended Changes to Policies/Objectives	Accepted Wording of Mitigatory Policy/Objective in the Draft Plan
	potential overloading of capacity of the WwTP.		
Objective UI4 – Wastewater Disposal. Restrict development that does not connect to the public sewer and discourage the proliferation of individual septic tanks and treatment plants in order to protect groundwaters, consolidate the town structure and control ribbon development along the approach roads into Gort. Ensure that any trade effluent from new development is managed properly and discharged to sewer in accordance with relevant discharge licenses, where appropriate.	This approach which is consistent with the approach to new development outlined in the Galway County Development Plan will ensure wastewater generated during the construction and operation of new developments will not result in a deterioration of water quality within hydrologically connected waterbodies, thus ensuring impacts to associated Natura 2000 Sites are avoided.	Following text included after existing text in Objective UI4: **Ensure the changeover from septic tanks to mains connections in all cases where this is feasible and that all new developments utilise and connect to the existing wastewater infrastructure subject to adequate capacity prior to any connection. The provision of individual septic tanks and treatment plants in the Gort area will be strongly discouraged to minimise the risk of groundwater pollution. Where such facilities are permitted, full compliance with the prevailing regulations and standards, including the EPA's a Code of Practice: Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (p.e.≤ 10), (EPA, 2009), will be required.**	New text in bold accepted. Strikethrough text is excluded as already included within Objective UI1. Objective UI4 Wastewater Disposal to read as follows - Restrict development that does not connect to the public sewer and discourage the proliferation of individual septic tanks and treatment plants in order to protect groundwaters, consolidate the town structure and control ribbon development along the approach roads into Gort. ~~Ensure that any trade effluent from new development is managed properly and discharged to sewer in accordance with relevant discharge licenses, where appropriate~~. **Implement and promote the Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations 2001 and 2004.** **Ensure the changeover from septic tanks to mains connections in all cases where this is feasible and that all new developments utilise and connect to the existing wastewater infrastructure subject to adequate capacity prior to any connection.**

Original or Newly Proposed Mitigation Policy/Objective	Description of how Mitigatory Policy/Objective will Protect N2K Sites	Recommended Changes to Policies/Objectives	Accepted Wording of Mitigatory Policy/Objective in the Draft Plan
			Connection to the public sewer will be encouraged as an alternative to~~The provision of individual septic tanks and treatment plants in the Gort area will be strongly discouraged~~in order to minimise the risk of groundwater pollution. Where such facilities are permitted, full compliance with the prevailing regulations and standards, including the EPA's a Code of Practice: Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems Serving Single Houses (p.e.≤ 10), (EPA, 2009), will be required.
Objective UI 5 – Wastewater Treatment Plant Buffer (Refer to Map 2A/2B) Provide and protect a 100m buffer around the wastewater treatment plant (Public Utilities Zoning Objective) site and protect buffer zones around any other treatment plant in the town as appropriate	This buffer is provided to restrict any development within 100m of the WwTP. However additional measures are needed to ensure that flooding does not impact the WwTP and potentially cause flooding.	New wording to include for the: **The council will support and facilitate protection measures for the town's existing wastewater treatment plant which is located within Flood Zone A.**	Additional text accepted.
New objective recommended to address waste leakage from the system: **Objective UI XX - Develop a wastewater leak detection programme including the use of a strategic metering system to aid in leak detection.**	This will limit the potential for groundwater pollution as a result of leaks in the wastewater infrastructure of the town and therefore limit potential for impacts on water quality and Natura 2000 sites.	New objective recommended.	Text modified and inserted within **Objective UI1 – Water Services Infrastructure, part b)** **Continue to implement the water leak detection programme including the use of a strategic metering system to aid in leak detection and reduction in**

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			unaccounted for water.
New objective recommended so that the plan implements and promotes the Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations 2001 and 2004: **Implement and promote the Urban Waste Water Treatment Regulations 2001 and 2004.**	This will ensure Wastewater treatment for the town is facilitated under the appropriate legislation.	New objective recommended.	See new text within Objective UI4 Wastewater Disposal.
Objective UI 6 – Surface Water Drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems Maintain and enhance, as appropriate, the existing surface water drainage system throughout the Plan Area and ensure that new developments are adequately serviced with surface water drainage infrastructure and promote the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems in new developments. Surface water runoff 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.	This will ensure natural surface runoff characteristics are maintained along watercourses draining into the aquatic environment.	Recommend inclusion of following text within Section 3.6.1 of the Plan: **The Council will also implement all relevant Surface Water legislation including 'Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations 2009 (S.I. No 272 of 2009).** Also include at end of Objective UI6: **Developers will be required to adopt site specific solutions to surface water drainage systems in all cases.**	All recommended text accepted and inserted into Objective UI6 with the inclusion of '**or any updated/superseding document'** after first section.
Objective UI7 The Cannahowna/Gort River and Drainage Catchment Require new development proposals within the catchment of the Cannahowna/Gort River or that potentially drain towards this river to include full	See Policy UI 1 above.	No changes required or proposed	As original objective

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details of proposals to address the high probability of flooding associated with the river and its catchment and the need to provide adequate surface water drainage, including the incorporation of Sustainable Drainage Systems.			
Objective UI8 – Flood Risk Management and Assessment Ensure the implementation of the DoEHLG/OPW publication *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2009* (or any updated/superseding document) in relation to flood risk management within the Plan Area. This will include the following: 1. Avoid, reduce and/or mitigate, as appropriate in accordance with *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2009*, the risk of flooding within the flood risk areas indicated on ***Map 3A/3B – Flood Risk Management***, including fluvial, coastal/tidal, pluvial and groundwater flooding, and any other flood risk areas that may be identified during the period of the Plan or in relation to a planning application. 2. 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 may 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 for Planning Authorities 2009*, (or any superseding document). Any flood risk assessment should include an assessment of	The restriction of inappropriate development in flood risk areas will ensure no artificial impermeable surfaces installed in such areas. This will ensure natural surface runoff characteristics are maintained along watercourses draining into the aquatic environment.	No changes required or proposed	As original objective

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the potential impacts of climate change, such as an increase in the extent or probability of flooding, and any associated measures necessary to address these impacts. 3. 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. 4. Where certain measures proposed to mitigate or manage the risk of flooding associated with new developments are likely to result in significant effects to the environment or Natura 2000 sites downstream, such measures will undergo environmental assessment and Habitats Directive Assessment, as appropriate.			
Objective UI10 – Water Bodies and Watercourses (Refer to Map 2A/2B and to Maps 3A/3B) Protect water bodies and watercourses within the Plan Area from inappropriate development, including lakes, rivers, canals, streams, associated undeveloped riparian strips, wetlands and natural floodplains. This will include a 10 metre environmental management buffer on either side of the Cannahowna/Gort River, measured from the near river bank. Promote the sustainable management and uses of water bodies and avoid culverting or realignment of these features.	The implementation of this buffer area will protect the water quality of rivers and streams and minimise disturbance to fauna (e.g. Otter, which a Qualifying Species of the East Burren Complex cSAC which is within foraging distance of Gort) which are likely supported by watercourses within the Plan area.	Recommend inclusion of additional text: Protect waterbodies and watercourses within the Plan Area from inappropriate development, including rivers, streams, associated undeveloped riparian strips, wetlands and natural floodplains. This will include a 10m environmental management buffers **between any new development and all watercourses** including the Cannahowna/Gort River. Promote the sustainable management and use of watercourses and avoid the	New text accepted

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		culverting or realignment of these features. **Any hard landscaping proposals shall be located outside of any buffer zone areas.**	
Objective UI11 – Groundwater and Pluvial Flood Risk Planning applications on lands identified within groundwater and pluvial PFRA areas shall be accompanied by a Site-specific Flood Risk Assessment that corresponds with that outlined under Chapter 5 'Flooding and Development Management' of the DEHLG Flood Guidelines (2009). Such assessments shall be prepared by suitably qualified experts with hydrological experience and shall quantify the risks and the effects of any necessary mitigation, together with the measures needed or proposed to manage residual risks.	The implementation of this Policy will facilitate the improvement/maintenance of good water quality and good ecological status within hydrologically connected waterbodies and the Plan area.	No changes are proposed for this Policy.	No changes required or proposed
Policy UI 4 – Water Quality It is the policy of Galway County Council to protect and improve water quality in all waters, in conjunction with other agencies and stakeholders in accordance with the EU Water Framework Directive (2006/60/EC), EU Groundwater Directive (2006/118/EC) and other relevant EU Directives, including associated national legislation and policy guidance, (including any superseding versions of same), and to support the implementation of the Western River Basin District Management Plan, Galway County Council will take account of the above requirements to protect and improve water quality when considering new development	The implementation of this Policy will facilitate the improvement/maintenance of good water quality and good ecological status within hydrologically connected waterbodies and the Plan area.	No changes are proposed for this Policy.	No changes required or proposed

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proposals.			
Objective UI13 – Western River Basin District Management Plan and Protection of Waters Support the protection of water quality in accordance with the EU Water Framework Directive (2006/60/EC) and the European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (SI No. 722 of 2003) (as amended) (or any updated legislation), including the implementation of the relevant recommendations and measures as outlined in the Western River Basin District Management Plan 2009-2015, (and any updated/ superseding documents). Development will only be permitted where it can be clearly demonstrated that the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on the water environment, including surface water, groundwater quality and quantity, river corridors and associated wetlands. Galway County Council is statutorily obliged to protect the existing good quality status of the waters in the Gort area (including the Cannahowna/Gort River and tributary/stream, the Kiltartan drainage area and including the surface water catchments of the Coole-Garryland turlough (a wetland system of global significance).'	Supporting the recommendations and measures of the Western River Basin District Management Plan and associated management plans such as the Kinvara Water Management Unit Action Plan will ensure that the good water quality and ecological status of hydrologically connected water bodies is improved maintained over the lifetime of the Plan.	Recommendation to include the below text after 'Western River Basin District Management Plan 2009-2015': ….**and associated Programme of Measures**…	Change accepted
Objective UI14 – Groundwater and Aquifers Support the protection of groundwater resources and dependent wildlife/habitats in accordance with the EU Groundwater Directive (2006/118/EC) and the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations 2010 (SI No. 9 of 2010) (or any updated legislation). Protect the regionally important aquifer that under	Implementing this Objective will support the protection of groundwater and associated groundwater influenced habitats that form qualifying features for the hydrologically connected Natura 2000 sites, in particular Coole-Garryland	No changes are proposed for this Objective.	No changes required or proposed

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lays the Plan Area from risk of environmental pollution and have regard to any groundwater protection schemes and groundwater source protection zones where data has been made available by the Geological Survey of Ireland**.**	cSAC. In particular this Objective will support the protection of springs and alkaline fen habitats occurring within and adjacent to the Plan area.		
Policy UI5 – Waste Management It is the policy of Galway County Council to support sustainable waste management through the prevention, reduction and recycling of waste and by facilitating the provision of adequate waste infrastructure, such as bring banks, at locations that will not adversely affect residential amenities.	This Policy will have a positive impact for the environment.	No changes are proposed for this objective	No changes required or proposed
Objective UI17 – Waste Management Implement the Waste Management Plan for the Connaught Region 2006-2011, the Galway County Council's Litter Management Plan 2007-2010, the National Waste Prevention Programme, the EPA's National Hazardous Waste Management Plan and any superseding plans/programmes over the lifetime of the Gort Local Area Plan.	Reduction of waste in the Plan area will likely reduce the potential for impacts on habitats and species as a result of waste generated in the Plan area.	This is a new objective recommended as part of the SEA process.	No changes required or proposed
Recommend new objective: **Objective UIXX Bioenergy Crops** **Bioenergy crops will be facilitated only in circumstances where they avoid gene flow to wild relatives of crops in centres of diversity, that do not result in invasion by the crop into other habitats, that enhance field scale biodiversity, that increase landscape diversity,**	This objective will ensure that in facilitating bioenergy crops there will risks to natural heritage will be minimised.	New objective	Not accepted.

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that do not threaten valued habitats within the local landscape, that promote the sustainable management of biodiverse habitats, that do not increase the risk of loss of primary habitats and that result in a proportionately large reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.			
Objective UI19 Energy Conservation and Efficiency Continue to implement Galway County Council's Energy Action Plan regarding energy efficiency and conservation in existing and future residential, commercial and industrial buildings within Gort. Ensure that new buildings are sustainable in their siting, orientation, design and construction. Passive solar design techniques, high energy efficiency, low impact construction methods and the use of local/sustainable building materials, recycled aggregates and local craftsmanship will be encouraged to ensure that new developments minimise their environmental impacts and long term costs.	This Objective will have a positive impact for the environment	No changes are proposed for this Objective	No changes required or proposed
Policy UI7 Climate Change and Air Quality It is the policy of Galway County Council to support and promote, in conjunction with other agencies, local, national and international initiatives for limiting/reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and encouraging the development of renewable energy in accordance with the National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012, the EU Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe (CAFE) Directive (2008/50/EC) and the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2011 (SI No. 180 of 2011) (or any updated/ superseding	This Objective will have a positive impact for the environment.	No changes are proposed for this Objective	No changes required or proposed

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documents).			
Objective UI23 – Air Quality Promote the preservation of best ambient air quality compatible with sustainable development throughout the Plan Area in accordance with the *EU Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe (CAFE)* Directive *(2008/50/EC)* by seeking to protect and maintain the regulatory standards contained within the EPA"s *Air Quality in Ireland 2009:Key Indicators of Ambient Air Quality 2010*, (or any superseding document) 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 180 of 2011) (or any updated/superseding documents)**.**	Implementing this objective will serve to protect qualifying habitats and species of nearby Natura 2000 sites by ensure that emissions associated with any new developments are minimised.	No changes are proposed for this Objective	No changes required or proposed
Objective UI24– Air Purification Encourage landscaping and deciduous tree planting in an environmentally sensitive manner within the Plan Area as a means of air purification, the filtering of suspended particles and the improvement of Gort's micro- climate.	The planting of deciduous trees and associated landscaping will have the potential to provide habitat for a range of fauna as well as functioning as an air purifiers in the Plan area.	No changes are proposed for this Objective.	No changes required or proposed
Objective UD4 Green Network and the Landscape Support the development of a network of amenities, open spaces and natural areas that support biodiversity, that incorporate existing landscape features such as local rivers, streams, trees, stone walls and hedgerows, that provide pedestrian and cycling linkages and active and	This objective will potentially provide positive benefits for mobile species which are qualifying interests of nearby Natura 2000 sites.	No changes are proposed for this Objective	No changes required or proposed

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passive recreation opportunities, that help to structure and provide relief from the built environment and that can provide areas for surface water attenuation and flood risk management.			
New objective proposed: **Objective UDXX – Development Proposals and Green Infrastructure** **Require all proposals for major developments to submit, as part of the landscaping plan for the proposal, details of how any green infrastructure proposed as part of the development (e.g. green open spaces, hedgerows, tree lines, etc.) contribute positively to the development and protection of the overall green infrastructure assets of Gort Town and how it would protect and enhance linkages to the wider natural landscape features.**	This objective will potentially provide positive benefits for mobile species which are qualifying interests of nearby Natura 2000 sites.	New objective	New objective not accepted
Natural Heritage			
Policy NH1 Natural Heritage and Biodiversity It is the policy of Galway County Council to support the 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 and proposed Natural Heritage Areas and the promotion of the development of a green/ecological network within the Plan Area, in order to support ecological	This Policy aims to support the protection of the conservation status and integrity of Natura 2000 Sites.	No changes are proposed for this Objective.	No changes required or proposed

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functioning and connectivity, create opportunities in suitable locations for active and passive recreation and to structure and provide visual relief from the built environment. The protection of natural heritage and biodiversity, including European sites that form part of the Natura 2000 network, will be implemented in accordance with relevant EU environmental directives and applicable national legislation, policies, plans and guidelines, including the following (and any updated/superseding documents): • EU Directives, including the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC), the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (85/337/EEC), the Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) and the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC), • National legislation, including the Wildlife Act 1976, the European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1989 (SI No. 349 of 1989) (as amended), the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000, the European Union (Water Policy) Regulations 2003 (as amended), the Planning and Development Act 200 (as amended) and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI No. 477 of 2011). • National policy guidelines, including the Landscape and Landscape Assessment Draft Guidelines 2000, the Environmental Impact Assessment Sub-Threshold Development Guidelines 2003, Strategic Environmental Assessment Guidelines 2004 and the Appropriate			

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Assessment Guidelines 2010. • Catchment and water resource management plans, including the Western River Basin District Management Plan 2009-2015. • Biodiversity plans and guidelines, including Actions for Biodiversity 2011-2016: Ireland's National Biodiversity Plan, the Biodiversity Action Plan for County Galway 2008-2013 and the Biodiversity Guidelines produced by Galway County Council.			
Objective NH1 European Sites 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 subsequent or updated 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 a Habitats Directive Assessment where necessary, that: 1. The plan or project will not give rise to	This Objective directs the Development Strategy for the Gort LAP to ensure that the conservation management objectives, conservation status and integrity of Natura 2000 Sites will not be negatively impacted by elements of the LAP	No changes are proposed for this Objective	Additional text added by Galway County Council: …EU Birds Directive (2009/147/EC), **the Environmental Liability Directive**, 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…

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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 2. 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 3. The plan or project will have significant adverse effects on the integrity of any European site (that hosts 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, 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.			

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Objective NH2 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 Birds Directive (2009/147/EC), and regularly occurring-migratory birds and their habitats, and species protected under the Wildlife Acts and species that are protected under the Wildlife Acts, 1976-2000. This includes the protection of bats and their roosts, and the maintenance of woodland, hedgerows, tree lines, ecological networks and corridors that serve as feeding areas, flight paths and commuting routes for bats.	See Policies DS 3, NH 1 above.	Change recommended to exclude reference to bats and include in new NH12 objective specifically relating to bats.	Change accepted. Deletion of the following text: ~~**This includes the protection of bats and their roosts, and the maintenance of woodland, hedgerows, tree lines, ecological networks and corridors that serve as feeding areas, flight paths and commuting routes for bats.**~~
Objective NH3 Natural Heritage Areas and Proposed Natural Heritage Areas Protect Natural Heritage Areas and proposed Natural Heritage Areas in accordance with the requirements of the Wildlife Act 1976, the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). Where a proposed development within the Plan Area may give rise to likely significant effects on any Natural Heritage Area or proposed Natural Heritage Area an Ecological Impact Assessment may be required.	This objective provides for protection of NHAs and pNHAs which will potential have knock on positive effects for Natura 2000 sites.	No changes are proposed for this Objective	No changes required or proposed
Objective NH4 Impact Assessment Ensure full compliance with the requirements of the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC), SEA Directive (2001/42/EC) and EIA Directive 2011/92/EU and associated legislation/regulations, including the European Communities (Birds and	These measures will ensure all proposed developments with the potential to result in likely significant effects to the environment and/or natural heritage will be identified,	No changes are proposed for this Objective	No changes required or proposed

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Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (SI No. 477 of 2011), European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004-2011, the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004-2011 and the European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1989-2011 (or any updated/superseding legislation). Planning applications for proposed developments within the Plan Area that may give rise to likely significant effects on the environment and/or any designated site may need to be accompanied by one of more of the following: an Environmental Impact Statement, an Ecological Impact Assessment Report, a Habitats Directive Assessment Screening Report or a Natura Impact Statement, as appropriate. Ensure that Natura Impact Statements and any other environmental or ecological impact assessments submitted in support of proposals for development are carried out in accordance with best practice methodologies and contain all necessary baseline assessments.	assessed and mitigated where necessary.		
Objective NH5 Biodiversity and Ecological Networks Support the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and ecological connectivity within the Plan Area, including woodlands, trees, hedgerows, rivers, streams, natural springs, wetlands, stonewalls, 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	The implementation of this Policy will support the enhancement of natural habitats providing shelter and resources for a range of flora and fauna including Qualifying Species of the Lough Cutra cSAC/SPA, East Burren cSAC and other nearby Natura 2000 sites.	Recommend to include the following bold, underlined text: 1. …including woodlands, trees, hedgerows, **semi-natural grasslands**, rivers, streams, natural springs… And 2. c) Ensure **maintenance and enhancement** of biodiversity	1. and 2. accepted 3. Text modified and inserted in part **c) Seek to prevent the introduction of imported ash trees/plants or other such species, into the Plan area in line with the Plant Health Directive and any other relevant legislation.** 4. Text accepted and inserted as

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corridors or stepping stones in the context of Article 10 of the Habitats Directive: a) Seek to retain and/or incorporate these natural features into developments, in order to avoid ecological fragmentation and maintain ecological corridors and stepping stones. b) Protect and enhance the water quality and ecology of the Cannahowna/Gort River and its function as ecological corridors, by maintaining the existing banks and channel and ensuring that new developments are set back at least 10m from the top of the bank of the stream. c) Ensure greater biodiversity through the appropriate planting of native trees, shrubs and hedgerows indigenous to the Gort area and of Irish provenance in public and private areas and in new developments.	Recommended new green infrastructure objective or inclusion of text in existing suitable objective in order to support the wildlife corridors/migration pathways within the LAP area.	through the appropriate planting of native trees, shrubs and hedgerows indigenous to the Gort area and of Irish provenance in public and private areas and in new developments. 3.**In consultation with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine seek to prevent the introduction of imported ash plants or ash plants infected with Chalara fraxinea into the Plan area in line with the Plant Health Directive any other relevant legislation.** 4.**Support the development of links between larger areas of green infrastructure including important tree clusters (NH8 on Specific Objectives Map 2A), hedgerows, watercourses and their riparian zones, the banks and buffer zones of the railway/motorway and the surrounding countryside.**	part d)
Objective NH6 Water Resources Protect the water resources in the Plan Area, including the Cannahowna/Gort, its tributaries and downstream water bodies, other streams, springs, surface water and groundwater quality, in accordance with the requirements and guidance in	See Policy UI 2 and Objective UI 8 and UI 9 above.	Additional text recommended to be included: …water and groundwater quality, **and wetlands** in accordance with the requirements and guidance in	New text accepted

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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 and other relevant EU Directives, including associated national legislation and policy guidance (including any superseding versions of same). Support the application and implementation of a catchment planning and management approach to development and conservation, including the implementation of Sustainable Drainage System techniques for new development in the Plan Area.		the EU…	
Objective NH7 Environmental Management Buffer Protect and seek to improve the water quality in the Cannahowna/Gort River. Limit development within the environmental management buffer so as to protect the qualifying interests of all European Sites which are linked indirectly to the Gort Local Area Plan area via the Cannahowna/Gort River. Seek to ensure that a minimum setback of 10 metres is maintained on either side of the Cannahowna/Gort River, save for exceptional circumstances where it can be reasonably demonstrated that this setback is not feasible.	This objective will provide protection for the Cannahowna/Gort River, its banks, associated species dependent on the river and water of the river which may impact hydrologically connected Natura 2000 sites including Coole/Garryland cSAC/SPA.	Protect and seek to improve the water quality in the Cannahowna/Gort River. Limit development within the environmental management buffer so as to protect the qualifying interests of all European Sites which are linked indirectly to the Gort Local Area Plan area via the Cannahowna/Gort River **and to mitigate against pollution risks, reduce flooding potential and maintain habitat**. Seek to ensure that **a minimum setback of 10 metres** is maintained on either side of the Cannahowna/Gort River, save for exceptional circumstances where it can be reasonably demonstrated that this setback is not feasible. **The extent of the riparian buffer**	The following text was not accepted by GCC as the 10m minimum setback is already set save for exceptional circumstances where it can't be achieved: ~~**The extent of the riparian buffer zone should be determined in consultation with a qualified ecologist.**~~ The majority of remaining recommended text is accepted for **Objective NH7.** Additional text inserted into NH7as follows: **The recommendations of the specialist studies shall be implemented** to the greatest extent possible... And also with the following modifications additional/deleted text

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		zone should be determined in consultation with a qualified ecologist. In the event of lighting being proposed along watercourse corridors an Ecological Impact Assessment (and where necessary an Appropriate Assessment) including bat and otter survey shall be conducted by specialists. The recommendations of the specialist studies shall be implemented. No lighting will be installed without prior consultation with NPWS and shall be in line with advances in knowledge into the impact of lighting on bats and other species and also to reflect advances in technology in the lighting industry. **Support the carrying out of a river corridor habitat survey of the Cannahowna/Gort River within the lifetime of the Plan.**	in blue: **...river corridor habitat survey of the Cannahowna/Gort River ~~within the lifetime of the Plan as resources permit~~.**
Objective NH8 Trees, Parkland/Woodland and Hedgerows	The implementation of this Policy will support the enhancement of natural	Recommend to include additional text below:	Following text is already contained within Objective NH12, so is not included:

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Protect important tree clusters and hedgerows in the Plan Area and ensure that development proposals take cognisance of significant trees/tree stands. 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.	habitats providing shelter and resources for a range of flora and fauna including Qualifying Species of the Lough Cutra cSAC/SPA, East Burren cSAC and other nearby Natura 2000 sites.	**Developments which propose to remove hedgerows shall be assessed by a suitably qualified expert for potential cumulative impacts on bat populations in the area.** **Ensure replacement planting of semi-mature trees where mature trees are removed within developments. Semi mature trees are defined by the BSI[4] as 'Trees with an overall height in excess of 4 metres and or a stem girth measurement circumference of 20 centimetres or larger'.**	~~Developments which propose to remove hedgerows shall be assessed by a suitably qualified expert for potential cumulative impacts on bat populations in the area.~~ The following text is included in Objective NH8: **Ensure replacement planting of semi-mature trees where mature trees are removed within developments** The following text not accepted: ~~Semi mature trees are defined by the BSI as 'Trees with an overall height in excess of 4 metres and or a stem girth measurement circumference of 20 centimetres or larger'.~~
Objective NH9 Geological and Geo-morphological Systems Protect and conserve geological and geo-	Karst formations are potential links to groundwater and therefore to hydrologically connected Natura 2000 sites.	No changes are proposed for this Objective	No changes required or proposed

4 BS 5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations (British Standards Institution)

Original or Newly Proposed Mitigation Policy/Objective	Description of how Mitigatory Policy/Objective will Protect N2K Sites	Recommended Changes to Policies/Objectives	Accepted Wording of Mitigatory Policy/Objective in the Draft Plan
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 are adequately assessed with regard to their potential geophysical, hydrological or ecological impacts on the environment.	Adequate assessment and protection of these features will reduce the potential for water pollution impacts arising as a result of construction.		
Objective NH10 Control of Invasive and Alien Invasive Species Seek to prevent the spread of invasive and alien invasive species and promote measures to achieve this objective. Require a landscaping plan to be produced for developments near waterbodies and ensure that such plans do not include alien invasive species.	Certain alien invasive species will have the potential to negatively affect the conservation status of qualifying Annex II species occurring within and adjacent to the LAP. This measure will help to ensure potential pressures associated with alien invasive species are minimised and or avoided in the plan area.	Seek to prevent the spread of invasive and alien invasive species **(e.g. Japanese Knotweed, Himalayan Balsam, etc.) and noxious weeds (e.g. Ragwort, thistle, dock, etc.)** and promote measures to achieve this objective. **Ensure compliance with the requirements of the Noxious Weeds Act 1936, the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000 and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 with regard to the control of noxious weeds and non-native invasive species.** Require a landscaping plan to be produced for developments near waterbodies and ensure that such plans do not include alien invasive species. **Where the potential for spread of invasive species are identified as part of a development proposal the developer will be required to submit an**	New text for NH10 accepted with modifications, in blue, as follows: Seek to prevent the spread of invasive and alien invasive species ~~(e.g. Japanese Knotweed, Himalayan Balsam, etc.)~~ and noxious weeds ~~(e.g. Ragwort, thistle, dock, etc.~~and promote measures to achieve this objective. ~~**Ensure compliance**~~ **Raise awareness and seek to inform developers of the need to comply with the requirements of the Noxious Weeds Act 1936, the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2000 and the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (or any updated/superseding legislation) with regard to the control of noxious weeds and non-native invasive species.** Cognisance should also be taken of information available from The National Invasive Species Database. **Where the potential for spread of invasive species are**

Original or Newly Proposed Mitigation Policy/Objective	Description of how Mitigatory Policy/Objective will Protect N2K Sites	Recommended Changes to Policies/Objectives	Accepted Wording of Mitigatory Policy/Objective in the Draft Plan
		invasive species management plan.	**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 waterbodies and ensure that such plans do not include alien invasive species.**
Objective NH11 Consultation with Environmental Authorities Ensure that all development proposals are screened to determine whether they are likely to have a significant direct, indirect or cumulative effect on any European site in view of its conservation objectives and, where significant effects are likely or uncertain, there will be a requirement to prepare and submit a Natura Impact Statement, including prior consultation with the relevant environmental authorities.	This objective ensures that all developments will be adequately assessed, with input from the relevant environmental authorities, as to their potential for significant effects.	No changes are proposed for this Objective	No changes required or proposed
Suggest inclusion of a new objective: **Objective NH12 – Protection of Bats and Bat Habitats** **Ensure that development proposals in areas which are potentially important for bats, including areas of woodland, hedgerows and watercourses, and specifically the entirety of the Plan area east of the Cannahowna/Gort River which may provide migratory/foraging pathways from Lough Cutra and Pollduagh**	This mitigatory objective will ensure that bats and particular lesser horseshoe bats are considered in all development within the plan area and in particular areas which may potentially be used as migratory routes or as foraging habitat. Lesser horseshoe bat is a qualifying species of nearby Natura	New objective recommended and consequential recommended removal of specific reference to bats in Objective NH2.	The removal of specific reference to bats in Objective NH2 and the inclusion of a new objective **Objective NH12 – Protection of Bats and Bats Habitats** is accepted as modified with additional agreed text in blue. **Seek to protect bats and their roosts, their feeding areas, flight paths and commuting routes.Ensure that development**

Original or Newly Proposed Mitigation Policy/Objective	Description of how Mitigatory Policy/Objective will Protect N2K Sites	Recommended Changes to Policies/Objectives	Accepted Wording of Mitigatory Policy/Objective in the Draft Plan
Cave, 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. All development shall be required to include green infrastructure measures which provide the potential for enhancement of local bat populations.	2000 sites.		**proposals in areas which are potentially important for bats, including areas of woodland, linear features such as hedgerows, stone walls, watercourses and associated riparian vegetation including the Cannahowna/Gort River, the railway line corridor and specifically the entirety of the Plan area east of the Cannahowna/Gort River which may provide migratory/foraging pathways from Lough Cutra and Pollduagh Cave, 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. All development shall be required to include green infrastructure measures which provide the potential for enhancement of local bat**

Original or Newly Proposed Mitigation Policy/Objective	Description of how Mitigatory Policy/Objective will Protect N2K Sites	Recommended Changes to Policies/Objectives	Accepted Wording of Mitigatory Policy/Objective in the Draft Plan
			<u>populations.</u>
Include new objective or the following text where applicable in Objectives CF9, UD4 and NH5: **Objective NHXX** **<u>Require all proposals for major developments to submit, as part of the landscaping plan for the proposal, details of how any green infrastructure proposed as part of the development (e.g. green open spaces, hedgerows, tree lines, etc.) contribute positively to the development and protection of the overall green infrastructure assets of Gort Town and how it would protect and enhance linkages to the wider natural landscape features.</u>**	This new objective would reinforce a requirement as part of development to take into account and to plan for enhanced green infrastructure in the town and thereby potentially enhancing habitat and migratory pathways for mobile species which are qualifying interests of nearby Natura 2000 sites e.g. lesser horseshoe bat and otter.	Recommended new objective or additional text in relevant objectives such as cf9, UD4 and NH5.	Not accepted, Galway County Council consider there to be no requirement for this proposed new text as a satisfactory landscape plan is considered sufficient. Reference to Ministerial Guidelines are contained within existing **Policy UD1-Urban Design and Landscape**
Recommended new green infrastructure objective or inclusion of text in existing suitable objective. **<u>Support the development of links between larger areas of green infrastructure including important tree clusters hedgerows, watercourses and their riparian zones, the banks and buffer zones of the railway/motorway and the surrounding countryside.</u>**	See rationale for new green infrastructure above.	Recommended new green infrastructure objective or inclusion of text in existing suitable objective.	Text accepted and inserted as **part d) of Objective NH5 - Biodiversity and Ecological Networks.**

Table 3.4:Specific Mitigatory Recommendations for Potentially Negative Policies/Objectives within the Plan

Current Policy/Objective	Recommended Change or Existing Avoidance/Mitigation Policies and Objectives	Description of Potential Negative Impact When Policy/Objective is Considered in Isolation	Accepted in Draft LAP
Land Use			
Objective LU1 Town Centre/Commercial (C1) (refer to Maps 1A/1B) Promote the development of the Town Centre as an intensive, high quality, well-landscaped, human-scaled and accessible environment with an appropriate mix of uses, including residential, commercial, service, tourism, enterprise, public and community uses as appropriate, that provide a range of retail services, facilities and amenities to the local community and visitors to the town. The town centre and associated main streets will remain the primary focus for retail and service activity in Gort.	No change recommended but the following policies and objectives will act as avoidance/mitigation measures: Policy DS, UI1, UI2, NH1. Objective DS3, UI2, UI3, UI4, UI5, UI6, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UI11, UI13, UI14, UI15, NH1, NH2, NH3, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9, NH10, NH11, NH12.	The zoning of lands for residential Phase 1 has the potential to facilitate an increased population over the carrying capacity of the Gort WwTP.	No change recommended
Objective LU2 – Residential (R) (refer to Maps 1A/1B and Objective RD1) Promote the development of appropriate and serviced lands to provide for high quality, well laid out and well landscaped sustainable residential communities with an appropriate mix of housing types and	No change recommended but the following policies and objectives will act as avoidance/mitigation measures: Policy DS, UI1, UI2, NH1. Objective DS3, UI2, UI3, UI4, UI5,	Undeveloped lands zoned residential have the potential to adversely impact water quality and mobile species	No change recommended

Current Policy/Objective	Recommended Change or Existing Avoidance/Mitigation Policies and Objectives	Description of Potential Negative Impact When Policy/Objective is Considered in Isolation	Accepted in Draft LAP
densities together with complementary land uses, such as community facilities, local services and public transport facilities, to serve the residential population of the area. Protect existing residential amenities and facilitate compatible and appropriately designed new infill development in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. A phasing scheme will apply to residential uses on Residential (R) zoned lands, as set out under Objective RD1 in Section 3.2.2	UI6, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UI11, UI13, UI14, UI15, NH1, NH2, NH3, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9, NH10, NH11, NH12.		
Objective LU3 – Industrial (I) (refer to Maps 1A/1B) Promote the development of industrial and industrial-related uses, including manufacturing, processing of materials, warehousing and distribution, on suitable lands with adequate services and facilities and a high level of access to the major road network and public transport facilities. Adequate edge treatments and/or screening will be required to ensure high quality interfaces with public spaces and any adjoining residential areas or other sensitive land uses, as appropriate.	The SEA process recommended to include the word sustainable before development. The following policies and objectives will act as avoidance/mitigation measures: Policy DS, UI1, UI2, NH1. Objective DS3, UI2, UI3, UI4, UI5, UI6, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UI11, UI13, UI14, UI15, NH1, NH2, NH3, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9, NH10, NH11, NH12.	Industrial zoned land is agricultural grassland with treelines and hedgerows. Removal of these features may cause adverse effects on bats	The word **sustainable** is included as part of the SEA process, as follows: Promote the **sustainable** development of industrial and industrial-related uses, including manufacturing.....
Objective LU4 – Business &	The SEA process recommended to include the word sustainable before	BE zoned land is agricultural grassland with treelines and	The word **sustainable** is included as part of the SEA process, as

Current Policy/Objective	Recommended Change or Existing Avoidance/Mitigation Policies and Objectives	Description of Potential Negative Impact When Policy/Objective is Considered in Isolation	Accepted in Draft LAP
Enterprise (BE) (refer to Maps 1A/1B) Promote thedevelopment of business and enterprise uses, light industry/warehousing and the facilitation of enterprise park/office park type uses, incubation/start-up units and Small, Medium Enterprises, on suitable lands with adequate services and facilities and with a high level of access to the major road/rail networks and to public transport facilities.	development. The following policies and objectives will act as avoidance/mitigation measures: Policy DS, UI1, UI2, NH1. Objective DS3, UI2, UI3, UI4, UI5, UI6, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UI11, UI13, UI14, UI15, NH1, NH2, NH3, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9, NH10, NH11, NH12.	hedgerows. Removal of these features may cause adverse effects on bats	follows: Promote the **sustainable** development of business and enterprise uses, light.....
Objective LU5 – Community Facilities (CF) (refer to Maps 1A/1B) Promote the development of community facilities on suitable lands with a high level of access to the local community, including educational, community, civic, public, institutional, recreational, cultural and other complementary uses as appropriate.	The SEA process recommended to include the word sustainable before development. The following policies and objectives will act as avoidance/mitigation measures: Policy DS, UI1, UI2, NH1. Objective DS3, UI2, UI3, UI4, UI5, UI6, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UI11, UI13, UI14, UI15, NH1, NH2, NH3, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9, NH10, NH11, NH12.	CF zoned land is agricultural grassland with treelines and hedgerows. Removal of these features may cause adverse effects on bats.	The word **sustainable** is included as part of the SEA process, as follows: Promote the **sustainable** development of community facilities on suitable lands with a high level of access....
Objective LU8 – Public Utilities (PU) (refer to Maps 1A/1B) Facilitate the provision and maintenance of essential public utility infrastructure, together with necessary ancillary facilities and uses, as appropriate.	No change recommended but the following policies and objectives will act as avoidance/mitigation measures: Policy DS, UI1, UI2, NH1. Objective DS3, UI2, UI3, UI4, UI5,	Facilitating public utility infrastructure such as the WWTP has the potential to adversely impact water quality and mobile species.	No change recommended

Current Policy/Objective	Recommended Change or Existing Avoidance/Mitigation Policies and Objectives	Description of Potential Negative Impact When Policy/Objective is Considered in Isolation	Accepted in Draft LAP
	UI6, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UI11, UI13, UI14, UI15, NH1, NH2, NH3, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9, NH10, NH11, NH12.		
Objective LU9 – Transport Infrastructure (TI) (refer to Maps 1A/1B Facilitate the provision and maintenance of essential transportation infrastructure. This shall include the reservation of lands to facilitate possible rail infrastructure improvements, public roads, footpaths, cycle ways, bus stops and landscaping, together with any necessary associated works, as appropriate.	No change recommended but the following policies and objectives will act as avoidance/mitigation measures: Policy DS, UI1, UI2, NH1. Objective DS3, UI2, UI3, UI4, UI5, UI6, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UI11, UI13, UI14, UI15, NH1, NH2, NH3, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9, NH10, NH11, NH12.	Lands which are reserved for transport infrastructure have the potential if developed to impact water quality and mobile species	No change recommended
Residential Development			
Objective RD1 – Phased Residential Development (refer to Maps 1A/1B) Support the development of lands designated as Residential (Phase 1) within the lifetime of the Local Area Plan, subject to normal planning, access and servicing requirements, and reserve the lands designated as Residential (Phase 2) for the longer term growth needs of the town. Lands that have been designated as Phase 1 shall be reviewed for the next Plan having regard to development proposals or otherwise in the interim.	Additional wording to this objective: **The inclusion of new residential Phase 2 lands within this plan will not in any way infer a prior commitment on the part of the Council regarding their future zoning for residential purposes within any future variation or review of the Gort LAP Any future zoning of the phase II lands would also be subject to appropriate environmental assessment(s) as required under**	See Policy RD2.	Not accepted by GCC as covered under DS3 and NH1.

Current Policy/Objective	Recommended Change or Existing Avoidance/Mitigation Policies and Objectives	Description of Potential Negative Impact When Policy/Objective is Considered in Isolation	Accepted in Draft LAP
Residential (Phase 2) lands are generally not developable within the lifetime of this Plan, with the exception of the following developments, which may be considered by the Planning Authority within the lifetime of this Local Area Plan subject to a suitable case being made for the proposal: a) Single house developments for family members on family owned lands. b) Non-residential developments that are appropriate to the site context, any existing residential amenity and the existing pattern of development in the area. c) Where it is apparent that Residential (Phase 1) lands cannot or will not be developed within the plan period, residential development may be considered in a phased manner on some Residential (Phase 2) lands. The above exceptions will be subject to compliance with the Core Strategy in the Galway County Development Plan, the policies and objectives in this Local Area Plan, the principles of proper planning and sustainable development and to meeting normal planning, access and servicing requirements. Developments will only be permitted where a substantiated case has been made to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority and	**the relevant legislation.** The following policies and objectives will act as avoidance/mitigation measures: Policy DS, UI1, UI2, NH1. Objective DS3, UI2, UI3, UI4, UI5, UI6, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UI11, UI13, UI14, UI15, NH1, NH2, NH3, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9, NH10, NH11, NH12.		

Current Policy/Objective	Recommended Change or Existing Avoidance/Mitigation Policies and Objectives	Description of Potential Negative Impact When Policy/Objective is Considered in Isolation	Accepted in Draft LAP
the development will not prejudice the future use of the lands for the longer term growth needs of the town.			
Policy RD2 – Phased Development on Residential Zoned Lands(refer to Maps 1A/B) It is the policy of Galway County Council to encourage orderly, sequential and phased residential development in accordance with the Preferred Development Strategy and the land use management and zoning provisions set out in this Local Area Plan. This shall include a positive presumption in favour of the sequential development of suitably serviced Residential (Phase 1) lands in order to align the Local Area Plan with the Core Strategy/Settlement Strategy in the Galway County Development Plan, subject to compliance with the policies and objectives in this Local Area Plan and the principles of proper planning and sustainable development. There will be a general presumption against residential development on lands zoned Residential (Phase 2) within the lifetime of the Local Area Plan, subject to the exceptions provided for under Objective RD1.	No change recommended but the following policies and objectives will act as avoidance/mitigation measures: Policy DS, UI1, UI2, NH1. Objective DS3, UI2, UI3, UI4, UI5, UI6, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UI11, UI13, UI14, UI15, NH1, NH2, NH3, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9, NH10, NH11, NH12.	Although a phased approach to development on residential lands will direct development to appropriate areas a positive presumption in favour of development of undeveloped lands zoned Residential Phase 1 has the potential to adversely impact water quality and mobile species which could impact adversely Natura 2000 sites through effects on water quality and mobile species.	No change recommended
Objective RD9 – Agricultural Zoned Lands There will be a general presumption against residential development on	No change recommended but the following policies and objectives will act as avoidance/mitigation	Single house developments with wastewater treatment units on undeveloped lands zoned agriculture have the potential to	No change recommended

Current Policy/Objective	Recommended Change or Existing Avoidance/Mitigation Policies and Objectives	Description of Potential Negative Impact When Policy/Objective is Considered in Isolation	Accepted in Draft LAP
Agricultural (A) zoned lands, with the exception of single house developments for family members on family owned lands, which may be considered subject to compliance with the Policy RD1, as appropriate, normal planning, access and servicing requirements and the principles of proper planning and sustainable development. Developments will only be permitted where a substantiated case has been made to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority and the development will not prejudice the future use of the lands for the longer term growth needs of the town. An enurement clause will be applied in the case of any permissions for single house developments for family members on family owned lands.	measures: Policy DS, UI1, UI2, NH1. Objective DS3, UI2, UI3, UI4, UI5, UI6, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UI11, UI13, UI14, UI15, NH1, NH2, NH3, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9, NH10, NH11, NH12.	adversely impact water quality.	
Community Facilities			
Objective CF3 – Lands for Community Facilities and Amenities (refer to Maps 1A/1B and Maps 2A/2B) Ensure that there are adequate zoned and serviced lands to cater for the establishment, improvement or expansion of educational, community, recreation and amenity facilities within the Plan Area. This will include the following: a) Reserve lands for existing community facilities and for the	No change recommended but the following policies and objectives will act as avoidance/mitigation measures: Policy DS, UI1, UI2, NH1. Objective DS3, UI2, UI3, UI4, UI5, UI6, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UI11, UI13, UI14, UI15, NH1, NH2, NH3, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9, NH10, NH11, NH12.	Negative - See assessment of impacts associated with Objective LU7 as set out above.	No change recommended

Current Policy/Objective	Recommended Change or Existing Avoidance/Mitigation Policies and Objectives	Description of Potential Negative Impact When Policy/Objective is Considered in Isolation	Accepted in Draft LAP
expansion and provision of additional community facilities adjacent to existing community facility lands. b) Reserve lands for the provision of community facilities adjacent to large blocks of residentially zoned lands to meet the needs of existing and future residents.			
Objective CF4 – Educational Facilities (refer to Maps 2A/2B) Support the provision of adequate educational facilities for the local community, including primary, post primary, third level outreach programmes, research and development facilities and other training facilities to meet the needs of the widest range of residents within Gort and its environs. Galway County Council is positively disposed towards the provision of new school facilities in appropriate location/s and has identified a number of areas considered to be generally suitable for new school provision particularly in relation to the Gaelscoil which is in temporary accommodation. The indicative locations of areas considered suitable for new school provision are shown on Maps 2A/2B – Specific Objectives. Other sites may also be considered where these are considered suitable in terms of location, access,	No change recommended but the following policies and objectives will act as avoidance/mitigation measures: Policy DS, UI1, UI2, NH1. Objective DS3, UI2, UI3, UI4, UI5, UI6, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UI11, UI13, UI14, UI15, NH1, NH2, NH3, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9, NH10, NH11, NH12.	Negative - See assessment of impacts associated with Objective LU7 as set out above.	No change recommended

Current Policy/Objective	Recommended Change or Existing Avoidance/Mitigation Policies and Objectives	Description of Potential Negative Impact When Policy/Objective is Considered in Isolation	Accepted in Draft LAP
servicing, etc.			
Objective CF9 – Amenity Network (refer to Maps 2A/2B) Support the establishment of an accessible network of greenway linkages and amenities that provide safe and attractive circulation routes for pedestrians and cyclists for the enjoyment and recreational use of the entire community. This network will include an amenity walking circular route along the Kinincha Road returning via the river bank to George's Street. The network will also link together community facilities, amenities and built heritage features in the Plan Area and surrounding areas. Galway County Council will also seek to promote the functioning of greenway networks as wildlife corridors and habitats to enhance biodiversity and the natural environment.	No change recommended but the following policies and objectives will act as avoidance/mitigation measures: Policy DS, UI1, UI2, NH1. Objective DS3, UI2, UI3, UI4, UI5, UI6, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UI11, UI13, UI14, UI15, NH1, NH2, NH3, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9, NH10, NH11, NH12.	The potential negative impacts of this Objective are outlined in the assessment of impacts associated with Objective LU7 and LU8 above. The location of walking route along the river bank has the potential to adversely impact water quality and mobile species affecting the qualifying interests of Natura 2000 sites.	No change recommended
Objective CF10 Linear Park along the Cannahowna/Gort River Ensure that any development of lands along the Cannahowna/Gort River is designed in such a way to incorporate a linear park and amenity walkway in the identified flood risk area associated with the river. The existing river, riparian vegetation and nearby tree lines should be retained as part of the park and any new development along the river will be	No change recommended but the following policies and objectives will act as avoidance/mitigation measures: Policy DS, UI1, UI2, NH1. Objective DS3, UI2, UI3, UI4, UI5, UI6, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UI11, UI13, UI14, UI15, NH1, NH2, NH3, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9,	The development of any new riverside walkways along the stretch of the Cannahowna/Gort River will have the potential to adversely impact upon the water quality of the river and the qualifying habitats and/or result in disturbances to qualifying and (non-qualifying) species occurring downstream or in close proximity of such a	No change recommended

Current Policy/Objective	Recommended Change or Existing Avoidance/Mitigation Policies and Objectives	Description of Potential Negative Impact When Policy/Objective is Considered in Isolation	Accepted in Draft LAP
required to be compatible with the aim of achieving good ecological status for the Cannahowna/Gort River as well as having a positive relationship with the park, including high quality streetscapes, overlooking development and active/responsive ground floor uses, where appropriate. This will include the lands zoned Open Space (OS) both north and south of the Gort Bridge and Town Centre (C1) located to the north and south of the Gort River in the vicinity of the Pound/Kinincha Roads and in adjacent to the Gort Railway station.	NH10, NH11, NH12.	development	
Economic Development			
Objective ED2 Business/Enterprise and Industrial Development Facilitate and encourage the establishment of business, enterprise and industrial developments that are considered compatible with surrounding uses on suitably zoned and serviced sites. Where such uses are developed adjacent to residential areas or community facilities, buffer zones shall be provided as well as adequate screening, in the form of planting and landscaping, as appropriate. The Business and Enterprise (BE) and Industrial (I) zonings will be the primary focus for such uses, subject to the guidance provided in DM Guideline LU2	No change recommended but the following policies and objectives will act as avoidance/mitigation measures: Policy DS, UI1, UI2, NH1. Objective DS3, UI2, UI3, UI4, UI5, UI6, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UI11, UI13, UI14, UI15, NH1, NH2, NH3, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9, NH10, NH11, NH12.	Negative, see the assessment of impacts associated with Objective LU5 above.	No change recommended

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– Land Use Zoning Matrix.			
Objective ED4 Tourism Development Encourage and facilitate the sustainable development of the tourism potential of Gort and its environs in a manner that respects, builds on, protects and enhances the cultural, built and natural heritage of the town and the local amenities within the Plan Area. Key projects and initiatives that will be supported will include: a) Support the sustainable development of a river walkway and a linear park including recreational facilities and activities that will benefit the local community and visitors to the area and enhance the tourism infrastructure in an environmentally sustainable manner that recognises the Water Framework Directive, water quality and Natura 2000 conservation management objectives for the Coole-Garryland Complex. b) Investigate the provision of a tourist/information centre within the town centre.	Recommend inclusion of the following text after Coole-Garryland Complex: **and associated protected species including otter and bat species.**	See assessment for CF10.	Additional text accepted
Transport Infrastructure			
Objective TI7 Walking and Cycling Strategy	No change recommended but the following policies and objectives will	This objective may enhance links to Coole-Garryland, increase visitor	Galway County Council has included reference to a Gort

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Support the preparation of a County Walking and Cycling Strategy and the implementation of any specified objectives for the town of Gort and its environs as resources permit, such as the provision of a walkway/cycleway from the town centre to Coole Park.	act as avoidance/mitigation measures: Policy DS, UI1, UI2, NH1. Objective DS3, UI2, UI3, UI4, UI5, UI6, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UI11, UI13, UI14, UI15, NH1, NH2, NH3, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9, NH10, NH11, NH12.	numbers and potentially increase disturbance to qualifying habitats and species of this Natura 2000 site	Walking and Cycling Strategy as follows: Support the preparation of a County Walking and Cycling Strategy **and the Gort Walking and Cycling Strategy** and the implementation
Objective TI15 – Transport Network Improvements (refer to Specific Objectives Maps 2A/2B) Support the improvement of the road and street network in and around the Plan Area, subject to normal planning and environmental considerations, including in combination effects under the EU Habitats Directive Assessment as appropriate. This will include the following new routes and projects and any other appropriately approved transport schemes/improvements to roads and streets in and around the Plan Area: a) Continue to implement the provisions of the current Traffic Management Plan for Gort (and any updated/superseding documents) b) Consider the reservation lands for a new relief/link road/street connecting the north-eastern approach N66 Loughrea road to the N18 Oranmore	No change recommended but the following policies and objectives will act as avoidance/mitigation measures: Policy DS, UI1, UI2, NH1. Objective DS3, UI2, UI3, UI4, UI5, UI6, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UI11, UI13, UI14, UI15, NH1, NH2, NH3, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9, NH10, NH11, NH12.	New road developments to the north and south of the town will have the potential to result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites during the construction and operation phase of these developments. Impacts that have the potential to affect Natura 2000 Sites as a result of the development of new road schemes include: A deterioration of water quality in surface watercourses and groundwater resulting from runoff, accidental spillage and contaminating material during the construction and operation phase of such developments, and fragmentation of habitats and barriers to species movements.	No change recommended

Current Policy/Objective	Recommended Change or Existing Avoidance/Mitigation Policies and Objectives	Description of Potential Negative Impact When Policy/Objective is Considered in Isolation	Accepted in Draft LAP
in the north western portion of the Plan Area. c) Consider the reservation of lands for a new relief/link road/street connecting the south eastern approach road R458 Ennis Road to the L4514 Tubber Road on the north western portion of the Plan Area. Both of the above new routes should be designed to provide adequate access points to adjacent lands with adjacent street-oriented development and provide opportunities for smarter travel improvements within the town. d) Continue to carry out road and junction improvement, widening and realignment as required. e) Improve and maintain existing public footpaths within the town as resources permit. f) Improve culverts and all roadside drainage, maintain and renew pavements, widen and improve existing roads, improve road signage and facilitate the provision of new roads/streets within Gort, as the need arises and as resources permit. All new or modified culverts or bridges in the Plan Area shall be designed and constructed to allow for the safe passage of Otter, where this is required.			

Current Policy/Objective	Recommended Change or Existing Avoidance/Mitigation Policies and Objectives	Description of Potential Negative Impact When Policy/Objective is Considered in Isolation	Accepted in Draft LAP
Require proposed developments to consider incorporating provisions for busways, footpaths and cycleways where properties bound main arterial routes, new link routes or other routes determined by the NRA. Prohibit development on lands that are reserved for proposed road/street corridors and associated buffers and where development would affect a route, line, level or layout of any proposed new roadway or any junction required between a proposed and existing road.			
Objective TI24– Walkways (refer to Specific Objectives Maps 2A/2B) Provide a walkway along the Cannahowna/Gort River including the Kinincha and Pound Road in a sustainable manner where possible. Regard should be had to the protection of Otters and Otter breeding sites and resting places along the proposed river walk.	No change recommended but the following policies and objectives will act as avoidance/mitigation measures: Policy DS, UI1, UI2, NH1. Objective DS3, UI2, UI3, UI4, UI5, UI6, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UI11, UI13, UI14, UI15, NH1, NH2, NH3, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9, NH10, NH11, NH12.	See assessment for CF10.	
Utilities Infrastructure			
Objective UI3 Water Supply and Water Conservation Ensure that new developments are adequately serviced with a suitable quantity and quality of a sustainably sourced drinking water supply, promote	Additional text recommended: **Verification of the effectiveness of the remedial action programme for the current water supply scheme will be progressed in**	Water leak repairs have been carried out on the water supply system in Gort and it is considered that the current supply will be sufficient for the duration of the Plan, however should any new	New text accepted

Current Policy/Objective	Recommended Change or Existing Avoidance/Mitigation Policies and Objectives	Description of Potential Negative Impact When Policy/Objective is Considered in Isolation	Accepted in Draft LAP
water conservation to reduce the overall level of water loss in the public supply and require that new domestic developments provide for water supply metering.	**consultation with the EPA.** **Ensure any new potential water supply for Gort, in particular any proposals for water abstraction from Lough Cutra, will be subject to required environmental screening, including Appropriate Assessment Screening.**	water source be proposed in response to this objective there are potential for impacts on water levels of the relevant Natura 2000 sites (i.e. potential for effects on Cannahowna/Gort River and Lough Cutra if any new or increased water supply is proposed).	
Policy UI6 Energy and Communications It is the policy of Galway County Council to support the provision of adequate energy and communications infrastructure to service developments, including gas, electricity, broadband and telephone services. In particular, the Council supports the increased development and use of renewable energy and the aims of sustainable energy use and conservation in building design and construction.	No change recommended but the following policies and objectives will act as avoidance/mitigation measures: Policy DS, UI1, UI2, NH1. Objective DS3, UI2, UI3, UI4, UI5, UI6, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UI11, UI13, UI14, UI15, NH1, NH2, NH3, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9, NH10, NH11, NH12.	The development of energy and/or communications infrastructure has potential to result in negative impacts on mobile species which qualifying interests of nearby Natura 2000 sites.	No change recommended
Objective UI18 Electricity and Gas Supply Facilitate the provision of an adequate supply of electricity and gas to developments in the Plan Area, to the requirements of the relevant service provider and in accordance with the principles of proper planning and	No change recommended but the following policies and objectives will act as avoidance/mitigation measures: Policy DS, UI1, UI2, NH1. Objective DS3, UI2, UI3, UI4, UI5, UI6, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UI11, UI13, UI14, UI15, NH1, NH2, NH3,	See assessment of Policy UI 6 above.	No change recommended

Current Policy/Objective	Recommended Change or Existing Avoidance/Mitigation Policies and Objectives	Description of Potential Negative Impact When Policy/Objective is Considered in Isolation	Accepted in Draft LAP
sustainable development.	NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9, NH10, NH11, NH12.		
Objective UI20 – Broadband and Telecommunications Facilitate the provision of adequate telecommunication infrastructure in the Plan Area, including telephone and broadband services (MANS), to the requirements of the relevant service providers and in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development.	No change recommended but the following policies and objectives will act as avoidance/mitigation measures: Policy DS, UI1, UI2, NH1. Objective DS3, UI2, UI3, UI4, UI5, UI6, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UI11, UI13, UI14, UI15, NH1, NH2, NH3, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9, NH10, NH11, NH12.	See assessment of Policy UI 6 above.	No change recommended
Objective UI21 – Renewable Energy Promote and facilitate the development and use of renewable energy sources and associated infrastructure within the Plan Area, including wind, solar, bioenergy, geothermal/CHP, hydropower and other renewable energy sources, as appropriate. Encourage the integration of micro-renewable energy sources into the design and construction of new developments, as appropriate.	No change recommended but the following policies and objectives will act as avoidance/mitigation measures: Policy DS, UI1, UI2, NH1. Objective DS3, UI2, UI3, UI4, UI5, UI6, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UI11, UI13, UI14, UI15, NH1, NH2, NH3, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9, NH10, NH11, NH12.	See assessment of Policy UI 6 above.	No change recommended

3.4 ADDITIONAL MITIGATION MEASURES

A precautionary approach to developments relating to particular land use zonings (i.e. residential or business and enterprise) or Specific Objectives of the Plan has been promoted by the Plan.

Any new plans or projects occurring in development land use zonings adjacent to or in areas with karst formations will require detailed hydrological and hydrogeological assessments to establish the nature of groundwater flows and their vulnerability to potential development impacts. These assessments will also establish how groundwater pathways occurring within proposed development sites have the potential to impact upon groundwater quality in the area and thereby establish the potential for pollution of water-dependent habitats such Turloughs. The inclusion of Objectives NH6 and NH9 will ensure that that any potential impacts to karst formations and their resultant direct or indirect impacts to the environment in general and Natura 2000 Sites will be identified in advance of the commencement of new developments.

Any proposed development with the potential to result in adverse impacts to Natura 2000 Sites will be required to undertake an appropriate level of baseline investigations to establish how Natura 2000 Sites and their qualifying interests could be affected. This recommended approach is in line with objectives labelled NH1 and NH4 in **Table 3.3** above. Baseline investigations may include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- Hydrological, hydrogeological and geophysical assessments (as outlined above);
- Noise assessments (to determine the effects of noise disturbance (should this occur) to qualifying species);
- Visual assessments (to determine the effects of visual intrusions (should they occur) on qualifying species);
- Air quality assessments (to determine the effects of air emissions (should they occur) on qualifying habitats); and
- Ecological assessments, which may include botanical surveys and surveys for qualifying species likely to be impacted by a proposed plan or project.

The objectives CF10 and TI15 include examples of potential developments that will be required to undergo some or all of the above assessments. Currently the Plan seeks to encourage the development of such facilities but it recognises the potential implications such developments will have to the conservation status of Natura 2000 sites. Hence the Plans commitment to only encourage such developments where it can be shown, upon assessment of a detailed development design, that no negative implications will arise to Natura 2000 Sites or the environment in general.

This is the approach that will be adopted for any new development within the Plan area with the potential to result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites. Furthermore any such developments will be required to be assessed for its potential to result in cumulative impacts in combination with other existing or proposed developments. This approach is in line with Objective DS3 and Objective NH1 of the Plan.

Mitigatory Policies and Objectives of the Plan in combinations with the recommended policies and objectives outlined in this NIR will ensure the implementation of the Plan will avoid likely significant effects to Natura 2000 Sites.

4 APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT CONCLUSION

This NIR has reviewed the impacts arising from the Plan and found following a Stage 1 Screening Assessment that, without the implementation of mitigation measures, significant effects are considered likely on a number of Natura 2000 sites as a result of the Plan.

These potential impacts have been outlined in detail in the Natura Impact Report along with the commitments within the Plan that aim to ensure these potential impacts are avoided.

The requirement of the Plan to ensure Appropriate Assessment Screening and where necessary Appropriate Assessment of any future Plans or Projects which, alone or in combinations with other plans and project, are likely to have a significant direct or indirect impact on any Natura 2000 Sites will protect these Sites from potential adverse impacts.

Other measures within the Plan include such as the frequent monitoring of Gort WwTP capacity and effluent to the Gort/Cannahowna River with the objective of preventing the plant reaching its capacity and thereby contributing to a degradation in water quality with subsequent effects on hydrologically connected Natura 2000 sites. Once the carrying capacity of Gort WwTP has been reached no further permission for development which would provide for an increased population will be granted.

The measures and the requirements for all new developments with the potential to adversely affect Natura 2000 Sites to undertake thorough assessments to inform the conclusions of Habitats Directive Assessment will ensure adverse impacts to the integrity of these Sites will be identified in advance of receiving planning permission. Such developments will only be permitted where it can be shown that such adverse impacts can be mitigated or minimised so that likely significant effects will be avoided.

In summary and having regard to the following;

- Provision within the Plan to ensure inputs to Gort WwTP do not exceed its carrying capacity;
- Requirement as set out in Objectives DS 3 and NH1 to undertake project-level AA wherever the possibility of likely significant effects cannot be excluded; and
- Plan-level mitigation measures as outlined in **Table 3.3**and **Table 3.4** of this NIR and incorporated into the LAP.

It is considered that the adoption of the Gort Local Area Plan will not result in likely significant effects to the conservation management or integrity of Natura 2000 Sites, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects.

5 REFERENCES

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Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government (DEHLG) (2010). Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland: Guidance for Planning Authorities. Second Edition, February, 2010.

European Commission (2002). *Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites. Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*. Luxembourg.

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APPENDIX A

POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND RECOMMENDED MITIGATION AS A RESULT OF POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES IN THE PLAN

1. Development Strategy

Policies/ Objectives	Potential Impacts	Avoidance/Mitigation Measures	Residual Impacts
Policy DS1 Development Strategy	Positive. It is the overarching policy of the Council to support and facilitate the sustainable development of the Plan Area, which furthers the development of Gort in a manner that maintains and enhances and protects the natural heritage and environment and complies with relevant statutory requirements.	None	No
Objective DS1 Orderly and Sequential Development	Neutral	None	No
Objective DS2 Consistency with Core Strategy	Neutral	None	No
Objective DS3 Natura 2000 Network and Habitats Directive Assessment	Positive. This Objective directs the Development Strategy for the Gort LAP to ensure that the conservation management objectives, conservation status and integrity of Natura 2000 Sites will not be negatively impacted by elements of the LAP.	None	No
Objective DS4 Development Management Standards and Guidelines	Neutral	None	No
Objective DS5 Service Led Development	Positive. This Objective will ensure that adequate wastewater services are in place prior to permitting new development. This approach will avoid a potential scenario where wastewater treatment services cannot adequately treat the hydraulic loads being received, resulting in the discharge of polluting wastewater to the aquatic environment and potential impacts to water quality and qualifying habitats and species of all water-dependent Natura 2000 sites.	None	No
Objective DS6 Residential Development Phasing	Negative – the zoning of lands for residential Phase 1 has the potential to facilitate an increased population over the carrying capacity of the Gort WwTP. Development of lands for residential purposes also has the potential to remove habitat which might be used by	Policy DS, UI1, UI2, NH1. Objective DS3, UI2, UI3, UI4, UI5, UI6, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UI11, UI13, UI14, UI15, NH1,	No

Policies/ Objectives	Potential Impacts	Avoidance/Mitigation Measures	Residual Impacts
	mobile species which are qualifying interests of nearby Natura 2000 sites such as Lough Cutra cSAC/SPA and East Burren cSAC.	NH2, NH3, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9, NH10, NH11, NH12.	
Objective DS7 Flood Risk Management and Assessment (refer to Maps 3A/3B)	Neutral	None	No

2. Land Use

Policies/ Objectives	Potential Impacts	Avoidance/Mitigation Measures	Residual Impacts
Policy LU1 Land Use Management (refer to Maps 1A/1B)	Neutral/Positive - The Policy sets out an approach to land use management which will in itself have a neutral effect on Natura 2000 Sites. The measures within this Policy to protect and enhance the existing landscape setting and environmental quality of the Plan area will have a positive effect for Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective LU1 Town Centre/Commercial (refer to Maps 1A/1B)	Negative - The zoning of lands for residential Phase 1 has the potential to facilitate an increased population over the carrying capacity of the Gort WwTP.	Policy DS, UI1, UI2, NH1. Objective DS3, UI2, UI3, UI4, UI5, UI6, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UI11, UI13, UI14, UI15, NH1, NH2, NH3, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9, NH10, NH11, NH12.	No
Objective LU2 Residential (R) (refer to Maps 1A/1B and Objective RD1)	Negative - Undeveloped lands zoned residential have the potential to adversely impact water quality and mobile species (see DS6 above)	Policy DS, UI1, UI2, NH1. Objective DS3, UI2, UI3, UI4, UI5, UI6, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UI11, UI13, UI14, UI15, NH1, NH2, NH3, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9, NH10, NH11, NH12.	No
Objective LU3 Industrial (I) (refer to Maps 1A/1B)	Negative - Industrial zoned land is agricultural grassland with treelines and hedgerows. Removal of these features may cause adverse effects on bats	Policy DS, UI1, UI2, NH1. Objective DS3, UI2, UI3, UI4, UI5, UI6, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UI11, UI13, UI14, UI15, NH1, NH2, NH3, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9, NH10, NH11, NH12.	No
Objective LU4 Business & Enterprise (BE) (refer to Maps 1A/1B)	Negative - BE zoned land is agricultural grassland with treelines and hedgerows. Removal of these features may cause adverse effects on bats.	Policy DS, UI1, UI2, NH1. Objective DS3, UI2, UI3, UI4, UI5, UI6, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UI11, UI13, UI14, UI15, NH1, NH2, NH3, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9, NH10,	No

Policies/ Objectives	Potential Impacts	Avoidance/Mitigation Measures	Residual Impacts
		NH11, NH12.	
Objective LU5 Community Facilities (CF) (refer to Maps 1A/1B)	Negative - CF zoned land is agricultural grassland with treelines and hedgerows. Removal of these features may cause adverse effects on bats.	Policy DS, UI1, UI2, NH1. Objective DS3, UI2, UI3, UI4, UI5, UI6, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UI11, UI13, UI14, UI15, NH1, NH2, NH3, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9, NH10, NH11, NH12.	No
Objective LU6 Open Spaces/Recreation & Amenity (OS) (refer to Maps 2A/2B)	Neutral	None	No
Objective LU7 Agriculture (A) (refer to Maps 1A/1B) (refer to Maps 1A/1B)	Neutral - The aim of this land use zoning is to maintain the rural character of the Plan area and existing agricultural land uses within the Plan area.	None	No
Objective LU8 Public Utilities (PU) (refer to Maps 1A/1B)	Negative - Facilitating public utility infrastructure such as the WWTP has the potential to adversely impact water quality and mobile species.	Policy DS, UI1, UI2, NH1. Objective DS3, UI2, UI3, UI4, UI5, UI6, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UI11, UI13, UI14, UI15, NH1, NH2, NH3, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9, NH10, NH11, NH12.	No
Objective LU9 Transport Infrastructure (TI) (refer to Maps 1A/1B	Negative – Lands which are reserved for transport infrastructure have the potential if developed to impact water quality and mobile species and could therefore potentially result in likely significant effects to Natura 2000 Sites.	Policy DS, UI1, UI2, NH1. Objective DS3, UI2, UI3, UI4, UI5, UI6, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UI11, UI13, UI14, UI15, NH1, NH2, NH3, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9, NH10, NH11, NH12.	No
Objective LU10 Flood Risk Areas and Land Use Zones	Neutral	None	No
Objective LU11 Land Use Zoning Matrix	Neutral	None	No
Objective LU12 Development Densities	Neutral	None	No

Policies/ Objectives	Potential Impacts	Avoidance/Mitigation Measures	Residual Impacts
Objective LU13 Residential Densities	Neutral	None	No

3. Residential Development

Policies/ Objectives	Potential Impacts	Avoidance/Mitigation Measures	Residual Impacts
Policy RD1 Residential Development	Positive/Negative – This Objective contains measures to ensure that higher residential densities are located in appropriate areas where such developments "will not….impact adversely on the integrity of Natura 2000 Sites.	Policy DS, UI1, UI2, NH1. Objective DS3, UI2, UI3, UI4, UI5, UI6, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UI11, UI13, UI14, UI15, NH1, NH2, NH3, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9, NH10, NH11, NH12.	No
Policy RD2 Phased Development on Residential Zoned Lands (refer to Maps 1A/B)	Positive/Negative – Although a phased approach to development on residential lands will direct development to appropriate areas a positive presumption in favour of development of undeveloped lands zoned Residential Phase 1 has the potential to adversely impact water quality and mobile species which could impact adversely Natura 2000 sites through effects on water quality and mobile species.	Policy DS, UI1, UI2, NH1. Objective DS3, UI2, UI3, UI4, UI5, UI6, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UI11, UI13, UI14, UI15, NH1, NH2, NH3, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9, NH10, NH11, NH12.	No
Objective RD1 Phased Residential Development (refer to Maps 1A/1B)	Negative - See assessment of impacts associated with Objective DS 6 and Objective LU3 as set out above.	Policy DS, UI1, UI2, NH1. Objective DS3, UI2, UI3, UI4, UI5, UI6, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UI11, UI13, UI14, UI15, NH1, NH2, NH3, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9, NH10, NH11, NH12.Additional text suggested but not accepted by Galway County Council.	No
Objective RD2 Quality Housing Environments	Neutral - This Objective will not in itself result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective RD3 Housing Options	Neutral - This Objective will not in itself result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective RD4 Open Space in Residential Areas	Neutral - This Objective will not in itself result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective RD5 Social and Affordable Housing	Neutral - This Objective will not in itself result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No

Policies/ Objectives	Potential Impacts	Avoidance/Mitigation Measures	Residual Impacts
Objective RD6 Traveller Accommodation	Neutral - This Objective will not in itself result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective RD7 Compatible Development	Neutral - This Objective will not in itself result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective RD8 Other Residential Development	Neutral - This Objective will not in itself result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective RD9 Agricultural Zoned Lands	Negative - Single house developments with wastewater treatment units on undeveloped lands zoned agriculture have the potential to adversely impact water quality.	Policy DS, UI1, UI2, NH1. Objective DS3, UI2, UI3, UI4, UI5, UI6, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UI11, UI13, UI14, UI15, NH1, NH2, NH3, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9, NH10, NH11, NH12.	No

4. Social and Community Development

Policies/ Objectives	Potential Impacts	Avoidance/Mitigation Measures	Residual Impacts
Policy CF1 Social Inclusion and Universal Access	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Policy CF2 Community Facilities and Amenities	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective CF1 Social Inclusion	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective CF2 Universal Access	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective CF3 Lands for Community Facilities and Amenities (refer to Maps 1A/1B and Maps 2A/2B)	Negative - See assessment of impacts associated with Objective LU7 as set out above.	Policy DS, UI1, UI2, NH1. Objective DS3, UI2, UI3, UI4, UI5, UI6, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UI11, UI13, UI14, UI15, NH1, NH2, NH3, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9, NH10, NH11, NH12.	No
Objective CF4 Educational Facilities (refer to Maps 2A/2B)	Negative - See assessment of impacts associated with Objective LU7 as set out above.	Policy DS, UI1, UI2, NH1. Objective DS3, UI2, UI3, UI4, UI5, UI6, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UI11, UI13, UI14, UI15, NH1, NH2, NH3, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9, NH10, NH11, NH12.	No
Objective CF5 Childcare Facilities	Neutral	None	No
Objective CF6 – Open Spaces	Positive	None	No
Objective CF7 Sports, Play and Recreation Facilities	Neutral	None	No
Objective CF8 Existing Community, Recreation and Amenity Facilities and Zoned Lands	Neutral - Existing recreational facilities within Gort do not result in adverse impacts or pressures to the conservation status or integrity of Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No

Policies/ Objectives	Potential Impacts	Avoidance/Mitigation Measures	Residual Impacts
Objective CF9 Amenity Network (refer to Maps 2A/2B)	Negative - the potential negative impacts of this Objective are outlined in the assessment of impacts associated with Objective LU7 and LU8 above. The location of walking route along the river bank has the potential to adversely impact water quality and mobile species.	Policy DS, UI1, UI2, NH1. Objective DS3, UI2, UI3, UI4, UI5, UI6, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UI11, UI13, UI14, UI15, NH1, NH2, NH3, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9, NH10, NH11, NH12.	No
Objective CF10 Linear Park along the Cannahowna/Gort River	Negative - The development of any new riverside walkways along the stretch of the Cannahowna/Gort River will have the potential to adversely impact upon the water quality of the river and the qualifying habitats and/or result in disturbances to qualifying and (non-qualifying) species occurring downstream or in close proximity of such a development.	Policy DS, UI1, UI2, NH1. Objective DS3, UI2, UI3, UI4, UI5, UI6, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UI11, UI13, UI14, UI15, NH1, NH2, NH3, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9, NH10, NH11, NH12.	No

5. Economic Development

Policies/ Objectives	Potential Impacts	Avoidance/Mitigation Measures	Residual Impacts
Policy ED1 Economic Development	Neutral	None	No
Objective ED1 Employment and Economic Development	Neutral	None	No
Objective ED2 Business/Enterprise and Industrial Development	Negative - see the assessment of impacts associated with Objective LU5 above.	Policy DS, UI1, UI2, NH1. Objective DS3, UI2, UI3, UI4, UI5, UI6, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UI11, UI13, UI14, UI15, NH1, NH2, NH3, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9, NH10, NH11, NH12.	No
Objective ED3 Retail Development	Neutral - This objective aims to direct retail development to areas zoned as town centre and commercial/mixed use zonings both of which are examples of established urban land use.	None	No
Objective ED4 Tourism Development	Negative – See assessment for CF10.	Additional wording accepted to strengthen this objective. Policy DS, UI1, UI2, NH1. Objective DS3, UI2, UI3, UI4, UI5, UI6, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UI11, UI13, UI14, UI15, NH1, NH2, NH3, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9, NH10, NH11, NH12.	No
Objective ED5 Quality Working Environments	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective ED6 Non Conforming Uses	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective ED7 Proliferation of Individual Uses	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No

6. Transport Infrastructure

Policies/ Objectives	Potential Impacts	Avoidance/Mitigation Measures	Residual Impacts
Policy TI1 Sustainable Transport, Walking and Cycling	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective TI1 Integrated Land Use and Transport	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective TI2 Sustainable Transportation	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective TI3 Public Transport	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective TI4 Walking	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective TI5 Cycling	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective TI6 Bicycle Parking	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective TI7 Walking and Cycling Strategy	Negative/Positive – This objective may enhance links to Coole-Garryland, increase visitor numbers and potentially increase disturbance to qualifying habitats and species of this Natura 2000 site.	Policy DS, UI1, UI2, NH1. Objective DS3, UI2, UI3, UI4, UI5, UI6, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UI11, UI13, UI14, UI15, NH1, NH2, NH3, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9, NH10, NH11, NH12.	No
Objective TI8 Pedestrian Crossings	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective TI9 Mobility Management Plans	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective TI10 Charging Points for Electric	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to	None	No

Policies/ Objectives	Potential Impacts	Avoidance/Mitigation Measures	Residual Impacts
Vehicles	Natura 2000 Sites.		
Objective TI11 Bus Facilities and Services	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective TI12 Amenity/Walking/Cycling Network	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Policy TI2 Roads, Streets and Parking	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Policy TI3 County Development Plan Policies, Objectives & Development Management Standards	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective TI13 National Road/Motorway Network	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective TI14 Urban Street Network	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective TI15 Transport Network Improvements (refer to Specific Objectives Maps 2A/2B)	Negative - New road developments to the north and south of the town will have the potential to result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites during the construction and operation phase of these developments. Impacts that have the potential to affect Natura 2000 Sites as a result of the development of new road schemes include: A deterioration of water quality in surface watercourses and groundwater resulting from runoff, accidental spillage and contaminating material during the construction and operation phase of such developments, and fragmentation of habitats and barriers to species movements.	Policy DS, UI1, UI2, NH1. Objective DS3, UI2, UI3, UI4, UI5, UI6, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UI11, UI13, UI14, UI15, NH1, NH2, NH3, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9, NH10, NH11, NH12.	No
Objective TI16 Galway County Development Plan Policies, Objectives and Guidelines	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective TI17 Road Safety Audits and Traffic Impact Assessments	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective TI18 Noise	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No

Policies/ Objectives	Potential Impacts	Avoidance/Mitigation Measures	Residual Impacts
Objective TI19 Schools	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective TI20 Parking Facilities	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective TI21 Traffic Safety and Access	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective TI22 M18 Gort to Crusheen Motorway	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective TI23 Access Points	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective TI24 Walkways	Negative. See assessment for CF10.	Policy DS, UI1, UI2, NH1. Objective DS3, UI2, UI3, UI4, UI5, UI6, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UI11, UI13, UI14, UI15, NH1, NH2, NH3, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9, NH10, NH11, NH12.	No

7. Utilities Infrastructure

Policies/ Objectives	Potential Impacts	Avoidance/Mitigation Measures	Residual Impacts
Policy UI1 Water Supply, Wastewater Disposal and Surface Water Drainage Infrastructure	Positive - The aim of this policy is to ensure adequate wastewater treatment and surface water drainage infrastructure are available to meet the need of new development within the lifetime of the Plan. The provision of adequate infrastructure will ensure adverse impacts to surface water resulting from inadequate wastewater treatment or surface water drainage are avoided. The provision of adequate water supply infrastructure will also have a positive effect in terms of water conservation by reducing water loss.	None	No
Objective UI1 Water Services Infrastructure	Positive - See Policy UI 1 above regarding water supply infrastructure.	Additional wording accepted to strengthen this objective.	No
Objective UI2 Water Services for New Developments	Positive - This approach which is consistent with the approach to new development outlined in the Galway County Development Plan will ensure wastewater generated during the construction and operation of new developments will not result in a deterioration of water quality thus ensuring impacts to associated Natura 2000 Sites are avoided.	None	No
Objective UI3 Water Supply and Water Conservation	Negative. Water leak repairs have been carried out on the water supply system in Gort and it is considered that the current supply will be sufficient for the duration of the Plan, however should any new water source be proposed in response to this objective there are potential for impacts on water levels of the relevant Natura 2000 sites (i.e. potential for effects on Cannahowna/Gort River and Lough Cutra if any new or increased water supply is proposed).	Additional wording accepted to strengthen this objective. Policy DS, UI1, UI2, NH1. Objective DS3, UI2, UI3, UI4, UI5, UI6, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UI11, UI13, UI14, UI15, NH1, NH2, NH3, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9, NH10, NH11, NH12.	No

Policies/ Objectives	Potential Impacts	Avoidance/Mitigation Measures	Residual Impacts
Objective UI4 Wastewater Disposal	Positive - This approach which is consistent with the approach to new development outlined in the Galway County Development Plan will ensure wastewater generated during the construction and operation of new developments will not result in a deterioration of water quality within hydrologically connected waterbodies, thus ensuring impacts to associated Natura 2000 Sites are avoided.	Additional wording accepted to strengthen this objective.	No
Objective UI5 Wastewater Treatment Plant Buffer	Positive – This buffer is provided to restrict any development within 100m of the WwTP. However additional measures are needed to ensure that flooding does not impact the WwTP and potentially cause flooding.	Additional wording accepted to strengthen this objective.	No
Objective UI6 Surface Water Drainage and Sustainable Drainage Systems	Positive - See Policy UI 1 above.	Additional wording accepted to strengthen this objective.	No
Objective UI7 The Cannahowna/Gort River and Drainage Catchment	Positive - See Policy UI 1 above.	None	No
Policy UI2 Flood Risk Management and Assessment	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Policy UI3 Flood Risk in Pluvial and Groundwater Flood Areas	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective UI8 (Flood risk) Flood Risk Management and Assessment	Positive – The restriction of inappropriate development in flood risk areas will ensure no artificial impermeable surfaces installed in such areas. This will ensure natural surface runoff characteristics are maintained along watercourses draining into the aquatic environment.	None	No
Objective UI9 Flood Zones and Appropriate Land Uses	Neutral - This Objective will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective UI10 Waterbodies and Watercourses	Positive - The implementation of this buffer area will protect the water quality of rivers and streams and minimise disturbance to fauna (e.g. Otter, which a Qualifying Species of the East Burren Complex cSAC	Additional wording accepted to strengthen this	No

Policies/ Objectives	Potential Impacts	Avoidance/Mitigation Measures	Residual Impacts
	which is within foraging distance of Gort) which are likely supported by watercourses within the Plan area.	objective.	
Objective UI11 Groundwater and Pluvial Flood Risk	Neutral	None	No
Objective UI12 – Boundaries of Flood Zones	Neutral	None	No
Policy UI4 Water Quality	Positive - The implementation of this Policy will facilitate the improvement/maintenance of good water quality and good ecological status within hydrologically connected waterbodies and the Plan area.	None	No
Objective UI13 Western River Basin Management Plan and Protection of Waters	Positive - Supporting the recommendations and measures of the Western River Basin District Management Plan and associated management plans such as the Kinvara Water Management Unit Action Plan will ensure that the good water quality and ecological status of hydrologically connected water bodies is improved maintained over the lifetime of the Plan.	Additional wording accepted to strengthen this objective.	No
Objective UI14 Groundwater and Aquifers	Positive – Implementing this Objective will support the protection of groundwater and associated groundwater influenced habitats that form qualifying features for the hydrologically connected Natura 2000 sites, in particular Coole-Garryland cSAC. In particular this Objective will support the protection of springs and alkaline fen habitats occurring within and adjacent to the Plan area.	None	No
Policy UI5 Waste Management	Positive - It is the policy of Galway County Council to support sustainable waste management through the prevention, reduction and recycling of waste and by facilitating the provision of adequate waste infrastructure, such as bring banks, at locations that will not adversely affect residential amenities. This Policy will have a positive impact for the environment.	None	No
Objective UI15 Waste Prevention, Reduction and Recycling	Neutral	None	No
Objective UI16 Bring Bank Facility	Neutral	None	No
Objective UI17 Waste Management	Positive - Reduction of waste in the Plan area will likely reduce the potential for impacts on habitats and species as a result of waste	New objective accepted through SEA	No

Policies/ Objectives	Potential Impacts	Avoidance/Mitigation Measures	Residual Impacts
	generated in the Plan area.	process.	
Policy UI6 Energy and Communications	Negative - the development of energy and/or communications infrastructure in areas adjacent to Natura 2000 Sites will have the potential to result in negative impacts	Policy DS, UI1, UI2, NH1. Objective DS3, UI2, UI3, UI4, UI5, UI6, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UI11, UI13, UI14, UI15, NH1, NH2, NH3, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9, NH10, NH11, NH12.	No
Objective UI18 Electricity and Gas Supply	Negative - See Policy UI 6 above.	Policy DS, UI1, UI2, NH1. Objective DS3, UI2, UI3, UI4, UI5, UI6, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UI11, UI13, UI14, UI15, NH1, NH2, NH3, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9, NH10, NH11, NH12.	No
Objective UI19 Energy Conservation and Efficiency	Positive - This Objective will have a positive impact for the environment.	None	No
Objective UI20 Broadband and Telecommunications	Negative - See Policy UI 6 above.	Policy DS, UI1, UI2, NH1. Objective DS3, UI2, UI3, UI4, UI5, UI6, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UI11, UI13, UI14, UI15, NH1, NH2, NH3, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9, NH10,	No

Policies/ Objectives	Potential Impacts	Avoidance/Mitigation Measures	Residual Impacts
		NH11, NH12.	
Objective UI21 Renewable Energy	Negative - See Policy UI 6 above.	Policy DS, UI1, UI2, NH1. Objective DS3, UI2, UI3, UI4, UI5, UI6, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UI11, UI13, UI14, UI15, NH1, NH2, NH3, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9, NH10, NH11, NH12.	No
Policy UI7 Climate Change and Air Quality	Positive - This Objective will have a positive impact for the environment.	None	No
Objective UI22 Climate Change	Neutral	None	No
Objective UI23 Air Quality	Positive	None	No
Objective UI24 Air Purification	Positive - The planting of deciduous trees and associated landscaping will have the potential to provide habitat for a range of fauna as well as functioning as an air purifiers in the Plan area.	None	No
Objective UI25 Radon	Neutral	None	No

8. Urban Design and Landscape

Policies/ Objectives	Potential Impacts	Avoidance/Mitigation Measures	Residual Impacts
Policy UD1 Urban Design and Landscape	Neutral - This Policy will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective UD1 High Quality, Context Sensitive Design	Neutral - This Policy will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective UD2 Public Spaces and Streets	Neutral - This Policy will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective UD3 Spatial Definition and Animation	Neutral - This Policy will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective UD4 Green Network and the Landscape	Positive – This objective will potentially provide positive benefits for mobile species which are qualifying interests of nearby Natura 2000 sites.	None	No
Objective UD5 Street-Oriented Development and Responsive Frontages	Neutral - This Policy will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective UD6 Design Statements	Neutral - This Policy will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective UD7 Landscape, Townscape, Views and Prospects	Neutral - This Policy will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No

9. Built and Cultural Heritage

Policies/ Objectives	Potential Impacts	Avoidance/Mitigation Measures	Residual Impacts
Policy BH1 Built Heritage	Neutral - This Policy will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Policy BH2 Cultural Heritage	Neutral - This Policy will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective BH1 Architectural Heritage	Neutral - This Policy will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective BH2 Protected Structures	Neutral - This Policy will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective BH3 Architectural Conservation Area	Neutral - This Policy will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective BH4 Development/Works relating to Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Area	Neutral - This Policy will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective BH5 Demolition	Neutral - This Policy will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective BH6 Architectural Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan	Neutral - This Policy will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective BH7 Vernacular Architecture and Structures of Local Interest	Neutral - This Policy will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective BH8 Archaeological Heritage	Neutral - This Policy will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective BH9 Monuments and Places	Neutral - This Policy will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective BH10 Zones of Archaeological Potential	Neutral - This Policy will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective BH11 Local Place Names	Neutral - This Policy will not result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No

10. Natural Heritage and Biodiversity

Policies/ Objectives	Potential Impacts	Avoidance/Mitigation Measures	Residual Impacts
Policy NH1 European Sites	Positive - This Policy aims to support the protection of the conservation status and integrity of Natura 2000 Sites.	None	No
Objective NH1 Natura 2000 Sites	Positive – This Objective directs the Development Strategy for the Gort LAP to ensure that the conservation management objectives, conservation status and integrity of Natura 2000 Sites will not be negatively impacted by elements of the LAP.	None	No
Objective NH2 Protected Habitats and Species	Positive - See Objective DS 3, NH 1 and NH 2 above.	None	No
Objective NH3 Natural Heritage Areas and Proposed Natural Heritage Areas	Positive - This objective provides protection for NHAs and pNHAs.	None	No
Objective NH4 Impact Assessment	Positive - These measures will ensure all proposed developments with the potential to result in likely significant effects to the environment and/or natural heritage will be identified, assessed and mitigated where necessary.	None	No
Objective NH5 Biodiversity and Ecological Networks	Positive - The implementation of this Policy will support the enhancement of natural habitats providing shelter and resources for a range of flora and fauna including Qualifying Species of the Lough Cutra cSAC/SPA, East Burren cSAC and other nearby Natura 2000 sites.	Additional wording accepted to strengthen this objective.	No
Objective NH6 Water Resources	Positive - See Policy UI 2 and Objective UI 8 and UI 9 above.	Additional wording accepted to strengthen this objective.	No
Objective NH7 Environmental Management Buffer	Positive - This objective will provide protection for the Cannahowna/Gort River, its banks, associated species dependent on the river and water of the river which may impact hydrologically connected Natura 2000 sites including Coole/Garryland cSAC/SPA.	Additional wording accepted to strengthen this objective.	No
Objective NH8 Trees, Parkland/Woodland and Hedgerows	Positive - The implementation of this Policy will support the enhancement of natural habitats providing shelter and	Some additional wording accepted to strengthen this	No

Policies/ Objectives	Potential Impacts	Avoidance/Mitigation Measures	Residual Impacts
	resources for a range of flora and fauna including Qualifying Species of the Lough Cutra cSAC/SPA, East Burren cSAC and other nearby Natura 2000 sites.	objective.	
Objective NH9 Geological and Geo-morphological Systems	Positive - Karst formations are potential links to groundwater and therefore to hydrologically connected Natura 2000 sites. Adequate assessment and protection of these features will reduce the potential for water pollution impacts arising as a result of construction.	None	No
Objective NH10 Control of Invasive and Alien Invasive Species	Positive - Certain alien invasive species will have the potential to negatively affect the conservation status of qualifying Annex II species occurring within and adjacent to the LAP. This measure will help to ensure potential pressures associated with alien invasive species are minimised and or avoided in the plan area.	Some additional wording accepted to strengthen this objective.	No
Objective NH11 Consultation with Environmental Authorities	Positive - This objective ensures that all developments will be adequately assessed, with input from the relevant environmental authorities, as to their potential for significant effects.	None	No
Suggest inclusion of a new objective: **Objective NH12 – Protection of Bats and Bat Habitats**	This mitigatory objective will ensure that bats and particular lesser horseshoe bats are considered in all development within the plan area and in particular areas which may potentially be used as migratory routes or as foraging habitat. Lesser horseshoe bat is a qualifying species of nearby Natura 2000 sites.	New mitigation objective	No

APPENDIX B

QUALIFYING HABITATS AND SPECIES OF NATURA 2000 SITES INCLUDING CURRENT THREATS

Qualifying Habitats and Species of Natura 2000 Sites Including Current Threats

Site Name	Qualifying Interests	Current Threats	Site Sensitivity	Conservation Status
Coole-Garryland Complex cCSAC	[3150] Natural eutrophic lakes with *Magnopotamion* or *Hydrocharition*-type vegetation	Fertilisation, grazing, forestry, leisure fishing, hunting, human induced hydraulic changes, eutrophication and invasive species.	Surface water dependent. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Highly sensitive to pollution. Changes to trophic status.	Unfavourable - Bad
	[3180] * Turloughs	Nutrient enrichment and inappropriate grazing; drainage, peat cutting; marl extraction and quarrying.	Surface and Groundwater dependent. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Changes in nutrient or base status.	Unfavourable - Inadequate
	[3270] Rivers with muddy banks with *Chenopodion rubri* p.p. and *Bidention* p.p. vegetation	Changes in nutrient status and inappropriate grazing; drainage,	Surface water dependent. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Highly sensitive to grazing changes. Changes to trophic status.	Favourable
	[5130] *Juniperus communis* formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands	Over-grazing, agricultural improvement, pavement removal, burning and scrub encroachment, succession to woodland and invasion by Rhododendron spp	Changes in grazing management. Changes in nutrient or base status.	Unfavourable - Inadequate
	[6210] Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (*Festuco Brometalia*)(* important orchid sites)	The main threats to this habitat include the abandonment of traditional agricultural practices and reclamation.	Changes in management. Changes in nutrient or base status. Moderately sensitive to hydrological change.	Poor
	[8240] * Limestone pavements	Removal of limestone pavement, removal of scrub, dispersed habitation, stock feeding, agricultural improvement, quarry, disposal inert material, electricity lines, infilling wetlands, routes, abandonment of grazing, agricultural structure, burning, discharges, disposal household	Changes in management.	Unfavourable - Inadequate

Site Name	Qualifying Interests	Current Threats	Site Sensitivity	Conservation Status
		waste, dumping dredgings, forestry, grazing, improved access, landfill, nautical sports, paths and restructuring agric land holding.		
Coole-Garryland SPA	*Cygnus cygnus* [wintering]	While no information in the form of an Article 17 Conservation Status Report exists for waterbirds or their respective SPAs a number of pressures have been identified by Crowe et al (2008). These pressures include: the modification of wetland sites, particularly for industry or housing and increased levels of disturbance, largely related to recreational activity. Eutrophication at a number of wetland sites as a result of nutrient inputs from a range of polluting activities were also identified as a potential pressure. However this latter pressure is now being alleviated through stricter control of activities associated with water discharge/runoff etc. Climate change was also noted as a significant factor underlying changes in trends of wintering waterbirds in Ireland.	Highly sensitive to hydrological changes and loss of wetland habitat. Sensitive to disturbance.	No information is currently available on the threats to the qualifying features of this site
Lough Cutra cCSAC	[1303] *Rhinolophus hipposideros*	Loss of suitable summer and winter roosting sites due to the demolition or renovation of derelict buildings for human occupation, loss of commuting routes linking roosts to foraging sites, and loss of suitable foraging sites are the major threats to this species. The	Sensitive to changes in semi-natural and broadleaved woodland habitats. Uses derelict buildings for roosting sites.	Favourable

Site Name	Qualifying Interests	Current Threats	Site Sensitivity	Conservation Status
		use of insecticides, habitat destruction such as felling of trees and scrub clearance and deterioration of old buildings.		
East Burren Complex cCSAC	[3140] Hard oligo-mesotrophic waters with benthic vegetation of *Chara* spp.	Fertilisation, grazing, forestry, leisure fishing, hunting, human induced hydraulic changes, eutrophication and invasive species.	Surface water dependent. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Highly sensitive to pollution. Changes to trophic status.	Bad
	[3180] * Turloughs	Nutrient enrichment and inappropriate grazing; drainage, peat cutting; marl extraction and quarrying.	Surface and Groundwater dependent. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Changes in nutrient or base status.	Unfavourable - Inadequate
	[3260] Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculion fluitantis* and *Callitricho-Batrachion* vegetation	Fertilisation, grazing, forestry, peat extraction, pollution, drainage, invasive species.	Surface water dependent. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Highly sensitive to pollution. Changes to trophic status.	Bad
	[4060] Alpine and Boreal heaths	Overgrazing by sheep, burning, communications networks, paths, tracks or cycling paths, energy transport, other forms – wind generated energy, improved access to the site, outdoor sports and leisure activities, walking, horse riding and non-motorised vehicles, motorised vehicles,mountaineering, rock climbing, speleology, pollution, air pollution – acidification – from acid rain, trampling and overuse.	Sensitive to pollution. Changes to nutrient or base status.	Unfavourable - Inadequate
	[6210] Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (*Festuco Brometalia*)(* important orchid sites)	The main threats to this habitat include the abandonment of traditional agricultural practices and reclamation.	Changes in management. Changes in nutrient or base status. Moderately sensitive to hydrological change.	Poor

Site Name	Qualifying Interests	Current Threats	Site Sensitivity	Conservation Status
	[5130] *Juniperus communis* formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands	Over-grazing, agricultural improvement, pavement removal, burning and scrub encroachment, succession to woodland and invasion by Rhododendron spp	Changes in grazing management. Changes in nutrient or base status.	Unfavourable - Inadequate
	[6210] Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (*Festuco Brometalia*)(* important orchid sites)	The main threats to this habitat include the abandonment of traditional agricultural practices and reclamation.	Changes in management. Changes in nutrient or base status. Moderately sensitive to hydrological change.	Poor
	[6510] Lowland hay meadows (*Alopecurus pratensis*, *Sanguisorba officinalis*)	The main threats to this habitat include the abandonment of traditional agricultural practices and reclamation.	Changes in management. Changes in nutrient or base status. Moderately sensitive to hydrological change.	Bad
	[7210] * Calcareous fens with *Cladium mariscus* and species of the *Caricion davallianae*	Overgrazing, restructuring agricultural land holding, peat extraction, mechanical removal of peat, water pollution. landfill, land reclamation and drying out in general. Infilling ditches, dykes, ponds, marshes and pits.	Groundwater dependent. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Changes in nutrient or base status.	Unfavourable - Bad
	[7220] * Petrifying springs with tufa formation (*Cratoneurion*)	Peat cutting, arterial drainage, local drainage, water abstraction, agricultural reclamation.	Changes in management. Changes in nutrient or base status. Highly sensitive to hydrological change.	Unfavourable - Bad
	[7230] Alkaline fens	Fertilisation, grazing, forestry, burning, leisure fishing, hunting, peat extraction, dispersed habitation, discharges, sport and leisure structures, pollution, drainage, erosion , invasive species.	Changes in management. Changes in nutrient or base status. Highly sensitive to hydrological change.	Unfavourable - Bad

Site Name	Qualifying Interests	Current Threats	Site Sensitivity	Conservation Status
Kiltartan Cave (Coole) CSAC	[1303] *Rhinolophus hipposideros*	Loss of suitable summer and winter roosting sites due to the demolition or renovation of derelict buildings for human occupation, loss of commuting routes linking roosts to foraging sites, and loss of suitable foraging sites are the major threats to this species. The use of insecticides, habitat destruction such as felling of trees and scrub clearance and deterioration of old buildings.	Sensitive to changes in semi-natural and broadleaved woodland habitats. Uses derelict buildings for roosting sites.	Favourable
Caherglassaun Turlough CSAC	[3180] * Turloughs	Nutrient enrichment and inappropriate grazing; drainage, peat cutting; marl extraction and quarrying.	Surface and Groundwater dependent. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Changes in nutrient or base status.	Unfavourable - Inadequate
002295 Ballinduff Turlough CSAC	[3180] * Turloughs	Nutrient enrichment and inappropriate grazing; drainage, peat cutting; marl extraction and quarrying.	Surface and Groundwater dependent. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Changes in nutrient or base status.	Unfavourable - Inadequate
Lough Coy CSAC	[3180] * Turloughs	Nutrient enrichment and inappropriate grazing; drainage, peat cutting; marl extraction and quarrying.	Surface and Groundwater dependent. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Changes in nutrient or base status.	Unfavourable - Inadequate
Carrowbaun, Newhall and Ballylee Turloughs CSAC	[3180] * Turloughs	Nutrient enrichment and inappropriate grazing; drainage, peat cutting; marl extraction and quarrying.	Surface and Groundwater dependent. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Changes in nutrient or base status.	Unfavourable - Inadequate
Galway Bay Complex CSAC	[1140] Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide	Aquaculture; Professional fishing; Bait digging; Removal of fauna; Reclamation of land; Coastal protection works; and Invasion by a species;	Surface, ground and marine water dependent. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Highly sensitive to pollution. Changes in salinity and tidal regime	Unfavourable - Inadequate

Site Name	Qualifying Interests	Current Threats	Site Sensitivity	Conservation Status
	[1150] * Coastal lagoons	Drainage for agricultural and safety reasons; natural siltation; Water pollution in the form of excessive nutrient enrichment	Surface, ground and marine water dependent. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Highly sensitive to pollution. Changes in salinity and tidal regime	Bad
	[1160] Large shallow inlets and bays	Aquaculture, fishing, dumping of wastes and water pollution.	Surface and marine water dependent. low sensitivity to hydrological changes. Aquaculture, fishing and pollution.	Poor
	[1170] Reefs	Professional fishing, taking for fauna, taking for flora, water pollution, climate change and change in species composition.	Surface, ground and marine water dependent. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Highly sensitive to pollution. Changes in salinity and tidal regime	Unfavourable - Inadequate
	[1220] Perennial vegetation of stony banks	Over-grazing by sheep or cattle. Many sites are also subject to erosion and accretion. *Spartina anglica* is also present on many Irish saltmarshes and is considered an invasive species. There have been some minor losses of habitat during the current assessment period to infilling and reclamation.	Sensitive to anthropogenic changes to coastal processes.	Unfavourable - Inadequate
	[1310] *Salicornia* and other annuals colonizing mud and sand	Invasive Species; erosion and accretion	Marine water dependent. Medium sensitivity to hydrological change. Changes in salinity and tidal regime. Infilling, reclamation, invasive species	Poor
	[1330] Atlantic salt meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia* maritimae)	Overgrazing; erosion; invasive species, particularly common cordgrass (Spartina anglica); infilling and reclamation.	Marine and groundwater dependent. Medium sensitivity to hydrological change. Changes in salinity and tidal regime. Overgrazing, erosion and accretion	Poor

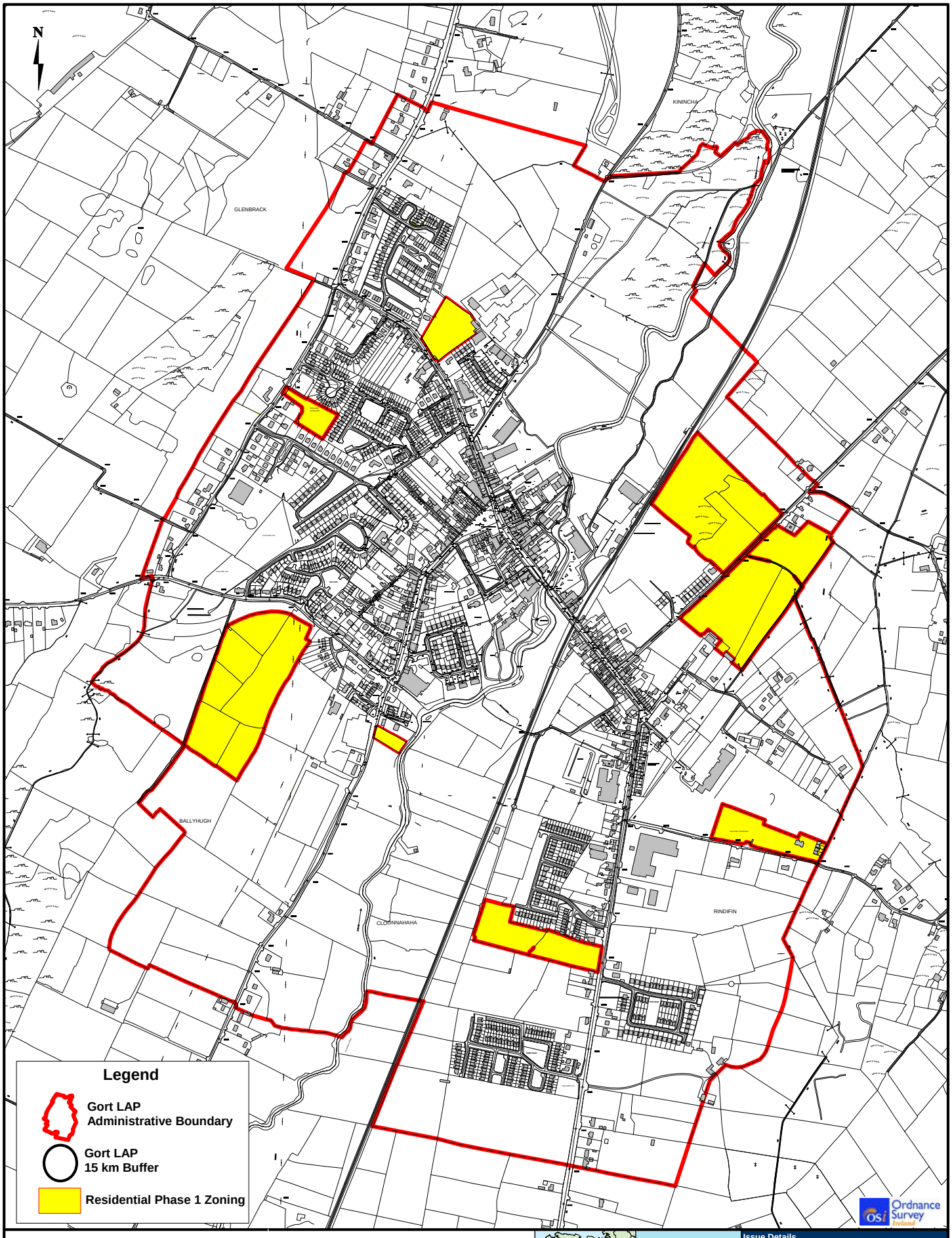
Site Name	Qualifying Interests	Current Threats	Site Sensitivity	Conservation Status
	[1410] Mediterranean salt meadows (*Juncetalia maritimi*)	Over-grazing by cattle or sheep; infilling and reclamation.	Marine and groundwater dependent. Medium sensitivity to hydrological change. Changes in salinity and tidal regime. Coastal development and reclamation.	Poor
	[3180] * Turloughs	Nutrient enrichment and inappropriate grazing; drainage, peat cutting; marl extraction and quarrying.	Surface and Groundwater dependent. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Changes in nutrient or base status.	Unfavourable - Inadequate
	[5130] *Juniperus communis* formations on heaths or calcareous grasslands	Over-grazing, agricultural improvement, pavement removal, burning and scrub encroachment, succession to woodland and invasion by Rhododendron spp	Changes in grazing management. Changes in nutrient or base status.	Unfavourable - Inadequate
	[6210] Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (*Festuco Brometalia*)(*important orchid sites)	The main threats to this habitat include the abandonment of traditional agricultural practices and reclamation.	Changes in grazing management. Changes in nutrient or base status. Moderately sensitive to hydrological change	Poor
	[7210] *Calcareous fens with *Cladium mariscus* and species of the *Caricion davallianae*	Peat or turf cutting, arterial drainage, local drainage and agricultural reclamation, infilling of sites with building waste, dumping of household refuse, afforestation, water pollution and urban expansion.	Groundwater dependent. Highly sensitive to hydrological changes. Changes in nutrient or base status.	Bad
	[1355] *Lutra lutra*	Decrease in water quality: Use of pesticides; fertilization; vegetation removal; professional fishing (including lobster pots and fyke nets); hunting; poisoning; sand and gravel extraction; mechanical removal of peat; urbanised areas;	Surface and marine water dependent. Moderately sensitive to hydrological change. Sensitivity to pollution	Poor

Site Name	Qualifying Interests	Current Threats	Site Sensitivity	Conservation Status
		human habitation; continuous urbanization; drainage; management of aquatic and bank vegetation for drainage purposes; ; and canalization or modifying structures of inland water course.		
	[1365] *Phoca vitulina*	Continued by-catch in fishing gear; occasional illegal culling; competition for prey resources with fisheries and disturbance at key breeding and moulting haul-out sites.	Marine water dependent. Sensitive to changes in food supply.	Good
Inner Galway Bay SPA	*Gavia immer* [wintering]	While no information in the form of an Article 17 Conservation Status Report exists for waterbirds or their respective SPAs a number of pressures have been identified by Crowe et al (2008). These pressures include: the modification of wetland sites, particularly for industry or housing and increased levels of disturbance, largely related to recreational activity. Eutrophication at a number of wetland sites as a result of nutrient inputs from a range of polluting activities were also identified as a potential pressure. However this latter pressure is now being alleviated through stricter control of activities associated with water discharge/runoff etc. Climate	Highly sensitive to hydrological changes and loss of wetland habitat. Sensitive to disturbance.	No information is currently available on the threats to the qualifying features of this site
	Phalacrocorax carbo [breeding + wintering]			
	Ardea cinerea [wintering]			
	Branta bernicla hrota [wintering]			
	Tadorna tadorna [wintering]			
	Anas penelope [wintering]			
	Anas crecca [wintering]			

Site Name	Qualifying Interests	Current Threats	Site Sensitivity	Conservation Status
	Anas clypeata [wintering]	change was also noted as a significant factor underlying changes in trends of wintering waterbirds in Ireland.		
	Mergus serrator [wintering]			
	Charadrius hiaticula [wintering]			
	Pluvialis apricaria [wintering]			
	Vanellus vanellus [wintering]			
	Calidris alpina [wintering]			
	Limosa lapponica [wintering]			
	Numenius arquata [wintering]			

APPENDIX C

MAPS DETAILING SPECIFIC LOCATIONS FOR EACH ZONING TYPE



RPS

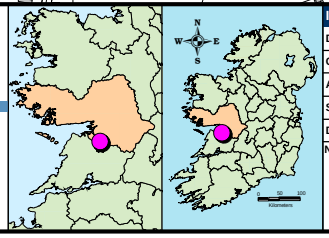
Client

Galway County Council

Title

Residential Phase 1 Zoning

Appendix C Figure 1



Issue Details			
Drawn by: DM		Project No. MGE0346	
Checked by: JF		File Ref. MGE0346MI0041	
Approved by: WM			
Scale: 1@200,000 @ A4		Drawing No. MI0041	Rev. F01
Date: February 2013			

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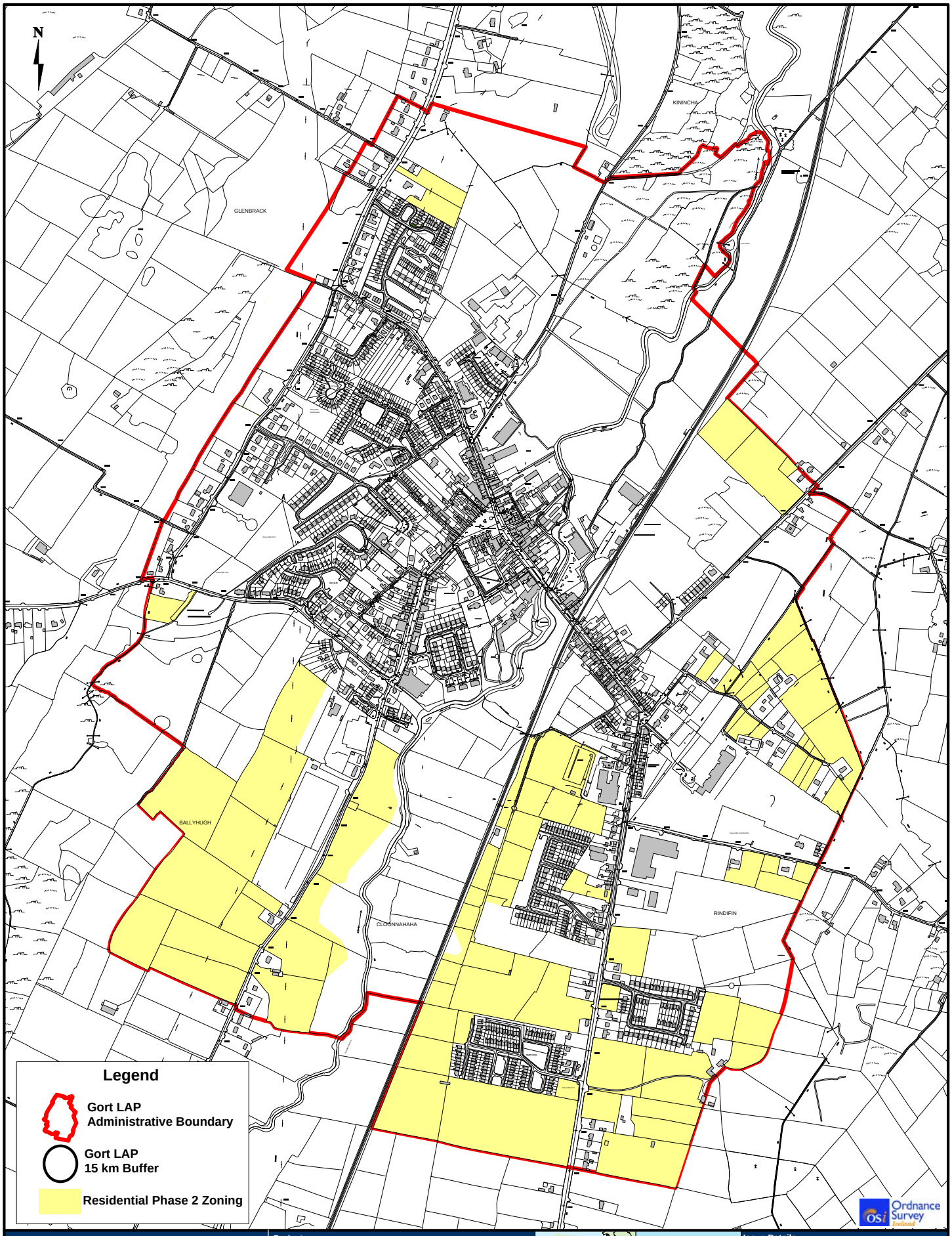

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Project
Gort LAP (2013-2019) AA

Client
Galway County Council

Title
Residential Phase 2 Zoning

Appendix C Figure 2

Issue Details

Drawn by:	DM	**Project No.**	MGE0346
Checked by:	JF	**File Ref.**	MGE0346MI0042
Approved by:	WM		
Scale:	1@200,000 @ A4	**Drawing No.**	MI0042
Date:	February 2013	**Rev.**	F01

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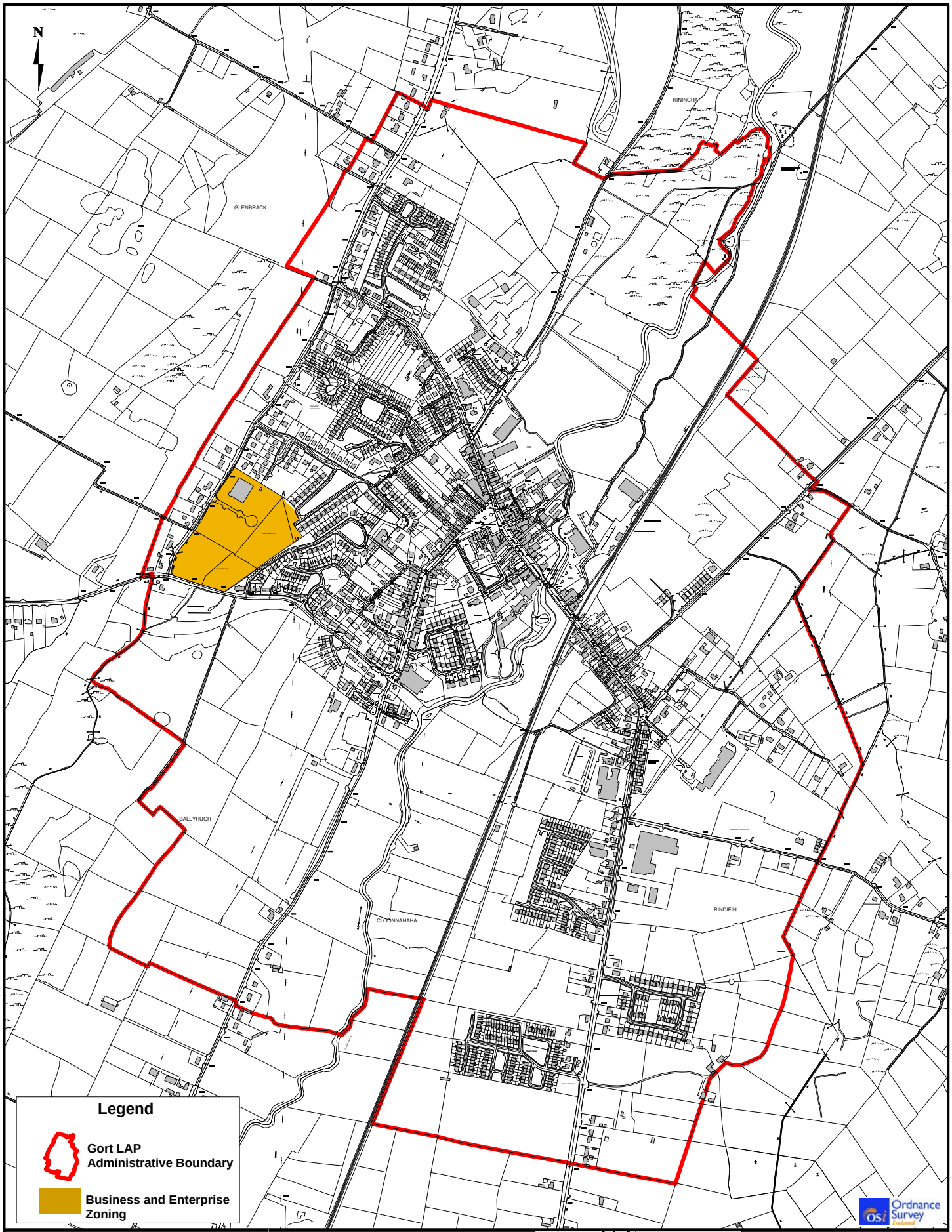

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Project
Gort LAP (2013-2019) SEA

Client
Galway County Council

Title
Business and Enterprise Zoning

Appendix C Figure 3

Issue Details			
Drawn by: JF		Project No. MGE0346	
Checked by: DM		File Ref. MGE0346MI0040	
Approved by: WM			
Scale: 1@200,000 @ A4		Drawing No. MI0040	Rev. F01
Date: February 2013			

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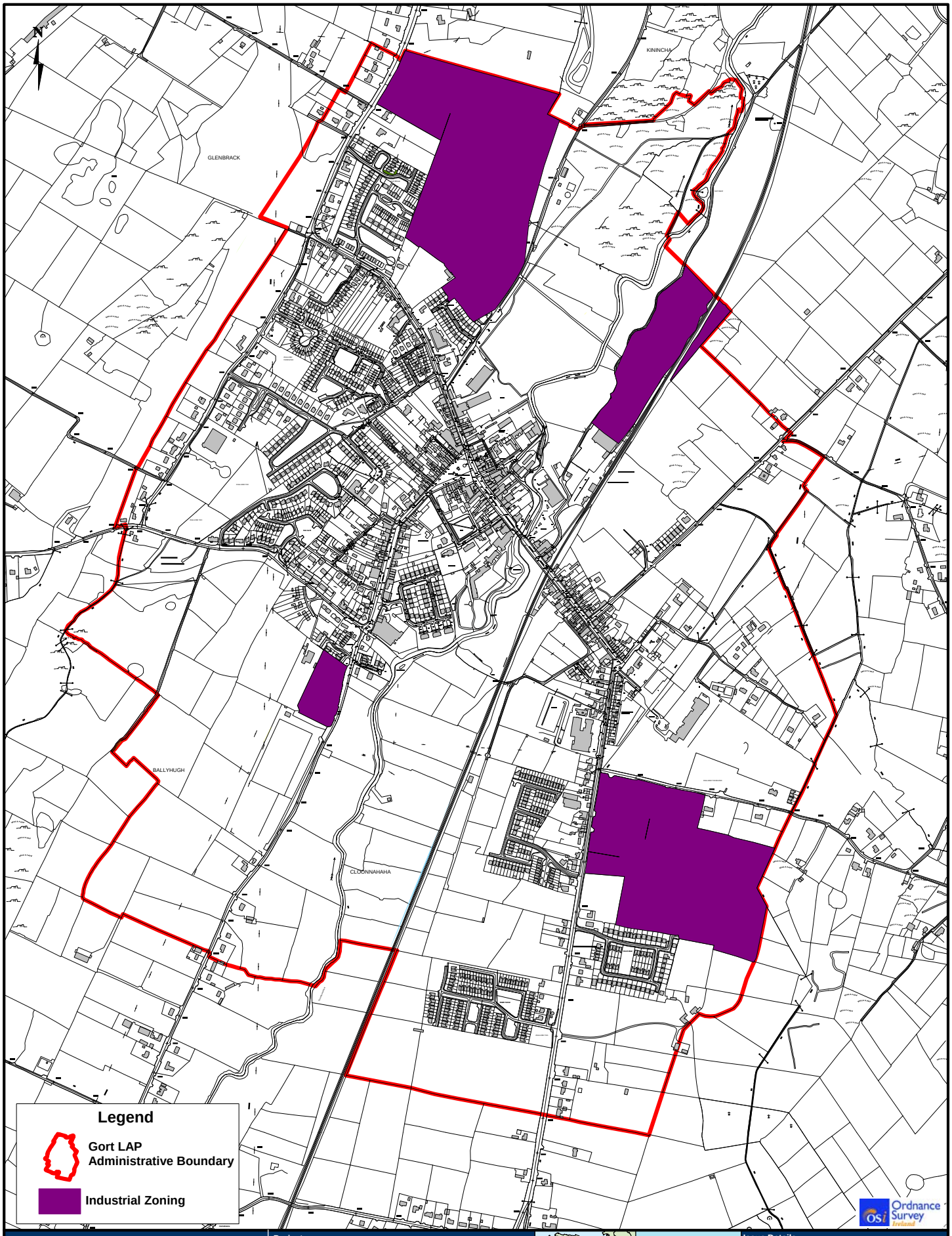

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Project

Gort LAP (2013-2019) AA

Client

Galway County Council

Title

Industrial Zoning

Appendix C Figure 4

Issue Details

Drawn by:	DM	**Project No.**	MGE0346
Checked by:	JF	**File Ref.**	MGE0346MI0044
Approved by:	WM		
Scale:	1@200,000 @ A4	**Drawing No.**	MI0044
Date:	February 2013	**Rev.**	F01

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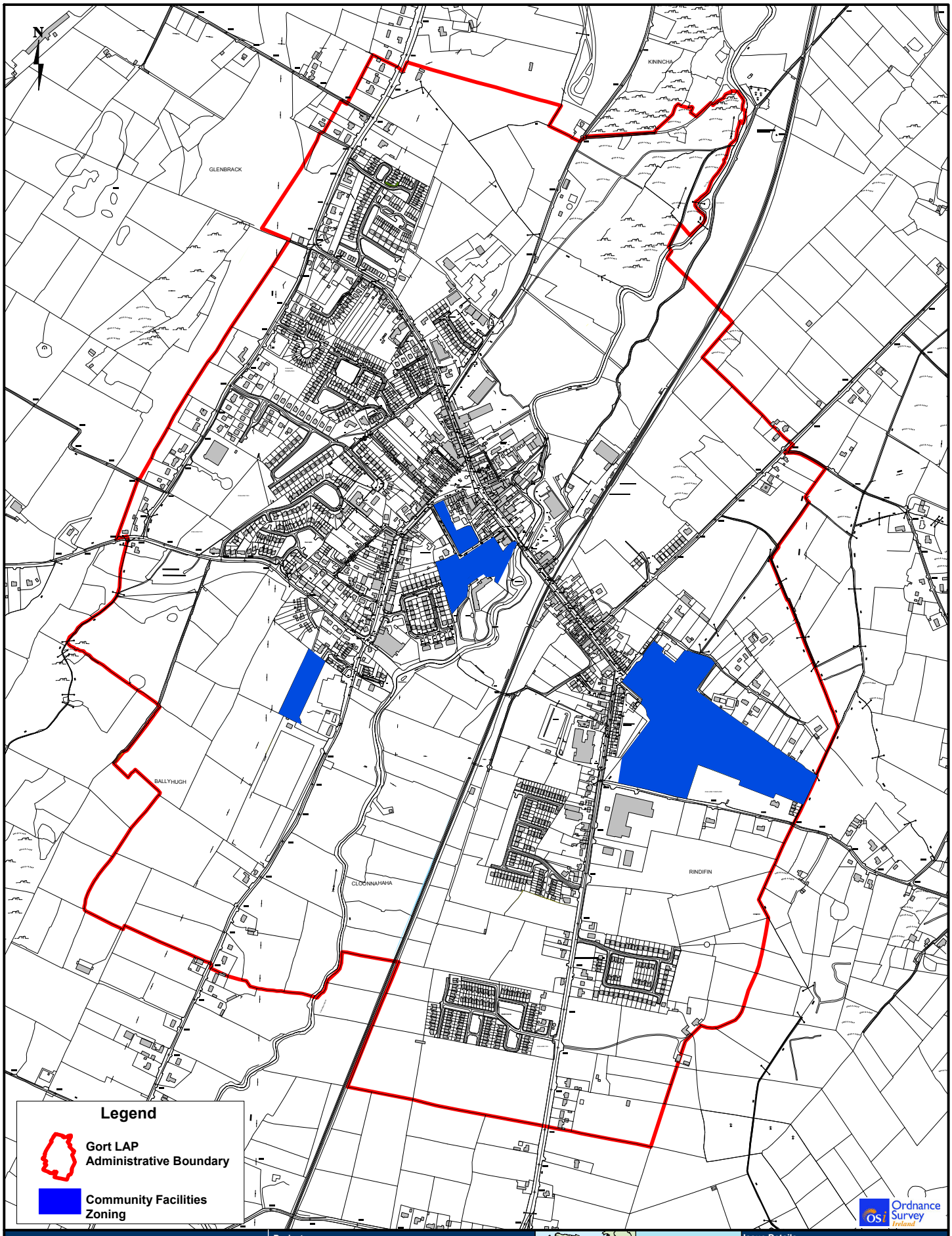

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Project

Gort LAP (2013-2019) AA

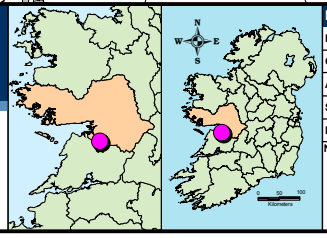
Client

Galway County Council

Title

Community Facilities Zoning

Appendix C, Figure 5



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Checked by:	JF	**File Ref.**	MGE0346MI0045
Approved by:	WM		
Scale:	1@200,000 @ A4	**Drawing No.**	**Rev.** MI0045 F01
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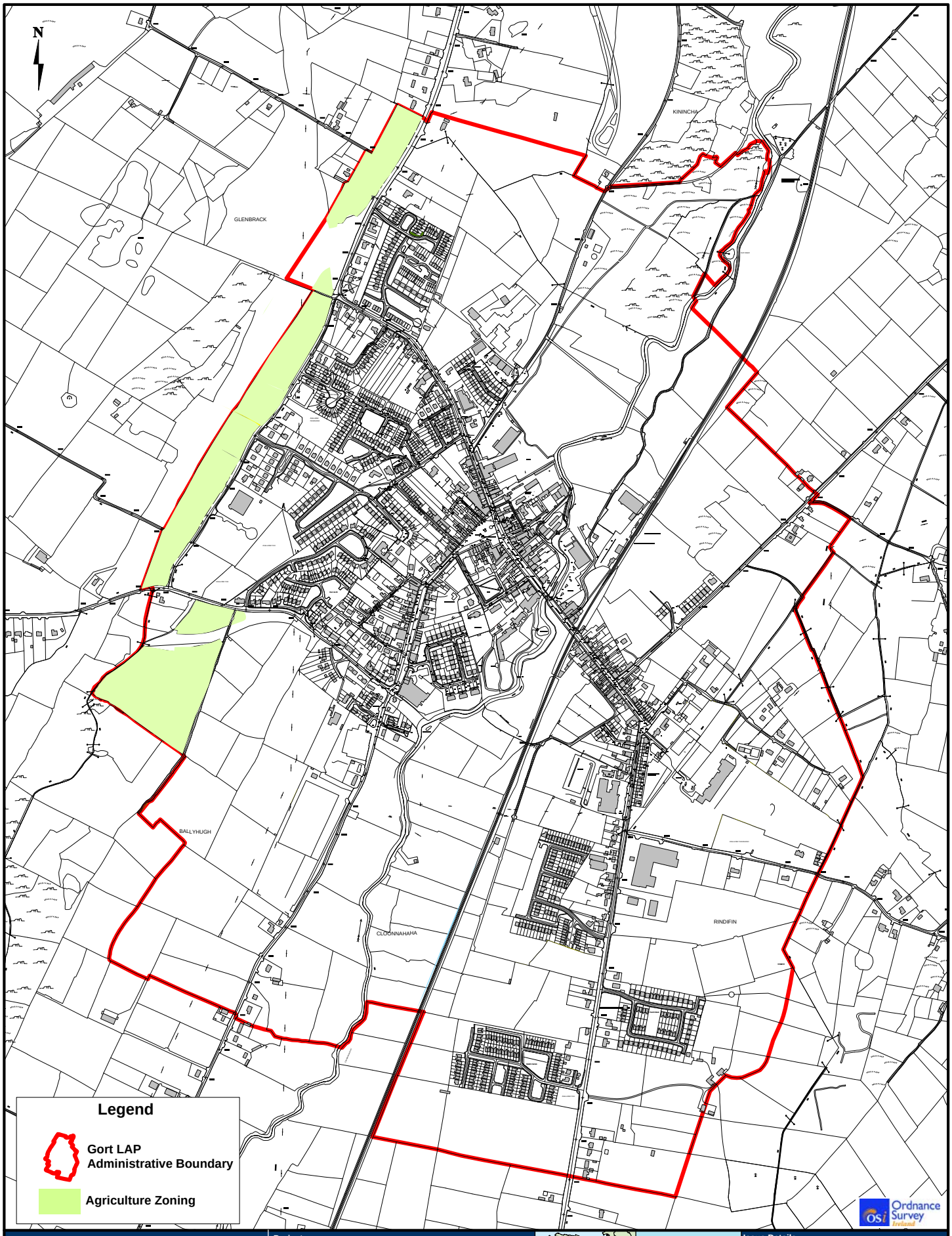

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Project

Gort LAP (2013-2019) AA

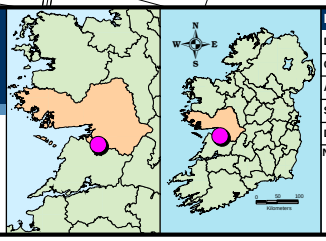
Client

Galway County Council

Title

Agriculture Zoning

Appendix C, Figure 6



Issue Details

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Checked by: JF		**File Ref.** MGE0346MI0046	
Approved by: WM			
Scale: 1@200,000 @ A4		**Drawing No.** MI0046	**Rev.** F01
Date: February 2013			

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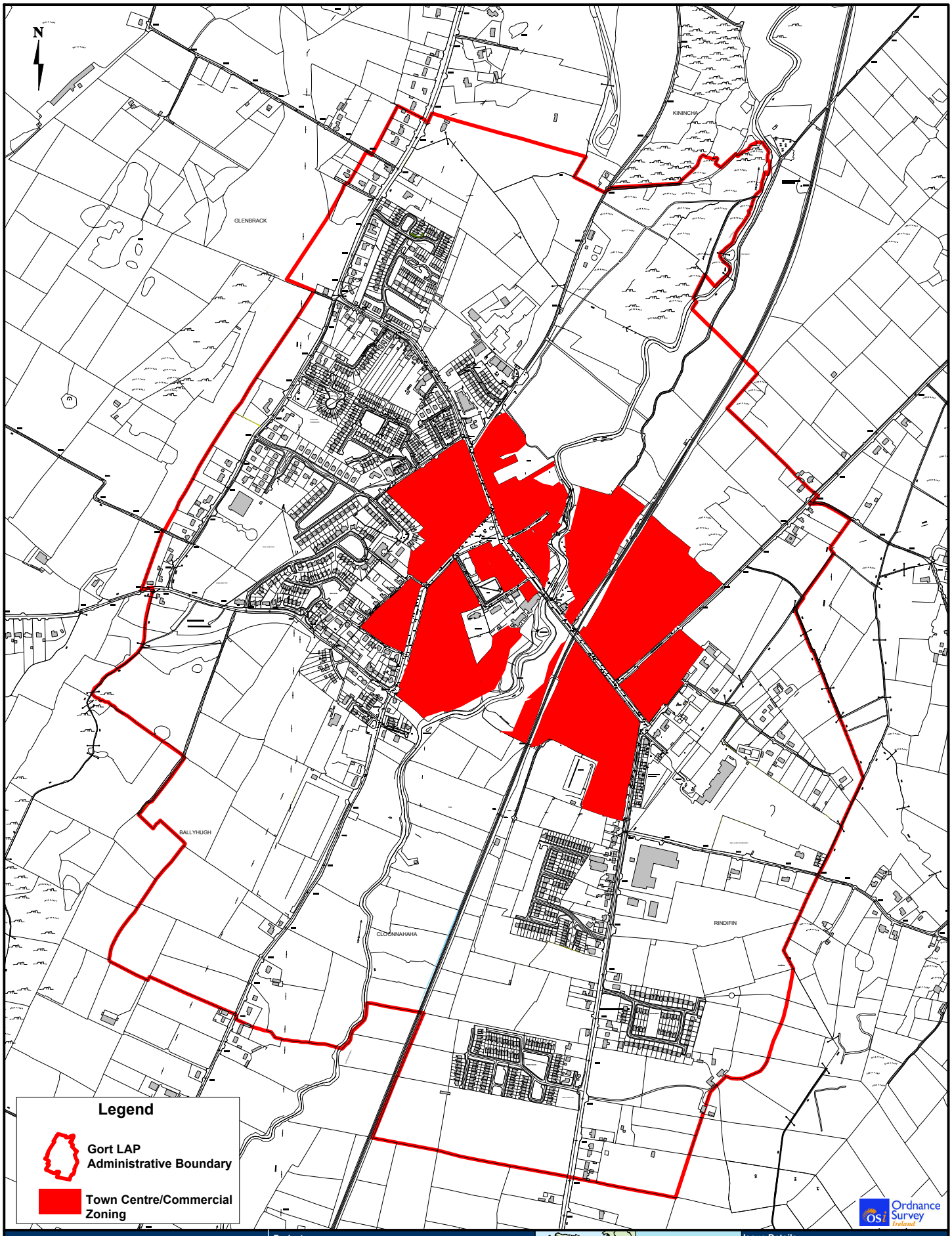

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Project

Gort LAP (2013-2019) AA

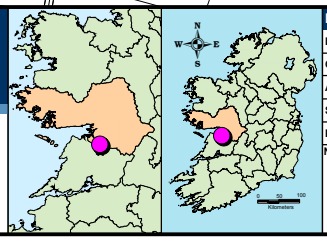
Client

Galway County Council

Title

Town Centre/Commercial Zoning

Appendix C, Figure 7



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Checked by: JF		File Ref. MGE0346MI0047	
Approved by: WM			
Scale: 1@200,000 @ A4		Drawing No. MI0047	Rev. F01
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APPENDIX D

NPWS SITE SYNOPSES OF NATURA 2000 SITES

SITE NAME : COOLE-GARRYLAND COMPLEX cSAC
SITE CODE : 000252

The Coole-Garryland Complex is situated in a low-lying karstic limestone area west of Gort, County Galway. It contains a series of seasonal lakes (turloughs), which are fed by springs and a partly submerged river, surrounded by woodland, pasture and limestone heath. The more well-known turloughs present in the site include Lydacan, Crannagh North, Raheen, Crannagh South, Coole, Garryland, Newtown and Hawkhill. Turloughs are listed as priority habitat on Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive, and the turloughs at Coole-Garryland are particularly good examples of this habitat type. Vegetation of the turloughs includes Shoreweed (Littorella uniflora), Spike-rush (Eleocharis palustris), Water-purslane (Lythrum portula) and Fen Violet (Viola persicifolia). A species of Water-starwort, Callitriche palustris, has recently been recorded from the site, its only known station in Ireland. The Coole river itself is of particular interest for the occurrence of a rare riverine habitat characterised by Trifid Bur-marigold (Bidens tripartita), Red Goosefoot (Chenopodium rubrum) and species of Knotgrass (Polygonum spp.).

The turloughs are fringed by a range of habitats on limestone pavement, including scrub communities containing Buckthorn (Rhamnus catharticus) and Hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna). In places, heath communities have developed over the limestone pavement, consisting of Ling Heather (Calluna vulgaris), Juniper (Juniperus communis), Blue Moor-grass (Sesleria albicans) and occasional Yew (Taxus baccata). In addition, the site contains good examples of smooth pavement and associated species-rich grasslands. Small areas of orchid-rich grassland occur at Coole-Garryland. The colourful array of orchids which can be found here include Pyramidal Orchid (Anacamptis pyramidalis), Spotted Orchids (Dactylorhiza spp.), Fragrant Orchid (Gymnadenia conopsea), Fly Orchid (Ophrys insectifera) and Greater Butterfly Orchid (Platanthera chlorantha).

A remarkable feature of the turloughs at Coole-Garryland is that they are closely associated with areas of woodland. Although substantial parts of the original deciduous forest have been converted to coniferous woodland composed of non-native species, stands of semi-natural deciduous woodland survive. Pedunculate Oak (Quercus robur) and Ash (Fraxinus excelsior) are the dominant species on deeper, more fertile soils, where there is also some Hazel (Corylus avellana), occasional Yew (Taxus baccata) and Elm (Ulmus spp.). There are also some unusual areas of dwarf Pedunculate Oak woodland growing on limestone pavement. This species of oak does not typically colonise this type of substrate. Some of the deciduous woodlands have a mixture of native and non-native species. These mixed woodlands have a diverse shrub layer comprised of Spindle (Euonymus europaeus), Privet (Ligustrum vulgare), Burnet Rose (Rosa pimpinellifolia), Guelder Rose (Viburnum opulus), Blackthorn (Prunus spinosa), Pear (Pyrus pyraster) and Honeysuckle (Lonicera periclymenum). The ground flora is rich and includes Wood Anemone (Anemone nemorosa), Dog Violet (Viola riviniana), Shining Crane's-bill (Geranium lucidum), Maidenhair Spleenwort (Asplenium trichomanes), Northern Bedstraw (Galium boreale), Biting Stonecrop (Sedum acre), Harebell (Campanula rotundifolia) and Bitter Vetch (Lathyrus montanus). The woodlands are notable for the presence of rare species of Myxomycete fungi, namely, Licea idris, Licea marginata and Macbrideola decapillata, the first-named in one of only three known sites for the species. The nationally rare Mudwort (Limosella aquatica) and Dropwort (Filipendula vulgaris) also occur at this site. These two plant species are listed in the Irish Red Data Book.

The complex of habitats at Coole-Garryland provides habitat for a variety of mammal species, including Otter and Pine Marten. The otter is listed on Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive, while Pine Marten is considered to be threatened in Europe. The Coole-Garryland complex is also home to one of the most important and unique assemblages of insects in the country, including several notable species of beetles and flies. The area is of importance for wintering waterfowl, especially Whooper Swan (mean peak of 324 in 1995/96 - 98/99), Bewick Swan (79 in winter 96/97), Wigeon (mean peak of 1044 in 1995/96 - 98/99), Mallard (mean peak of 330 in 1995/96 - 98/99), Pochard (mean peak of 176 in winter 1995/96 - 98/99), along with smaller numbers of Teal, Tufted Duck, Lapwing, Curlew and Dunlin. In 1996 seven pairs of Lapwing bred at Newtown Turlough and two pairs of Common Sandpiper bred at Coole Lough. A substantial portion of this site is in the ownership of the National Parks and Wildlife Service. It is a popular amenity area, and uncontrolled visitor access would pose a threat to sensitive animals.

Other threats to the site may result from the intensification of agriculture (e.g. fertiliser application or pollution of water courses) outside the Nature Reserve. The turlough system at Coole-Garryland is considered to be the most diverse in the country, for both its physiography and vegetation. It is unique in that it is so closely associated with woodland. The juxtaposition of these two distinct habitats, in addition to the presence of a variety of turloughs, has led to the development of uncommon communities, and rare species of insect and plant occur which are associated with both the turlough and the turlough/woodland transition. Overall, the range of good quality habitats at Coole-Garryland supports a high diversity of plant and animal species, rendering this site of prime importance for conservation.
30.11.2004

SITE NAME: COOLE-GARRYLAND SPA
SITE CODE: 004107

The Coole-Garryland SPA is situated in a low-lying karstic limestone area west of Gort, Co. Galway. It comprises a series of turloughs, which are fed by springs and a partly submerged river, surrounded by woodland, pasture and limestone heath. Coole Lough is the largest and most permanent of the turloughs, and retains some water throughout the year. Water levels vary greatly depending on rainfall and this has consequences on the numbers of birds present. During prolonged dry spells, higher numbers of some species are present as birds from other sites in the catchment are attracted to the permanent waters of Coole Lough. Excessive flood conditions reduce the potential feeding areas though birds still roost on the lakes.

Vegetation of the turloughs includes Shoreweed (Littorella uniflora), Common Spikerush (Eleocharis palustris), Water-purslane (Lythrum portula) and Fen Violet (Viola persicifolia). A species of Water-starwort, Callitriche palustris, has recently been recorded from the site, its only known station in Ireland. The Coole River itself is of particular interest for the occurrence of a rare riverine habitat characterised by Trifid Bur-marigold (Bidens tripartita), Red Goosefoot (Chenopodium rubrum) and species of Knotgrass (Polygonum spp.). The turloughs are fringed by a range of habitats on limestone pavement, including scrub communities containing Buckthorn (Rhamnus catharticus) and Hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna). Small areas of orchid-rich grassland occur at Coole-Garryland, and include such species as Pyramidal Orchid (Anacamptis pyramidalis), Fragrant Orchid (Gymnadenia conopsea) and Fly Orchid (Ophrys insectifera). A feature of the turloughs at Coole-Garryland is that they are closely associated with areas of woodland, including semi-natural deciduous woodland of Pedunculate Oak (Quercus robur) and Ash (Fraxinus excelsior). The site is of international importance for Whooper Swan (322), which use it for both feeding and roosting purposes, though the flock also visits other feeding areas outside of the site. It was formerly of importance for Bewick's Swan but birds have not been present in recent winters, reflecting a decline that has occurred throughout the country. A good diversity of other wintering birds occurs, notably Wigeon (845) which is close to the threshold for national importance. Also present are Teal (200), Shoveler (23), Pochard (142), Tufted Duck (56), Mallard (330), Pintail (7), Goldeneye (10), Mute Swan (14), Lapwing (297) and Curlew (111) – all figures are average peaks for three of the five seasons 1995/96-1999/00. Dunlin, a scarce species inland, is a visitor to the site at times. In 1996 two pairs of Common Sandpiper bred at Coole Lough. The complex of habitats at Coole-Garryland provides habitat for a variety of mammal species, including Otter and Pine Marten. Otter is listed on Annex II of the E.U. Habitats Directive, while Pine Marten is considered to be threatened in Europe. The Coole-Garryland complex is also home to one of the most important and unique assemblages of insects in the country, including several notable species of beetles and flies. The nationally rare Mudwort (Limosella aquatica) and Dropwort (Filipendula vulgaris) also occur at the site. These two plant species are listed in the Irish Red Data Book.

Much of the site is a Nature Reserve and is managed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service. It is a popular amenity area, and uncontrolled visitor access would pose a threat to sensitive animals. Other threats to the site may result from agricultural intensification (e.g. fertiliser application or pollution of watercourses) outside of the site. The turlough system at Coole-Garryland is considered to be the most diverse in the country, for both its physiography and vegetation. The site is of international importance for its population of Whooper Swan, a species that is listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive. Coole Lough has particular significance for wintering waterfowl as during prolonged dry spells it is one of the few sites in the catchment which retains open water. The ecology of the site has been studied in detail.

SITE NAME: LOUGH CUTRA cSAC
SITE CODE: 000299

Lough Cutra is a large oligo/mesotrophic freshwater lake lying on limestone but with much sediment washed down from the sandstone hills above. This lake is situated about 4 km south-east of Gort, Co. Galway.

This site is a candidate SAC selected for alkaline fen, a habitat listed on Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive, and for Lesser Horseshoe Bat, a species listed on Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive. A series of connected woodlands on the western side of the lake has been included as foraging habitat for these bats. The vegetation around the lake is diverse, with reedbeds confined to sheltered bays, marshes and fens on sandy and peaty ground and natural and planted woodlands. Shallow water communities include species such as Jointed Rush (Juncus articulatus), Bulbous Rush (J. bulbosus), Alternate Water-milfoil (Myriophyllum alternifolium), Water-plantain (Alisma plantago-aquatica), Floating Club-rush (Scirpus fluitans), Lesser Water-plantain (Baldellia ranunculoides), Water Lobelia (Lobelia dortmanna) and Shoreweed (Littorella uniflora). Winter flooded areas support marsh vegetation with Common Spike-rush (Eleocharis palustris), Common Marsh-bedstraw (Galium palustre), Purple-loosestrife (Lythrum salicaria), amongst others, and with notable species such as Lesser Meadow-rue

(Thalictrum minus), Northern Bedstraw (Galium boreale) and Blue-eyed-grass (Sisyrinchium bermudiana). On wet peaty areas fen vegetation includes Black Bog-rush (Schoenus nigricans), Saw Sedge (Cladium mariscus) and a range of associated sedges (Carex spp.) and fen mosses.

Included in the site is a small (c. 3 ha.) turlough, very small areas of alkaline fen and occasional fields with affinities to Molinia meadow. A relatively large poor fen is present in the north of the site, adjoining the lake. The mouth of the Owendalulleegh River has formed an unusual delta where a good quality old willow (Salix cinerea)- dominated wet woodland has developed behind vegetated sand bars. Woodland occurs around much of the lakeshore, as well as on a number of islands in the lake. Wet woodland on peat is dominated by Willow (Salix cinerea) and Alder (Alnus glutinosa). An old record of Irish Spurge (Euphorbia hybernica) probably comes from drier woodland which occurs in the Lough Cutra Demesne. These woodlands provide feeding grounds for Lesser Horseshoe Bats. Between 1999 and 2001 up to 93 bats have been recorded in hibernation at Lough Cutra Castle and it is thought likely that a summer nursery roost also occurs here. The lake is a regionally/locally important site for waterfowl. Monthly counts between November 1995 and March 1996, as part of an intensive study on flooding in the catchment, gave the following numbers: Whooper Swan (18), Mallard (101), Teal (69), Tufted Duck (83) and Goldeneye (58). The latter also use the nearly Ballynakill Lough. The lake has a long-established breeding colony of cormorants, with 34 nests in 1996. Higher numbers (166 pairs, 1985) have been recorded in the past. Small numbers also winter on the lake. In recent years there have been no records of Greenland White-fronted Geese from the lake, although in the past flocks of 60-80 birds were regular and were considered to be birds from the Rahasane or Creganna population.

The lake is used for fishing and tourism. Precautions should be taken to ensure the lake and its surrounding area is protected from damaging operations such as application of artificial fertilisers, development close to the lakeshore, drainage and felling of woodland areas. Lough Cutra is of conservation interest for the range of wetland habitat types it contains, particularly alkaline fen, a habitat listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. The presence of an internationally important colony of Lesser Horseshoe Bats, a species listed on Annex II of the Habitats Directive, and a regionally important population of Cormorants add further interest to the site.
19.2.2004

SITE NAME: EAST BURREN COMPLEX cSAC
SITE CODE: 001926

This large site incorporates all of the high ground in the east Burren, and extends south-eastwards to include a complex of calcareous wetlands. The area encompasses a complete range of limestone habitats that include limestone pavement and associated calcareous grasslands and heath, scrub and woodland together with a network of calcareous lakes and turloughs. The site exhibits some of the best and most extensive areas of oligotrophic limestone wetlands to be found in the Burren and in Europe.

The limestone pavement includes smooth blocky and shattered types. The bare pavement is interspersed with species-rich calcareous vegetation communities. Typical grassland species found include Blue Moor-Grass (Sesleria albicans), Mountain Everlasting (Antennaria dioica), Bloody Cranesbill (Geranium sanguineum) and Wild Thyme (Thymus praecox). Limestone Heath is well developed in part of the uplands where Heather (Calluna vulgaris) and Bell Heather (Erica cinerea) are common along with St. John's-wort (Hypericum spp.) and Tormentil (Potentilla erecta). Two rare plant species which are common to this habitat include the Hoary Rock-rose (Helianthemum canum) and Pyramidal Bugle (Ajuga pyramidalis); both species are listed in the Red Data Book. To the south-east around the western shores of Lough Bunny an interesting heath community with Bearberry (Arctostaphylos uva-ursi) occurs at one of its few inland lowland locations in the Burren.

Caves are a feature of this site, with four known natural limestone caves showing a variety of formations and passage types. Vigo Cave has one of the best undisturbed cave entrance facies in Ireland and is considered a valuable karst heritage landform. Glencurrane Cave shows some fine phreatic solution features and one passageway, known as “Crinoid Tower” shows an abundance of crinoids which have been etched out by splashing water. Gortlecka Cave and a series of small caves above Lough Inchiquin are other fine examples of this habitat. Ballyeighter Loughs complex to the east is a large network of calcareous lakes and turloughs with associated fen, cut-away bog and calcareous marsh habitats. The complex contains many species of plant and animal that are found in areas of fluctuating water levels. The fen flora is well developed and large areas of Great Fensedge (Cladium mariscus) and Black Bog-rush (Schoenus nigricans), with a diverse complement of associated species occur. Some of the best and most extensive calcareous swamp fen communities in the country occur within this complex and further north-east around the shores of Lough Bunny. Between this lake and the Coole-Garryland turlough complex to the north east of the site, another area of oligotrophic limestone wetlands occurs. This type of ecosystem is now very rare in Europe and many of the habitats found are listed on Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive.

Many fine examples of turloughs occur within the site; Carran Turlough is an oligotrophic turlough par excellence with many interesting features in its flora and vegetation. It is rated as of international importance. Lough Atedaun is a good example of Burren wetland habitat. The aquatic plant communities are well developed and the rare, Red Data Book species, Mudwort (Limosella aquatica), occurs here. Scrub cover is relatively good in this area of the Burren with large expanses of Hazel (Corylus avellana) intermixed with Spindle (Euonymous europaeus), Guelder Rose (Viburnum opulus) and Blackthorn (Prunus spinosa). An interesting scrub community of Alder Buckthorn (Frangula alnus), a Red Data Book species, Buckthorn (Rhamnus catharticus) and Shrubby Cinquefoil (Potentilla fruticosa), also a Red Data Book species, fringes the shores of some of the lakes and turloughs to the east.

Ballyeighter Wood to the east is an unusual scrub community on limestone with regenerating Oak (Quercus sp.) amongst Hazel (Corylus avellana), Ash (Fraxinus excelsior), Holly (Ilex aquifolium) and Hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna) and is an example of a woodland type that is rare in the Burren region. The eastern edge of Slieve Carran is dominated by steep cliffs and scree slopes over which Ash and Hazel wood is developed. This represents one of the few remaining woodland habitats in the Burren.

The East Burren Complex includes sites for many rare vascular plants and bryophytes (mosses and liverworts) and for several rare lichens and stoneworts. In the east Burren wetlands Mute Swan and Whooper Swan occur in internationally important concentrations, while Wigeon, Lapwing, Dunlin, Black-tailed Godwit and Goldeneye are also very numerous. Also found in wetlands on the site (e.g. Lough Atedaun, Carran Turlough, Lough Aleenaun, Lough Inchiquin, Lough Bunny, Lough Cullaun, Muckanagh Lough) are Bewick's Swan, Teal, Mallard, Gadwall, Shoveler, Tufted Duck, Curlew, Golden Plover, Coot and Little Grebe. The site also supports a flock of Greenland White-fronted Geese. Several of these species are listed in the Red Data Book and on Annex I of the EU Birds Directive. A nesting pair of Peregrine Falcon, a species listed on Annex I of the EU Birds Directive, occur on Glasgeivnagh Hill. The east Burren wetlands are frequented by Sparrowhawk, Kestrel and Hen Harrier, a rare species which is also listed on Annex I of the EU Birds Directive. Pine Marten and Otter have been recorded regularly within the site - both are listed in the Red Data Book as they are considered threatened in Europe, the latter also on Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive.

The site supports an internationally important population of Lesser Horseshoe Bats, with an estimated 400 individuals. There are two known nursery roosts, a transition roost and four known winter sites, the latter all in natural limestone caves. Pipistrelle and Long-eared Bats also occur. All of these species are listed in the Red Data Book, the former also on Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive. The Lesser Horseshoe Bat is a small, delicate bat which is confined to six western counties, Mayo, Galway, Clare, Limerick, Kerry and Cork. It forages close to woodland and at the edges of water. The Irish population of this species is estimated to be about 12,000 individuals and may be the largest national population in Europe. The Pipistrelle Bat is the smallest bat to occur in Ireland and is the commonest and most widespread species. Pipistrelle Bats forage where small insects gather, in gardens, along hedgerows and trees, over ponds and along rivers. The Long-eared Bat is the second commonest bat in Ireland and is easily identified by its long ears which are nearly as long as its body. The Long-eared Bat forages in and along woodland where they glean insects off foliage. Since the bats moved into their present location, the roof has been replaced and timbers treated, but this does not seem to have disturbed the nursery colony. The surrounding habitat is ideal for the Lesser Horseshoe Bat's foraging habitat, being a mixture of lake, river, woodland and hedgerows. A number of small caves in the surrounding countryside raises the possibility of a nearby hibernation site. The bat colony is of international importance because of the numbers of Lesser Horseshoe Bats roosting there during the summer months and because of the close proximity of suitable foraging areas and potential hibernation sites. The site includes a large population of Marsh Fritillary, a species of butterfly listed on Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive. The site also supports the only known populations of Slow Worm (Anguis fragilis) in Ireland - this lizard is believed to have been introduced in about 1970. Arctic Char (Salvelinus alpinus), a Red Data Book fish species has been recorded from Lough Inchiquin

Most of the site is grazed by cattle and sheep, and in some areas, particularly the uplands, by goats. Slieve Carran is a Statutory Nature Reserve, while some 750 square km within the region of Mullaghmore makes up the Burren National Park. Clearance and intensification of agriculture has caused damage to some parts of the site. This threatens the heath and scrub communities and may cause eutrophication (nutrient enrichment) of the lakelands to the east. Drainage and land reclamation have occurred in places around the edges of wetlands, while some marginal fen areas have been afforested. Areas of agriculturally-improved land have been included within the site in order to protect the hydrology and nutrient status of the wetland system. The East Burren Complex is of international scientific interest owing to the presence of fine examples of typical Burren habitats together with an oligotrophic wetland complex of lakes, turloughs, fen, cut-over bog and calcareous marsh. The Ballyeighter complex represents an excellent example of a nutrient-poor calcareous lake and fen system, of European significance. The only remaining woodland habitats to be found in the Burren occur

within the site. The site contains twelve habitats that are listed on Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive and three species of plant and animal listed on Annex II of this Directive and, as such, is of major conservation significance. The occurrence of many rare plants and several rare mammals within the site adds considerably to its scientific and conservation value. The site is of high ornithological interest for the internationally and nationally important numbers of waterfowl that use it.

03.09.2001

SITE NAME: KILTARTAN CAVE (COOLE) cSAC
SITE CODE: 000286

Kiltartan cave is a natural limestone cave situated north of Coole Park in County Galway, just off the main Galway-Ennis road. It is used as a hibernating site for the Lesser Horseshoe Bat (Rhinolophus hipposideros), a species listed on Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive.

This cave, which has been well documented since 1863, is a segment of an abandoned streamcourse of the Gort River. A 3 m descent into the cave divides into two main passages. A muddy slope south from the entrance leads to the Entrance Hall. The Entrance Hall is the only real chamber in the cave, the ceiling height measures approximately 6 m. A number of passages lead from this, most are silty and muddy. To the east of the Entrance Hall there are a series of well decorated passages etched into joints, which contain stalactites and curtains with serrated edges hanging from the roof and walls. The cave contains the following representative cave features: elliptical phreatic tube with local modification by roof collapse, roof tube still preserved in places, gour pools, straw stalactites and botryoidal calcite deposits. Water levels within the cave are known to fluctuate in winter with some passages filling completely with water; during severe flooding in 1994/95, all sections of the cave were filled with water except for small pockets in the roof.

The Lesser Horseshoe Bat (Rhinolophus hipposideros), an Annex II species, uses the cave as a hibernation site. Numbers of Lesser Horseshoe Bats counted prior to the serious flooding in 1994-95 varied between 44 and 70. During the floods the cave was filled to the entrance. Following the floods, bat numbers remained in the mid to low teens until January 2001, when 41 individuals were counted. Most hibernating bats are found on the right hand side of the cave entrance, in a passage historically known as the ‘Bat Passage’, which runs north for 40 m and is floored by boulders. The entrance of the cave is sheltered with hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna) trees and the surrounding vegetation is of scrub and hedgerows, which provides suitable foraging habitat and shelter for the bats. Coole Wood is within 500 m of the cave. Although well known and regularly visited by caving groups, disturbance to the cave and the wintering bats is though to be minimal. This is a particularly fine example of a fossil streamway cave, which contains many features of geological interest. Caves are listed on Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive. The presence of a significant population of Lesser Horseshoe Bat makes the site of International Importance.
4.9.2001

SITE NAME : CAHERGLASSAUN TURLOUGH cSAC
SITE CODE : 000238

Caherglassaun is a large lake located 6 km north-west of Gort and 5 km southeast of Kinvarra in the low-lying farmland of east County Galway. Situated in a natural depression just to the north-west of Coole Nature Reserve, this site comprises a permanent lake at its core, while the rest of the basin functions as a turlough. At times of high water, the entire site floods up to a height of 15m or more, i.e. to give at least 11m water depth. A series of collapse features act as swallowholes in such floods. Caherglassaun shows some features which are not typical of turloughs. Firstly, it has a permanent lake at its base which is relatively deep and has an aquatic flora of Pondweeds (Potamogeton spp.) and Rigid Hornwort (Ceratophyllum demersum). Secondly, because of its proximity to sea-level, the lake fluctuates 30cm or so, which is delayed significantly behind tidal height at Kinvarra. As a result of the fluctuation, an unusual plant community exists, dominated by Needle Spike-rush (Eleocharis acicularis) and Common Spike-rush (E. palustris). This resembles a saltmarsh in appearance although the water is not brackish. Other plant species which occur in the turlough at Caherglassaun include Creeping Yellow-cress (R. sylvestris) and Waterpurslane (Lythrum portula).

A mixed deciduous woodland occurs on rocky ground on the western side of the site. The canopy is dominated by Hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna), Blackthorn (Prunus spinosa) and Buckthorn (Rhamnus catharticus). This is a young woodland which may develop further into an Ash (Fraxinus excelsior)-dominated stand in the absence of high grazing pressure. Areas of exposed limestone occur within the site and include pavement, low cliffs and caves. This brings unusual plant species, such as Hairy Rock-cress (Arabis hirsuta), Biting Stonecrop (Sedum acre) and Polypody ferns (Polypodium spp.) into the edge of a turlough and adds diversity to the site. The rocky habitats also provide roosting sites for bats.

Three Rare plant species, which are listed in the Irish Red Data Book, occur on the site. Mudwort (Limosella aquatica) occurs here - it tends to occur in sites which retain water into the summer months. The south Galway area is the species headquarters in Ireland. Both Fen Violet (Viola persicifolia) and Northern Yellowcress (Rorippa islandica) occur at Caherglassaun. These are characteristic turlough species which occur to a very limited extent in other habitats. A bat roost exists within the site. Lesser Horseshoe Bat (Rhinolophus hipposideros) and Natterer's Bat (Myotis nattereri), which is listed in the Irish Red Data Book, roost here. Lesser Horseshoe Bat is listed on Annex II of the European Habitats Directive, and Ireland has the largest national population in Europe. Loss of suitable summer habitat and disturbance during hibernation are the major threats to this species. Caherglassaun shares in the populations of waterfowl that are based on Coole Lough. Whooper Swans, Wigeon and Lapwing are all regular visitors, though their numbers are low, while Lapwing may also nest here in some summers. Whooper Swan is listed on Annex I of the European Birds Directive.

Any development which would involve drainage or alteration of the watertable would threaten this site. Presence of grazers will also influence the site - low grazing levels would facilitate the further development of woodland at the site. Caherglassaun is of considerable conservation value, and was rated as the sixth most important large turlough by a recent national survey, based on vegetation. It has the most pronounced "tidal" fluctuation of any large site, and is remarkable for its complement of rare plants and animals.
03.09.2001

SITE NAME: BALLINDUFF TURLOUGH cSAC
SITE CODE: 002295

Ballinduff Turlough is situated in a narrow basin in the limestone lowlands of south Co. Galway, 5 km north-east of Gort. It is part of the Coole Lough complex of lakes and turloughs, most of which are Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) or Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). Rock outcrops around the northern half but there is glacial drift in the south. There is a low hill to the south outside the site. The boundary in the south-west is the Galway-Limerick railway line. The site is a candidate SAC selected for turlough, a priority habitat listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive.

The turlough is late-draining and a pool persists into June or July and re-floods easily. There is a marshy hollow in the middle of the southern section which receives an inflow of water from the south. The hydrology of the site is probably controlled by a complex of swallow holes and subsidence below the houses at Coolfin. During floods the turlough drains overland towards Coole Lough.

The main habitats on the site are various types of turlough grassland and turlough scrub which are related to the flooding regime. The turlough grassland types vary. In the wettest parts plant species such as Marsh Horsetail (Equisetum fluviatile), Amphibious Bistort (Persicaria amphibia) and Common Spike-rush (Eleocharis palustris) occur with some Lake Club-rush (Schoenoplectus lacustris). Higher up Yellow Sedge (Carex lepidocarpa), Marsh Pennywort (Hydrocotyle vulgaris) and Jointed Rush (Juncus articulatus) occur on marly rises, while the common community includes Common Sedge (Carex nigra), Creeping Bent Grass (Agrostis stolonifera), Creeping Cinquefoil (Potentilla reptans) and Silverweed (Potentilla anserina). There is also a wide band of nutrient-poor grassland with Purple Moor-grass (Molinia careulea), Common Sedge, Yellow Sedge and Tawny Sedge (Carex hostiana). An unusual feature is that Shoreweed (Littorella uniflora) is very widespread and prominent throughout the turlough and is present in all the above plant communities. Low dense woodland, liable to flood, is the other main habitat on the site, mostly along the north-western edge of the basin. Ash (Fraxinus excelsior), Buckthorn (Rhamnus catharticus) and Hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna) are the main constituents with other shrubs such as Guelder Rose (Viburnum opulus) and Spindle (Euonymus europaeus).

The vicinity of the swallow holes has a good woodland edge with tall herbs such as Yellow Loosestrife (Lysimachia vulgaris), Dewberry (Rubus caesius) and a large colony of Meadow-rue (Thalictrum flavum). Other habitats include scrub not subject to flooding and the inflowing drain from the southeast which contains abundant Watercress (Nasturtium sp.), around which wet grassland with Sharp-flowered Rush (Juncus acutiflorus) occurs. The rest of the site is mainly improved grassland, which is included for water quality reasons. In winter, Whooper Swans and Bewick’s Swans have been recorded at the site. These swans feed mainly on improved pasture on Corker Hill to the south but roost on the open water of the turlough. They are considered to be part of the large swan population that is centred at Coole Lough. In winters 1996/97 and 1997/98, between 200 and 300 Whoopers were recorded and between 10 and 50 Bewick’s. Lower numbers of Whoopers occurred in subsequent winters and Bewick’s are now rarely recorded in south Galway (a trend reflected throughout Ireland). Both of these swan species are listed on Annex I of the EU Birds Directive, and the numbers of Whoopers recorded in the above years were of International Importance. Numbers of other waterbirds using the site in winter are low.

The rare invertebrate Eurycercus glacialis, which was first found in Ireland in 1985, occurs at Ballinduff Turlough. In Ireland, the species is seen to be a turlough specialist of the east Galway region, rare elsewhere in Atlantic Europe. Its presence at the site adds to the ecological interest. Grazing intensity on the turlough grassland is very low. Some clearance of dry scrub has taken place recently. Ballinduff Turlough offers a wide range of turlough habitats with plant communities well developed and with little grazing. The widespread presence of Shoreweed within different plant communities is an unusual turlough feature. The development of Buckthorn woodland and the swallow-hole vegetation are other unusual features. The presence of a rare turlough invertebrate adds to the ecological interest.

SITE NAME: LOUGH COY cSAC
SITE CODE: 002117

Lough Coy is situated approximately 6.5 km north-east of Gort and lies close to the Slieve Aughty hills. The site consists of a small permanent lake in the middle of an almost circular turlough basin. There are drift deposits as well as outcropping rocks and boulders on the relatively steep side walls and small areas of scrub towards the top of the basin. Areas of improved grassland above the normal flood line are included in the site for hydrological reasons. The underlying soils consist of alluvial gleys and a gleyed rendzina-like soil. A large swallowhole occurs at one side of the basin slightly above summer water level and water enters and leaves the turlough mostly through this.

During the winter the fluctuation in levels is extreme and there are no emergent plants such as Common Club-rush (Scirpus lacustris) or Common Reed (Phragmites australis) in the lake. The turlough experiences a large throughput of water and is dependant on the flows in the tributaries of the Coole River. Lough Coy is an excellent example of a 'riverine' type of turlough, and is in essence the floodplain of an underground river. Practically the entire site consists of turlough habitat, an EU Habitats Directive Annex I priority habitat. In summer the water area contracts to a degree depending on the prevailing weather and flat mud is exposed which splits into polygonal plates. This is the habitat for a variety of specialised plants such as Mudwort (Limosella aquatica), Needle Spike-rush (Eleocharis acicularis), Northern Yellow-cress (Rorippa islandica) and the liverwort Riccia cavernosa. The lakeshore itself has some of these species along with Knotgrass (Polygonum aviculare) and Redshank (Polygonum persicaria). Above this is a more continuous cover of the sedges Carex nigra and C. hirta, Reed Canary-grass (Phalaris arundinacea), Creeping Cinquefoil (Potentilla reptans), Corn Mint (Mentha arvensis) and Creeping Buttercup (Ranunculus repens). A vegetation characterised by Meadowsweet (Filipendula ulmaria), Northern Bedstraw (Galium boreale), Common Bird's-foot-trefoil (Lotus corniculatus) and Adder's-tongue (Ophioglossum vulgare) grows amongst the rocks and includes both Dog Violet (Viola canina) and Fen Violet (V. persicifolia). The limestone boulders on the upper slopes have a covering of the moss Cinclidotus fontinaloides. The fringe of scrub at the edge of the basin is mostly of Blackthorn (Prunus spinosa), Buckthorn (Rhamnus catharticus) and Ash (Fraxinus excelsior), with some Hazel (Corylus avellana).

Lough Coy is part of a complex of small sites (along with nearby Blackrock, Ballylee and Bullaunagh turloughs) which supports a nationally important population of Whooper Swans and regionally/locally important numbers of several duck and wader species. Maximum counts at Lough Coy in winter 1995/96 were as follows: Whooper Swan 78, Wigeon 285, Teal 283, Pochard 45, Lapwing 300, Dunlin 120 and Curlew 80. Birds move frequently between the various sites in response to water levels and disturbance. Lough Coy is often one of the few sites in the district which holds water in late summer and autumn and consequently is of importance for post-breeding birds and early autumn arrivals – 132 Mallard were counted in August 1996 and 149 Wigeon in September 1996.

Of particular note is the occurrence of three Red Data Book plant species at this site – these are Mudwort (Limosella aquatica), Fen Violet (Viola persicifolia) and Northern Yellowcress (Rorippa islandica).

The main landuse within the site is cattle grazing which is quite heavy at the lake margins and on parts of the slopes. There is some removal of gravel from the drift deposits on the north western edge. Lough Coy is an excellent example of a eutrophic (nutrient-rich) turlough. The extreme water fluctuation supports a distinctive zonation of vegetation and provides many niches for specialist plants. It is an important site for wintering waterfowl.
24.10.2006

SITE NAME: CARROWBAUN, NEWHALL AND BALLYLEE TURLOUGHS cSAC
SITE CODE: 002293

This complex is a group of three turloughs hydrologically linked in times of high flood. It is situated in the vicinity of the Thoor Ballylee Interpretive Center, 3 km west of Peterswell and 6 km north-east of Gort, in the limestone lowlands of south Co. Galway.

The site is at the southern end of a complex of turloughs which includes the SACs Lough Coy (2117) and Peterswell (318). It is the last of these to flood. The site is a candidate SAC selected for turlough, a priority habitat listed on Annex I of the E.U. Habitats Directive. The lowest part of Carrowbaun is at its northern end and an artificial channel links the marsh with the Ballylee River. At the north end of Ballylee there is a swallow-hole (Pollaleen) which introduces water from Lough Coy. The Ballylee River is joined from the south (via the castle) by the Streamstown River and water sinks into the channel floor, or disappears in a tangle of scrub at Pollanoween further south. Newhall lies in a broad peaty depression with gravel deposits at the southern end. At high water-levels Newhall floods into Carrowbaun West.

The northern end of Carrowbaun is covered by a wet Common Sedge (Carex nigra) community which remains wet all year. Plants indicating this wetness are Bottle Sedge (Carex rostrata), Bogbean (Menyanthes trifoliata), Marsh Cinquefoil (Potentilla palustris), Water Horsetail (Equisetum fluviatile) and Marsh Marigold (Caltha palustris). On the drier edges Brown Sedge (Carex disticha), Meadowsweet (Filipendula ulmaria) and Marsh Ragwort (Senecio aquaticus) occur. Turlough scrub at the northern end contains Blackthorn (Prunus spinosa), Buckthorn (Rhamnus catharticus) and some Ash (Fraxinus excelsior). This grades up into dry rocky Hazel (Corylus avellana) scrub with a good ground flora.

The southern end of Carrowbaun floods less often and is largely modified by fertilisation and heavy grazing. Hairy Sedge (Carex hirta), Sorrel (Rumex acetosa) and Autumn Hawkbit (Leontodon autumnalis) characterise this vegetation with frequent Rye Grass (Lolium perenne), White Clover (Trifolium repens) and Timothy Grass (Phleum pratense) indicating semi-improvement. Newhall is rather similar to Carrowbaun though there is less intensification and more poaching. Animal treading has exposed the peaty soil and tussocks of a drier Carnation Sedge-Glaucous Sedge (Carex panicea - Carex flacca) community occur amongst a wetter Floating Sweet-grass/Starwort (Glyceria fluitans-Callitriche spp.) community. Ballylee contains more turlough scrub than the other two sites, especially around the Pollanoween sink which is overgrown by a tangle of shrubs. Tall herbs such as Meadowsweet, Nettle (Urtica dioica) and Wild angelica (Angelica sylvestris) grow beneath Buckthorn, Blackthorn, Hazel, Guelder Rose (Viburnum opulus) and Spindle (Euonymus europaeus). Ash occurs in turlough scrub along the central ridge. There is some dry limestone pavement along this ridge.

Much of the rest of Ballylee is uniform wet grassland with, for instance, Creeping Bent (Agrostis stolonifera) and Crested Dog's-tail (Cynosurus cristatus). In places, semiimprovement has increased the percentage of Rye grass. Carrowbaun and Newhall are part of a complex of neighbouring turloughs and, because they are the last to flood completely, there is a concentration of waterbirds at certain times. During monthly surveys in the winters of 1995/6 and 1996/7 Carrowbaun and Newhall was noted for its diversity and numbers of waterbirds when in flood. The maximum counted was 1,740 (involving 13 species). Maximum counts during this period were as follows (a count made on 18th December 2000 is given in parenthesis): Mute Swan 4 (6); Bewick's swan 40 (0); Whooper swan 141 (118); Wigeon 356 (270); Mallard 22 (15); Teal 55 (25); Pochard 35 (9); Tufted duck 38 (16); Golden plover 400 (0); Lapwing 1000 (0); Dunlin 140 (30); Curlew 87 (35). Whooper Swan and Bewick's Swan are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive and these numbers are of National Importance. This site has been of importance for wintering swans since at least the 1970s. Dunlin are very scarce on inland waters and their presence here is of note.

Ballylee Castle, a Visitors' Center, is included in the site. A breeding population of the Lesser Horseshoe Bat (Rhinolophus hipposideros), an Annex II species under the E.U. Habitats Directive, has been recorded regularly since 1996. Counts for 1996 were 20+ and for 2000 were 27. 20 roosting Long-eared Bats (Plecotus auritus) were also recorded. In addition, according to the literature, the castle is a known Pipistrelle Bat (Pipistrellus pipistrellus) site. These three bat species are listed as Internationally Important in the Irish Vertebrate Red Data Book. A pair of Kestrels (Falco tinnunculus) nest and have successfully bred at the top of the castle for the past three years.

The vegetation of Carrowbaun, Newhall and Ballylee has been largely modified by drainage works, fertilization and over-grazing, which reduce their botanical value. However, the wet plant communities in north Carrowbaun and the turlough scrub are important botanically. The presence of a high diversity of waterbirds and the roost of Lesser Horseshoe Bats, an Annex II species under the E.U. Habitats Directive adds to the ecological interest of the site.
20.3.2003

SITE NAME : GALWAY BAY COMPLEX cSAC
SITE CODE : 000268

Situated on the west coast of Ireland, this site comprises the inner, shallow part of a large bay which is partially sheltered by the Aran Islands. The Burren karstic limestone fringes the southern sides and extends into the sublittoral. West of Galway city the bedrock geology is granite. There are numerous shallow and intertidal inlets on the eastern and southern sides, notably Muckinish, Aughinish and

Kinvarra Bays. A number of small islands composed of glacial deposits are located along the eastern side. These include Eddy Island, Deer Island and Tawin Island. A diverse range of marine, coastal and terrestrial habitats, including several listed on Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive, occur within the site, making the area of high scientific importance. Galway Bay South holds a very high number of littoral communities (12). They range from rocky terraces, to sandy beaches with rock or sand dunes behind. The intertidal sediments of Galway Bay support good examples of communities that are moderately exposed to wave action. A well-defined talitrid zone in the upper shore gives way to an intertidal, mid-shore zone with sparse epifauna or infauna. On the lower, flat part of the shore, the tubes of the deposit-feeding terebellid worm, Lanice conchilega, are common on the surface. Nereid and cirratulid polychaete worms (Hediste diversicolor, Arenicola marina), small crustaceans and bivalves (Angulus tenuis, Cerastoderma edule and Macoma balthica) are present. The area has the country's only recorded example of the littoral community characterized by Fucus serratus with sponges, ascidians and red seaweeds on tide-swept lower eulittoral mixed substrata. This community has very high species richness (85 species), as do the sublittoral fringe communities on the Finavarra reef (88 species). The rare sea urchin Paracentrotus lividus and the foliose red alga Phyllophora sicula are present at Finavarra, whereas the red alga Rhodymenia delicatula and the rare brown alga, Ascophyllum nodosum var. mackii, occur in Kinvara and Muckinish Bays.

Sublittorally, the area has a number of distinctive and important communities. Of particular note is that Ireland's only reported piddock bed thrives in the shallows of Aughinish Bay. The rare sponge, Mycale contarenii, is also found here. There is further interest in an extensive maerl bed of Phymatolithon calcareum which occurs in the strong tidal currents of Muckinish Bay. There is also maerl off Finavarra Point and in Kinvara Bay (Lithothamnion corallioides, Lithophyllum dentatum and Lithophyllum fasciculatum). An oyster bed in Kinvara Bay and seagrass (Zostera spp.) beds off Finavarra Point are also important features. Other significant habitats which occur include secondary maerl beds and communities strongly influenced by tidal streams. Salt marshes are frequent within this extensive coastal site, with both Atlantic and Mediterranean marshes well represented. Most of the salt marshes are classified as the bay type, with the substrate being mud or mud/sand. There is one lagoon type one estuary type. Lagoon salt marshes are the rarest type found in Ireland. The examples of salt marsh are located in inner Galway bay, east of a line running between Galway city and Kinvara. In this area the coastline is highly indented, thus providing the sheltered conditions necessary for extensive salt marsh development. Common salt marsh species include Thrift (Armeria maritima), Red Fescue (Festuca rubra), Common Scurvygrass (Cochlearia officinalis), Sea Lavender (Limonium humile), Common Saltmarsh-grass (Puccinellia maritima), Saltmarsh Rush (Juncus gerardii) and Sea Rush (Juncus maritimus). On the lower levels of the salt marshes and within pans there occurs Glasswort (Salicornia europaea agg.). A noteworthy feature of the salt-marsh habitat within this site is the presence of dwarfed brown seaweeds in the vegetation. These are also known as "turf fucoids" and typical species include Fucus spp., Ascophyllum nodosum and Pelvetia canaliculata. A number of locally rare vascular plant species also grow in salt-marsh areas within the site. These include Puccinellia distans and Sea Purslane (Halimione portulacoides) which are both relatively rare in the western half of the country.

Shingle and stony beaches can be found throughout the site, with the best examples along the more exposed shores to the south and west of Galway city and to the north and east of Finnavara, Co. Clare. In general, these shingle shorelines are sparsely vegetated and frequently occur interspersed with areas of sandy beach and/or bedrock shore. The associated flora is dominated by plant species of frequently disturbed maritime habitats. To the south and west of Galway city, typical plants include Curled Dock (Rumex crispus), Common Couch (Elymus repens), Sea Sandwort (Honkenya peploides), Sea Beet (Beta vulgaris), Scentless Mayweed (Matricaria maritima), Silverweed (Potentilla anserina) and Atriplex spp.. Two rare plant species are associated with the habitat: Henbane (Hyoscyamus niger), a threatened species listed in the Irish Red Data Book, grows on shingle beach to the south of Lough Atalia; there are also old records for the threatened plant species Sea Kale (Crambe maritima).

An excellent range of lagoons of different types, sizes and salinities occurs within the site. This habitat is given priority status on Annex I of the Habitat Directive. One unusual type of lagoon, karstic rock lagoon, is particularly well represented. This type of lagoon is common on the Aran Islands, but on mainland Ireland, all but one are confined to this one site including the best example of all karstic lagoons in the country (Lough Murree). The flora of the habitat is rich and diverse, reflecting the range of salinities in the different lagoons, and typically brackish with two species of Tasselweed (Ruppia spp.), two Red Data charophytes Chara canescens and Lamprothamnion papulosum, and Chaetomorpha linum (all lagoonal specialists). The fauna of the lagoon is also rich, diverse and lagoonal. At least 10 lagoonal specialist species were recorded in 1996 and 1998 from the combined habitat of all the lagoons which is one of the highest number for any lagoonal habitat in the country. Many of the species appear to be rare. The lagoons within this site are an excellent representative of the habitat type and of high conservation importance. Other terrestrial habitats within this site which are of conservation importance include Saw Sedge (Cladium mariscus)-dominated fen and Black Bog-rush (Schoenus nigricans)-dominated alkaline fen at Oranmore, a turlough of moderate size at Ballinacourty, limestone pavement

mainly along the southern shore, dry calcareous grassland with orchids (best examples occurring east of Salthill), wet grassland and an area of deciduous woodland at Barna.

Inner Galway Bay provides extensive good quality habitat for Common Seals, a species listed on Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive. In 1984, this seal colony was one of the top three sites in the country, with over 140 animals recorded. The seals use a range of haul-out sites distributed through the bay - these include inner Oranmore Bay, Rabbit Island, St.Brendan's Island, Tawin Island, Kinvarra Bay, Aughinish Bay and Ballyvaughan. The site provides optimum habitat for Otter. Galway Bay is a very important ornithological site. The shallow waters provide excellent habitat for Great Northern Divers (35), Black-throated Divers (28), Scaup (39), Long-tailed Duck (27) and Red-breasted Merganser (232). (Figures given are peak average maxima over the 3 winters 1994/95 to 1996/97). All of these populations are of national importance. The intertidal areas and shoreline provides feeding and roosting habitat for wintering waterfowl, with Brent Goose (517) having a population of international importance and a further 11 species having populations of national importance. Four of the regular wintering species are listed on Annex I of the EU Birds Directive - Golden Plover, Bar-tailed Godwit and the two diver species. Breeding birds are also of importance, with significant populations of Sandwich Terns (81 pairs in 1995) and Common Terns (99 pairs in 1995), both also being listed on Annex I of the EU Directive. A large Cormorant colony (c.300 pairs in 1989) occurs on Deer Island.

Fishing and aquaculture are the main commercial activities within the site. A concern is that sewage effluent and detritus of the aquaculture industry could be deleterious to benthic communities. Reef and sediment communities are vulnerable to disturbance or compaction from tractors accessing oyster trestles. The Paracentrotus lividus populations have been shown to be vulnerable to over-fishing. Extraction of maerl in Galway Bay is a threat. Owing to the proximity of Galway city, shoreline and terrestrial habitats are under pressure from urban expansion and recreational activities. Eutrophication is probably affecting some of the lagoons and is a continued threat. Drainage is a general threat to the turlough and fen habitats. Bird populations may be disturbed by aquaculture activities. This large coastal site is of immense conservation importance, with many habitats listed on Annex I of the EU Habitats Directive, four of which have priority status (lagoon, Cladium fen, turlough and orchid-rich calcareous grassland). The examples of shallow bays, reefs, lagoons and salt marshes are amongst the best in the country. The site supports an important Common Seal colony and a breeding Otter population, both species that are listed on Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive, and six regular Annex I EU Birds Directive species. The site also has four Red Data Book plant species, plus a host of rare or scarce marine and lagoonal animal and plant species.

30.11.2006

SITE NAME: INNER GALWAY BAY SPA
SITE CODE: 004031

Galway Bay SPA is a very large, marine-dominated, site situated on the west coast of Ireland. The inner bay is protected from exposure to Atlantic swells by the Aran Islands and Black Head. Subsidiary bays and inlets (e.g. Poulnaclough, Aughinish and Kinvarra Bays) add texture to the patterns of water movement and sediment deposition, which lends variety to the marine habitats and communities. The terraced Carboniferous (Viséan) limestone platform of the Burren sweeps down to the shore and into the sublittoral. The long shoreline is noted for its diversity, with complex mixtures of bedrock shore, shingle beach, sandy beach and fringing salt marshes. Intertidal sand and mud flats occur around much of the shoreline, with the largest areas being found on the sheltered eastern coast between Oranmore Bay and Kinvarra Bay. A number of small islands composed of glacial deposits are included, such as Deer Island, along with some rocky islets.

The southern part of Galway Bay holds a very high number of littoral communities. They range from rocky terraces to sandy beaches with rock or sand dunes behind. The intertidal sediments of Galway Bay support good examples of communities that are moderately exposed to wave action. A well-defined talitrid zone in the upper shore gives way to an intertidal, mid-shore zone with sparse epifauna or infauna. On the lower, flat part of the shore, the tubes of the deposit-feeding terebellid worm, Lanice conchilega, are common on the surface. Nereid and cirratulid polychaete worms (Hediste diversicolor, Arenicola marina), small crustaceans and bivalves (Angulus tenuis, Cerastoderma edule and Macoma balthica) are present. Sublittorally, the area has a number of distinctive and important communities. Of particular note is that Ireland's only reported piddock bed thrives in the shallows of Aughinish Bay. The rare sponge, Mycale contarenii, is also found here. Of additional interest is the presence of an extensive maerl bed of Phymatolithon calcareum which occurs in the strong tidal currents of Muckinish Bay. There is also maerl off Finavarra Point and in Kinvarra Bay (Lithothamnion corallioides, Lithophyllum dentatum and Lithophyllum fasciculatum). An oyster bed in Kinvarra Bay and seagrass (Zostera spp.) beds off Finavarra Point are also important features.

Salt marshes are frequent within this extensive coastal site, with the best examples located east of a line running between Galway City and Kinvarra. In this area the coastline is highly indented, thus providing the sheltered conditions necessary for extensive salt marsh development. Common salt marsh species present include Thrift (Armeria maritima), Red Fescue (Festuca rubra), Common Scurvygrass (Cochlearia officinalis), Lax-flowered Sea-lavender (Limonium humile), Common Saltmarsh-grass (Puccinellia maritima), Saltmarsh Rush (Juncus gerardi) and Sea Rush (Juncus maritimus). On the lower levels of the salt marshes and within pans is found Glasswort (Salicornia europaea agg.). Shingle and stony beaches occur throughout the site, with the best examples found along the more exposed shores to the south and west of Galway City and to the north and east of Finnavara. In general, these shingle shorelines are sparsely vegetated, with such species as Curled Dock (Rumex crispus), Common Couch (Elymus repens), Sea Sandwort (Honkenya peploides) and Sea Beet (Beta vulgaris).

Galway Bay is one of the most important ornithological sites in the western region. It supports an excellent diversity of wintering wetland birds, with divers, grebes, cormorants, dabbling duck, sea duck and waders all well represented. There are internationally important wintering populations of Great Northern Diver (83) and Brent Goose (676), and nationally important populations of an additional sixteen species, i.e. Black-throated Diver (25), Cormorant (266), Mute Swan (150), Wigeon (1,157), Teal (690), Shoveler (88), Red-breasted Merganser (249), Ringed Plover (335), Golden Plover (2,030), Lapwing (3,969), Dunlin (2,149), Bar-tailed Godwit (447), Curlew (697), Redshank (505), Greenshank (20) and Turnstone (182) – all figures are average peaks for the 5 seasons 1995/96-1999/00. Of note is that the populations of Red-breasted Merganser and Ringed Plover represent 6.7% and 3.3% of the respective national totals. Black-throated Diver is a scarce species in Ireland and the Galway Bay population is the most regular in the country. Other species which occur in notable numbers include Little Grebe (35), Grey Heron (102), Longtailed Duck (19) and Scaup (40). The bay is an important wintering site for gulls, especially Black-headed Gull (1,815), Common Gull (1,011) and Herring Gull (216). In addition, the following species also use the site: Red-throated Diver (13), Great Crested Grebe (16), Mallard (200), Shelduck (139), Common Scoter (79), Oystercatcher (575), Grey Plover (60), Black-tailed Godwit (45) and Great Blackbacked Gull (124). The site provides both feeding and roost sites for most of the species, though some birds also commute to areas outside of the site. The wintering birds of Galway Bay have been monitored annually since 1980/81. The site has several important populations of breeding birds, most notably colonies of Sandwich Tern (81 pairs in 1995) and Common Tern (99 pairs in 1995). A large Cormorant colony occurs on Deer Island – this had 205 pairs in 1985 and 300 pairs in 1989.

Inner Galway Bay provides good quality habitat for Common Seal, a species that is listed on Annex II of the E.U. Habitats Directive. In 1984, this seal colony was one of the top three sites in the country, with over 140 animals recorded. The seals use a range of haul-out sites distributed through the bay. The site provides optimum habitat for Otter. While there are no imminent threats to the birds, a concern is that sewage effluent and detritus of the aquaculture industry could be deleterious to benthic communities and could affect food stocks of divers, seaduck and other birds. Bird populations may also be disturbed by aquaculture activities. Owing to the proximity of Galway City, shoreline habitats are under pressure from urban expansion and recreational activities. This large coastal site is of immense ornithological importance, with two wintering species having populations of international importance and a further sixteen species having populations of national importance. The breeding colonies of Sandwich Tern, Common Tern and Cormorant are also of national importance. Also of note is that seven of the regularly occurring species are listed on Annex I of the E.U. Birds Directive, i.e. Red-throated Diver, Black-throated Diver, Great Northern Diver, Golden Plover, Bar-tailed Godwit, Sandwich Tern and Common Tern.

22.2.2005

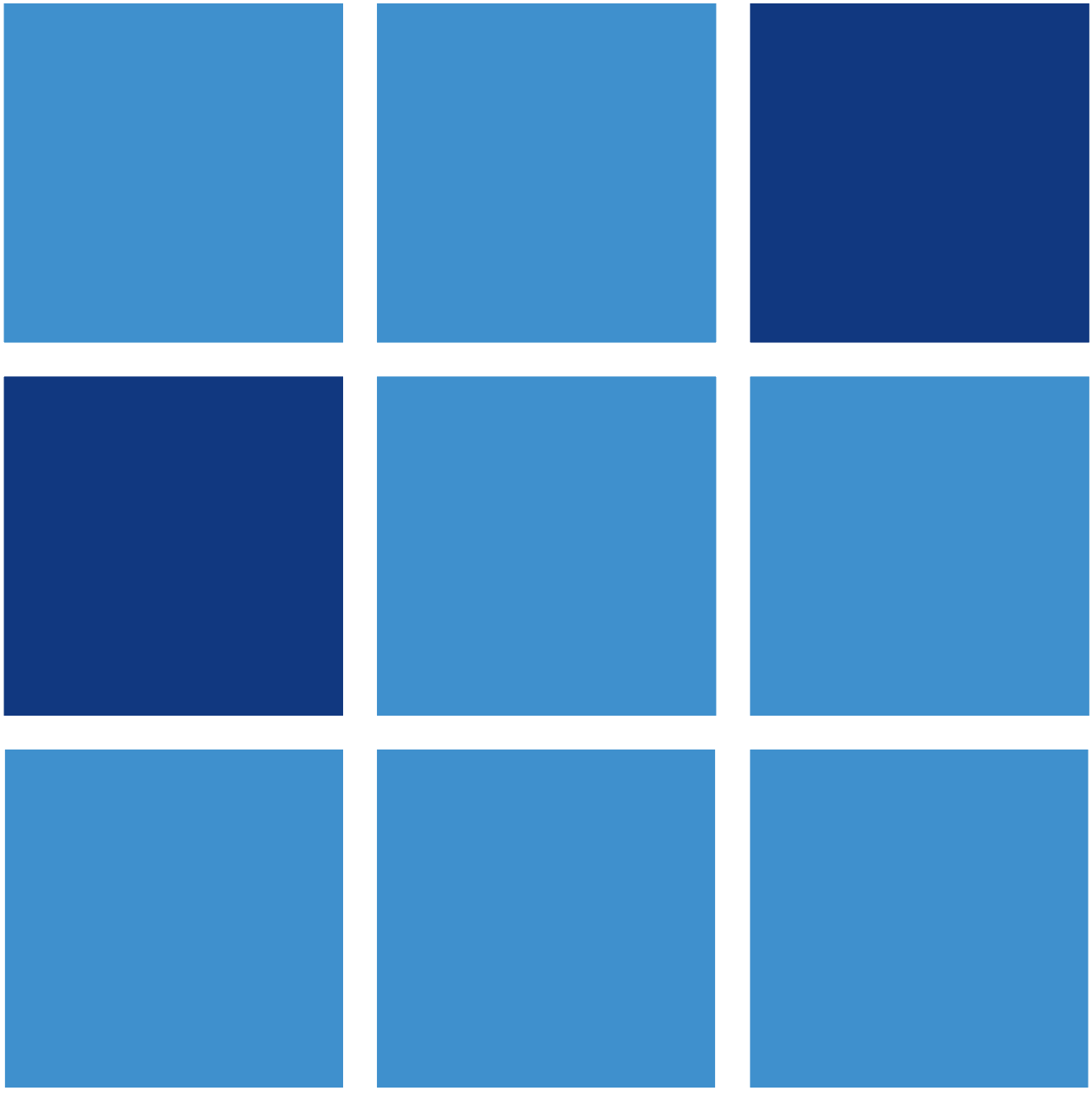
ANNEX A

ADDENDUM TO THE NATURA IMPACT REPORT OF THE DRAFT GORT LOCAL AREA PLAN 2013 – 2019

RPS

Addendum to the Natura Impact Report of the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2013 – 2019 Appropriate Assessment (AA)

June 2013



Addendum to the Natura Impact Report of the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2013 – 2019 Appropriate Assessment (AA)

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APPENDIX B Material Alterations Maps

1 INTRODUCTION

This addendum forms part of the documentation of the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2013-2019 and accompanying Natura Impact Report. It supplements and should be read in conjunction with the Natura Impact Report of the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2013-2019 Appropriate Assessment (AA). This addendum documents the appropriate assessment screening and full appropriate assessment undertaken of the material alterations to the Draft Gort LAP, as made by the Elected Members on the 27th May 2013, in accordance with the European Commission Methodological Guidance on the provision of Article 6(3) and 6(4) of the 'Habitats' Directive 92/43/EEC (EC 2001) and the Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland (Guidance for Planning Authorities).

This Addendum **MUST BE READ IN CONJUNCTION** with the Natura Impact Report of the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2013-2019 Appropriate Assessment (AA).

1.1 BACKGROUND AND LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

Galway County Council has prepared a Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2013 – 2019 to replace the Gort Local Area Plan, 2006-2012. The Plan has been prepared under the provisions of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2010 to develop and improve in a sustainable manner the environmental, social, economic and cultural assets of the town.

The legislative context for the Appropriate Assessment of the Draft Plan is detailed in Section 1.1 of the original NIR which was on public display in tandem with the Draft Gort LAP from the 19th February to the 2nd April.

Further material alterations have been made to the Draft Plan at a meeting of the Elected Members on the 27th May 2013. It is required that these material alterations undergo both Screening for Appropriate Assessment and if necessary full Appropriate Assessment (AA) informed by an AA Natura Impact Report.

1.2 STAGES OF THE APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

This document has been prepared in accordance with the European Commission Environment DG document "*Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites: Methodological guidance on the provisions of Articles 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*". The guidance document provides a non-mandatory methodology for carrying out assessments required under Articles 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive and is viewed as an interpretation of the EU Commission's document "*Managing Natura 2000 sites: The Provisions of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC".* In addition, "*Appropriate Assessment Guidance for Planning Authorities"* was published by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in December 2009 (DEHLG, 2009) and amended in March 2010. Cognisance has been taken of this document in carrying out this assessment.

In complying with the obligations under Article 6(3) and with reference to the guidance documents mentioned above, this AA has been broadly structured as a stage by stage approach, detailed overleaf,with the usually general approach to AA firstly outlined followed by how this will specifically be addressed for material alterations in this document

1) Stage 1 – Screening for Appropriate Assessment

- Description of the plan – In this case description of the material alterations;

- Identification of relevant Natura 2000 sites potentially affected - These have already been identified in the original NIR and so are merely listed in this document;

- Identification and description of individual and cumulative impacts likely to result from implementation of the Plan – In this case impacts as a result of the material alterations;

- Assessment of the significance of the impacts identified above on site integrity. Exclusion of sites where it can be objectively concluded that there will be no significant effects.

2) Stage 2 –Appropriate Assessment

- Description of the Natura 2000 sites that will be considered further in the AA - These sites have been descried in full in the original NIR and there are merely listed here;

- Description of significant impacts on the conservation feature of these sites likely to occur from the Plan – Significant Impacts as a result of material alterations not screened out will be detailed;

- Mitigation measures – In this case specific measures which will mitigate for potential impacts arising from those material alterations which cannot be screened out; and

- Conclusions.

The Habitats Directive promotes a hierarchy of avoidance, mitigation and compensatory measures. In the first instance, the Plan should aim to avoid any negative impacts on European sites by identifying possible impacts early in the plan-making, and writing the plan in order to avoid such impacts. Following that, mitigation measures should be applied, if necessary, during the AA process to the point where no adverse impacts on the site(s) remain. If the Plan is still likely to result in adverse effects, and no further practicable mitigation is possible, then it is rejected. If no alternative solutions are identified and the Plan is required for imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI test) under Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive, then compensation measures are required for any remaining adverse effect.

1.3 CONSULTATION & REVIEW

Written consultation has been undertaken with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (DAHG), the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (DCENR), Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (DAFF), Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG) and Galway City Council (GCC) at the stage of publication of the Background Issues Paper in February 2012 prior to the development of the Draft Gort LAP and at the publication of the Draft Gort LAP, AA NIR and SEA ER.

A meeting was held with NPWS in order to highlight potential issues which may give rise to significant impacts on the conservation objectives of any relevant European sites.

The Draft Gort Local Area Plan process is an iterative process, and similarly, Appropriate Assessment is an iterative process, and has assessed the Plan at all pre-draft, draft and material alterations stages. The abovementioned consultees provide an independent formal review of the Appropriate Assessment process at all pre-draft, draft and material alterations stages, and adjudicate and report on the Appropriate Assessment process and findings. As such, this Appropriate Assessment is not (and should not be viewed as) an audit at the end of the Local Area Plan process. Further consultation will be undertaken with regard to the material alterations with the above statutory bodies, the public and other interested organisations.

2 STAGE 1 - SCREENING FOR APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

2.1 SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF THE MATERIAL ALTERATIONS TO THE DRAFT GORT LAP 2013-2019

The public consultation period for the Draft Gort LAP and its associated AA NIR and SEA ER from19th February to the 2nd April, 2013, resulted in material alterations to the text, the Land Use Zoning Map1A, The Flood Risk Management Map 3A and objectives of the Draft LAP. The Stage 2 SFRA was also amended accordingly. A summary of the material alterations is set out in **Table 2.1**.Within the changes to text section of **Table 2.1**, the following text formatting is used to highlight textual changes to the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2013-2019:

- Existing Draft Gort LAP 2013-2019 Text – Shown in black text
- Proposed Alteration additional text – Shown in yellow highlighted red text
- Proposed Alteration deleted text – Shown in ~~strikethrough yellow highlight text~~

Changes proposed to landuse zoning are shown in Map 1A and clarification of Flood Zones A and B are shown in Map3A. Refer to **Appendix A**.

Table 2.1 Summary of Material Alterationsto the Draft Gort LAP made by the Elected Members

Material Alterations to the LAP as amended by recommendations made in the CMR. Amendments 1-12 made by the Elected Members as recommended in the Manager's Report. Amendments 13-made by the Elected Members otherwise than as recommended in the Manager's Report.
Amendment 1 – relating to Submission No. 3 – Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (MA1A and MA1B) **Greater clarity on the Draft LAP Flood Maps:** 1A. Alteration proposed within the Draft LAP Flood Risk Management Maps 3A/3B to delineate Food Zone A and Flood Zone B with red serrated lines in order to provide greater clarity and delineation of the Flood Zones 1B. Alteration proposed within the Draft LAP Flood Risk Management Maps 3A/3B to remove the OSI Layer in order to improve greater clarity to the Flood Plain Layers.
Amendment 2 – Additional bullet point within Policy RD1- Residential Development to include • Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets, 2013 And reword first word of second last bullet point "Smarter…."
Amendment 3 – Text changes in Policy TI 1 – Sustainable Transport, Walking and Cycling –'…….A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009-2020 and the National Policy Framework 2009-2020, ~~(and any updated/superseding documents),~~any forthcoming guidance in relation to street design and cycling facilities including the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets 2013 (and any updated/superseding documents) and any Smart Travel Plan(s) that may be adopted by Galway County Council.
Amendment 4 – Text changes in Policy TI 2 – Roads, Streets and Parking- '….This policy and its associated objectives will be guided by relevant national policy, including the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets 2013, the Spatial Planning and National Road Guidelines 2012,….'
Amendment 5 – To include reference to DMURS within the Title of Objective TI 14 and Textual changes to read as follows: **Objective TI 14 – Urban Street Network**and the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets -

Material Alterations to the LAP as amended by recommendations made in the CMR.
Amendments 1-12 made by the Elected Members as recommended in the Manager's Report.
Amendments 13-made by the Elected Members otherwise than as recommended in the Manager's Report.

….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 (or as updated) shall be applied to new development as appropriate.~~Where appropriate,~~ ~~n~~New developments will also be required to facilitate the extension of the urban street network and/or the provision of improved connectivity and permeability, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists, where appropriate.'

Amendment 6 –
Text changes inObjective RD 2 – Quality Housing Environments '……Urban Design Manual: A Best Practice Guide for Planning Authorities 2009 and the *Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets* 2013 (or any updated/superseding documents).'

Amendment 7 – Relating to Submission No. 1 – National Roads Authority
Text change to Objective TI15 – Transport Network Improvements'… normal planning and environmental considerations, in accordance with the DoECLG '*Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines'* andincluding in combination effects under the EU Habitats Directive Assessment as appropriate…… b) Consider the reservation of lands for a new relief/link road/street connecting the north-eastern approach N66 Loughrea road to the N18 Oranmore in the north western portion of the Plan Area, in compliance with the provisions of Section 2.7 of the DoECLG '*Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines'*.
c) Consider the reservation of lands for a new relief/link road/street connecting the south eastern approach road R458 Ennis Road to the L4514 Tubber Road on the ~~north~~southwestern portion of the Plan Area.

Amendment 8 –
Signage Insertion of a new objective proposed within Section 3.5 Transportation Infrastructure of the Gort Draft Plan as follows:
TI 25 – Signage on or Visible from National Roads
Avoid the proliferation of non-road traffic signage on and adjacent to national roads outside of the 50-60kmh speed limit area 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 Road March 2011 shall also be considered in the assessment of relevant developments.

Amendment 9 – Relating to Submission No 2 - OPW

Amend the text within the Gort Stage 2 SFRA document under Figure 3 -'Indicative Flood Risk Zone Map' and to include the associated consequential changes to the Map Legend of the Draft LAP Flood Risk Management Maps 3A/3B. Amended text to read as follows:

Indicative Flood Risk Zone A (Site visits, local knowledge and groundtruthing of flood indicators,including Western CFRAMFlood Risk Review, aerial photography and PFRA 100) ~~FRA Fluvial 100, JBA Extreme, CAAS 'groundtruthing' aerial photos/field observ.)~~

Indicative Flood Zone B (Site visits, local knowledge and groundtruthing of flood indicators,including aerial photography and PFRA 1000) ~~PFRA Fluvial 1000)~~

Amendment 10 –Relating to Submission No. 7 EPA
Flood Risk Management
Include additional text to Objective UI8 Part d) within Section 3.6.2 Utility and Environmental Infrastructure of the Gort Draft Plan as follows:
Objective UI8 – Flood Risk Management and Assessment (Refer to Maps 3A/3B)
d) Galway County Council shall work with other bodies and organisations, as appropriate, to help protect critical infrastructure, including water and wastewater, within the plan area, from risk of flooding. Where certain measures proposed to mitigate or manage the risk of flooding associated with

Material Alterations to the LAP as amended by recommendations made in the CMR. **Amendments 1-12 made by the Elected Members as recommended in the Manager's Report.** **Amendments 13-made by the Elected Members otherwise than as recommended in the Manager's Report.**
new developments/critical infrastructure are likely to result in significant effects to the environment of European sites that form part of Natura 2000 network downstream, such measures will undergo environmental assessment and Habitats Directive Assessment, as appropriate.
Amendment 11 Amend/delete wording of Objective UI 8 Flood Risk Management - Part a) as follows: Objective UI8– Flood Risk Management and Assessment '….Flood Risk Management, including fluvial, ~~coastal/tidal~~,pluvial and groundwater flooding….'
Amendment 12 **Amend wording of Policy UI 2 Flood Risk Management as follows: '…**Galway County Council will ~~also take account of~~implement the relevant aspects ofthe Western *Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study* (WesternCFRAMs, the output of which will be a Flood Risk Management Plan for the catchment), along with the mitigation measures and recommendations….'
Amendment 13 **Insert a new bullet point within Policy NH1 – Natural Heritage and Biodiversity** to read as follows: Ireland*'s Environment 2012* (EPA, 2012), and to make provision where appropriate to address the report's goals and challenges.
One material alteration proposed by the Elected Members otherwise than as recommended in the Manager's Report relates to a change in the Land Use zoning for one site located within a flood risk area as identified in the LAP and the Stage 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) for the Gort Draft LAP as follows: **Amendment 14** **Alteration proposed to the Land Use Zoning that allows the present zoning Town Centre/Commercial to be applied to the entirety of the Submission site.** **Refer to MA 2 on the attached Land Use Zoning Maps 1A/1B.** This specific alteration proposed by the Elected Members relates to changes in the Land Use Zoning for lands off Georges Street that are located within a flood risk area (Flood Zone A) as identified in the Gort Draft LAP and attached Stage 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) for the Gort Draft LAP. The proposed alteration relates to changes in land use zoning and development potential and also in relation to the methodology set out within the Draft LAP in relation to flood risk management and is accordingly considered to be a Material Alteration.

2.2 SUMMARY OF ELEMENTS OF THE MATERIAL ALTERATIONS TO GORT LAP THAT COULD NEGATIVELY AFFECT NATURA 2000 SITES

The material alterations to the Plan together with potential impacts, any avoidance or mitigation measures necessary and any residual impacts are outlined in full in **Table 2.2** of this document.

It is considered that all material alterations except for one can be screened out for potential adverse impacts on Natura 2000 sites or their qualifying features. The potential impact of MA 2, i.e. the zoning of lands within Flood Zone A as Town Centre as opposed to the general approach by Galway County Council to zone undeveloped lands with Flood Zones A and B as Open Space, is unclear at this time as no up-to-date, site specific flood impact assessment has been carried out on these lands.

The most serious threat to Natura 2000 sites in general arise from potential impacts on water quality and the impact on water quality should therefore be assessed as part of any site-specific flood impact assessment for these lands. The provision of social infrastructure is a key consideration including wastewater treatment, drainage systems, and waste management facilities. Many of the Natura 2000 sites which potentially have pathway links to Gort LAP area are aquatic, with a complex interconnection of surface and groundwater. Above- and below-ground waterbodies provide a significant pathway to deliver pollution to these sensitive sites; therefore, it is essential that zonings take account of the indirect impacts on Natura 2000 sites where inadequate or insufficient wastewater treatment or drainage may be involved.The zoning therefore of the lands in questions for Town Centre development within lands assigned as Flood Zone A i.e. the most frequently flooded lands, represent the most significant risks to Natura 2000 Sites.

Any impacts on water quality in the area particularly on the Cannahowna/Gort River has the potential to affect a number of hydrologically connected Natura 2000 sites, in particular Coole/Garryland Complex cSAC/SPA. The Coole/Garryland Complex is downstream of the Gort LAP area and connected through a series of surface and groundwater features.

The general impacts to the qualifying interests of Natura 2000 Sites associated with the proposed material alteration to the Plan will potentially include:

- Run off of pollutants during construction and operational phases of development leading to reduced water quality and potential impacts at or downstream of the development. Given that Gort is potentially hydrologically linked to a number of Natura 2000 sites, this is a particularly vulnerable pathway for potential adverse impacts;

- A reduction in water quality in groundwater, springs and watercourses associated with the construction phase of new developments;

- Surface water runoff from impermeable surfaces leading to reduced water quality in groundwater, springs or surface waters affecting qualifying habitats and species downstream;

- Increasing the extent of impermeable surfaces as a result of development within the lands under consideration in MA 2will result in a decrease in infiltration and an increase in runoff.

Table 2.2 Material Alterations with consideration of potential impacts on Natura 2000 sites, Existing Avoidance/Mitigation Measures within the Draft Plan and any Residual Impacts.

Policies/ Objectives	Potential Impacts	Existing Avoidance/Mitigation Measures	Residual Impacts
Amendment 1 – relating to Submission No. 3 – Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (MA1A and MA1B) **Greater clarity on the Draft LAP Flood Maps:** 1A. Alteration proposed within the Draft LAP Flood Risk Management Maps 3A/3B to delineate Food Zone A and Flood Zone B with red serrated lines in order to provide greater clarity and delineation of the Flood Zones 1B. Alteration proposed within the Draft LAP Flood Risk Management Maps 3A/3B to remove the OSI Layer in order to improve greater clarity to the Flood Plain Layers.	None	N/A	N/A
Amendment 2 – Additional bullet point within Policy RD1- Residential Development to include • Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets, 2013 And reword first word of second last bullet point "Smarter…."	None	N/A	N/A
Amendment 3 – Text changes in Policy TI 1 – Sustainable Transport, Walking and Cycling –'…….A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009-2020 and the National Policy Framework 2009-2020, ~~(and any updated/superseding documents),~~any forthcoming guidance in relation to street design and cycling facilities including the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets 2013 (and any updated/superseding documents) and any Smart Travel Plan(s) that may be adopted by Galway County Council.	None	N/A	N/A
Amendment 4 – Text changes in Policy TI 2 – Roads, Streets and Parking- '….This policy and its associated objectives will be guided by relevant national policy, including the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets 2013, the Spatial Planning and National Road Guidelines 2012,….'	None	N/A	N/A
Amendment 5 – To include reference to DMURS within the Title of Objective TI 14 and Textual changes to read as follows: **Objective TI 14 – Urban Street Network**and the Design Manual for Urban	None	N/A	N/A

Policies/ Objectives	Potential Impacts	Existing Avoidance/Mitigation Measures	Residual Impacts
Roads and Streets - ….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 (or as updated) shall be applied to new development as appropriate.~~Where appropriate,~~~~n~~New developments will also be required to facilitate the extension of the urban street network and/or the provision of improved connectivity and permeability, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists, where appropriate.'			
Amendment 6 – **Text changes inObjective RD 2 – Quality Housing Environments** '……Urban Design Manual: A Best Practice Guide for Planning Authorities 2009 and the *Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets* 2013 (or any updated/superseding documents).'	None	N/A	N/A
Amendment 7 – Relating to Submission No. 1 – National Roads Authority **Text change to Objective TI15 – Transport Network Improvements'…** normal planning and environmental considerations, in accordance with the DoECLG '*Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines*' andincluding in combination effects under the EU Habitats Directive Assessment as appropriate…… b) Consider the reservation of lands for a new relief/link road/street connecting the north-eastern approach N66 Loughrea road to the N18 Oranmore in the north western portion of the Plan Area, in compliance with the provisions of Section 2.7 of the DoECLG '*Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines*'. c) Consider the reservation of lands for a new relief/link road/street connecting the south eastern approach road R458 Ennis Road to the L4514 Tubber Road on the ~~north~~southwestern portion of the Plan Area.	None	N/A	N/A

Policies/ Objectives	Potential Impacts	Existing Avoidance/Mitigation Measures	Residual Impacts
Amendment 8 – **Signage** Insertion of a new objective proposed within Section 3.5 Transportation Infrastructure of the Gort Draft Plan as follows: **TI 25 – Signage on or Visible from National Roads** Avoid the proliferation of non-road traffic signage on and adjacent to national roads outside of the 50-60kmh speed limit area 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 Road March 2011 shall also be considered in the assessment of relevant developments.	None	N/A	N/A
Amendment 9 – Relating to Submission No 2 - OPW Amend the text within the Gort Stage 2 SFRA document under Figure 3 - 'Indicative Flood Risk Zone Map' and to include the associated consequential changes to the Map Legend of the Draft LAP Flood Risk Management Maps 3A/3B. Amended text to read as follows: **Indicative Flood Risk Zone A** (Site visits, local knowledge and groundtruthing of flood indicators,including Western CFRAMFlood Risk Review, aerial photography and PFRA 100) ~~FRA Fluvial 100, JBA Extreme, CAAS 'groundtruthing' aerial photos/field observ.)~~ **Indicative Flood Zone B** (Site visits, local knowledge and groundtruthing of flood indicators,including aerial photography and PFRA 1000) ~~PFRA Fluvial 1000)~~	None	N/A	N/A

Policies/ Objectives	Potential Impacts	Existing Avoidance/Mitigation Measures	Residual Impacts
Amendment 10 –Relating to Submission No. 7 EPA **Flood Risk Management** Include additional text to Objective UI8 Part d) within Section 3.6.2 Utility and Environmental Infrastructure of the Gort Draft Plan as follows: **Objective UI8 – Flood Risk Management and Assessment (Refer to Maps 3A/3B)** d) Galway County Council shall work with other bodies and organisations, as appropriate, to help protect critical infrastructure, including water and wastewater, within the plan area, from risk of flooding. Where certain measures proposed to mitigate or manage the risk of flooding associated with new developments/critical infrastructure are likely to result in significant effects to the environment of European sites that form part of Natura 2000 network downstream, such measures will undergo environmental assessment and Habitats Directive Assessment, as appropriate.	None	N/A	N/A
Amendment 11 Amend/delete wording of Objective UI 8 Flood Risk Management - Part a) as follows: **Objective UI8– Flood Risk Management and Assessment** '….Flood Risk Management, including fluvial, ~~coastal/tidal~~,pluvial and groundwater flooding….'	None	N/A	N/A
Amendment 12 **Amend wording of Policy UI 2 Flood Risk Management as follows:** **'…**Galway County Council will ~~also take account of~~implement the relevant aspects ofthe Western *Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study* (WesternCFRAMs, the output of which will be a Flood Risk Management Plan for the catchment), along with the mitigation measures and recommendations….'	None	N/A	N/A
Amendment 13 **Insert a new bullet point within Policy NH1 – Natural Heritage and Biodiversity** to read as follows: Ireland's *Environment 2012* (EPA, 2012), and to make provision where appropriate to address the report's goals and challenges.	None	N/A	N/A

Policies/ Objectives	Potential Impacts	Existing Avoidance/Mitigation Measures	Residual Impacts
One material alteration proposed by the Elected Members otherwise than as recommended in the Manager's Report relates to a change in the Land Use zoning for one site located within a flood risk area as identified in the LAP and the Stage 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) for the Gort Draft LAP as follows: **Amendment 14** **Alteration proposed to the Land Use Zoning that allows the present zoning Town Centre/Commercial to be applied to the entirety of the Submission site.** **Refer to MA 2 on the attached Land Use Zoning Maps 1A/1B.** This specific alteration proposed by the Elected Members relates to changes in the Land Use Zoning for lands off Georges Street that are located within a flood risk area (Flood Zone A) as identified in the Gort Draft LAP and attached Stage 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) for the Gort Draft LAP. The proposed alteration relates to changes in land use zoning and development potential and also in relation to the methodology set out within the Draft LAP in relation to flood risk management and is accordingly considered to be a Material Alteration.	Yes, given the location of the proposed zoning within Flood Zone A it is considered there exists a potential for impacts on water quality and therefore for potential impacts on the Coole-Garryland cSAC/SPA.	Policy DS, UI1, UI2, NH1. Objective DS3, UI2, UI3, UI4, UI5, UI6, UI7, UI8, UI9, UI10, UI11, UI13, UI14, UI15, NH1, NH2, NH3, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9, NH10, NH11, NH12.	Given the locations of the lands in question in question within land which has been assigned Flood Zone after a Stage 2 Flood Risk Assessment it is unclear as to the potential impact of this development.

2.3 CUMULATIVE AND IN COMBINATION IMPACTS

This step aims to identify at this early stage any possible significant in-combination or cumulative effects/impacts of the proposed material alterations with other such plans and projects on the relevant Natura 2000 sites and their conservation interests. Other plans and projects specific to the relevant Natura 2000 sites are outlined in the original NIR accompanying the Draft LAP.

The Gort LAP contains an overarching objective, DS3, which states that:

'*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 a Habitats Directive Assessment where necessary, that:*

1. 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****);*'

Therefore any development which is proposed within the Plan area in the lifetime of the Draft Gort LAP 2013-2019 will be subject to an assessment of its effects alone or in combination with other plans and projects which impact Natura 2000 sites. It was considered that the majority of the Plans and Projects identified in the original NIR would not give rise to significant adverse impact on the integrity of any European site and would likely provide a positive benefit.

2.4 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE NATURA 2000 SITES

Table 2.1of the original NIR lists the Natura 2000 sites that are within 15km of the Plan area which number a total of 28 cSACs and SPAs. This is in line with Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities, produced by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

Coole-Garryland Complex SAC and Coole-Garryland Complex SPA are the Natura 2000 sites closest to Gort LAP boundary with the nearest point of the SAC being approximately 400m from the boundary and the nearest point of the SPA being approximately 800m from the boundary. Lough Cutra SAC/SPA and the East Burren Complex SAC are approximately 2km from the LAP boundary. Carrowbaun, Newhall and Ballylee Turloughs SAC and Lough Coy SAC are approximately 4km from the LAP boundary. **Figure 2.1**and **Figure 2.2** show the relative locations of SACs and SPAs respectively in relation to the Plan boundary.

The below sites were considered to be at risk of being negatively impacted by the material alterations to the Draft Gort LAP.

- Coole-Garryland Complex **cSAC** (Site Code: 000252)

- Coole-Garryland **SPA** (Site Code: 004107)

2.4.1 Priority Species and Habitats

A number of species and habitats are given 'Priority' status in the Habitats Directive by the EU because they are considered to be particularly vulnerable and are mainly, or exclusively, found within the European Union.

Turlough habitat is considered to be one of the most prevalent priority habitats in the vicinity of Gort LAP with a complex of turloughs being present at Coole/Garryland cSAC. The importance of Priority

Habitat is emphasised in several places in the Directive (Articles 4 and 5 and Annex III), not only in terms of the selection of sites, but also in the measures required for site protection (Article 6) and surveillance (Article 11).

2.4.2 Conservation Objectives

Details on the relevant Natura 2000 site's Conservation Objectives are provided in the original NIR.

2.4.3 Documented Threats to the cSACs/SPAs and to their Qualifying Features

Details on documented threats to cSACs and SPAsare provided in **Appendix B** of the original NIR.

2.4.4 Assessment of Effects

Table 2.3 below provides an assessment of effects following the Assessment Criteria outlined in the European Commission (2002) Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura2000 sites- methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and 6 (4) of the HabitatsDirective 92/43/EEC.

Table 2.3 Assessment of Effects

Assessment Criteria	
Describe the individual elements of the project (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) likely to give rise to impacts on the Natura 2000 Sites:	
• The potential of zoning of lands which are located within Flood Zone A for Town Centre landuse to give rise to impacts on water quality with potential knock-on impacts on Coole-Garryland cSAC/SPA is currently unclear and therefore impacts on these Natura 2000 sites cannot be excluded.	
Describe any likely direct, indirect or secondary impacts of the plan (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects) on the Natura 2000 sites by virtue of:	
Size and Scale	The land proposed to be rezoned from Open Space, Recreation and Amenity to Town Centre/Commercial is approximately1.414Ha. (Total area of the site is 2.1ha) and are currently used for agricultural grazing. This undeveloped land is characterised by improved agricultural grassland and amenity grassland, scrub, treeline and hedgerows. No European (Natura 2000) Site is located within the lands under consideration in MA 2 or within the Plan area.
Land-take	The material alteration to Gort LAP will not involve land-take of Natura 2000 sites therefore there will be no direct impacts in this regard.
Distance from Natura 2000 sites or key features of the site	The Gort Plan area is located approximately 400m from Coole-Garryland cSAC. Distance to other Natura 2000 sites are given in **Table 2.1**of the original NIR. The Gort/Cannahowna River runs through Gort Town and receives treated effluent from Gort WWTP plant downstream of the town. This river is connected to underground systems in the area and is a potential pathway for pollutants to Coole-Garryland cSAC which is a water-dependent system. Therefore there is the potential for indirect impacts as a result of the material alteration to the zoning within the Plan area which has been proposed in the draft LAP.

Assessment Criteria	
Resource requirements	Gort Water Supply Scheme (WSS), which is sourced from the Gort/Cannahowna River, services the Gort Plan area. This water supply has recently been upgraded and removed from the EPA remedial action list. It is unclear as to the potential impact of the Gort RWSS on the Gort/Cannahowna River and potential indirect impacts on Coole-Garryland cSAC. There is an estimated spare capacity of 469PE at Gort Wastewater Treatment Plant. The Gort Local Area Plan includes a specific objective which states that any development within the town must be preceded by sufficient capacity in the WWTP and water supply. However, if all existing permissions, including those on appeal to An Bord Pleanála, were constructed then the capacity of Gort WWTP would be reached. Therefore development permitted as a result of Gort LAP has the potential to indirectly impact water quality of the Gort/Cannahowna River and thereby indirectly result in the damage of Turlough habitat.
Emissions	**Surface Water Run-off and Pollution Events during the Construction of Lands Zoned for Town Centre in Proximity to the Gort/Cannahowna River** Surface water run-off from construction site areas adjacent to the Gort/Cannahowna River will have the potential to increase the rates of sedimentation within the river. The storage of fuels, lubricants and other polluting materials on construction sites adjacent to the Gort/Cannahowna River will present a risk of a pollution incident occurring in the Gort/Cannahowna River. The ingress of such polluting materials to the Gort/Cannahowna River will have the potential to result in significant perturbations to the water quality of this river and could affect the conservation status of qualifying habitats and species downstream in Coole-Garryland cSAC. The mitigation policies of the Plan and particularly Policy UI2 and Objective UI4; NH6 and NH7 should ensure that the water quality of the Gort/Cannahowna River is protected from any adverse impacts during the construction of lands zoned for development in proximity to the Gort/Cannahowna River. The implementation of an Environmental Management Buffer as outlined in Objective NH7 should ensure that potential impacts associated with the ingress of surface water runoff or polluting materials are minimised however these mitigatory policies and objectives may be compromised if development is located within Flood Zone A.
Excavation requirements	The material alterations to the Draft Gort LAP does not propose any excavations that will result in likely significant effects to Natura 2000 Sites. Excavation requirements are not considered to be an issue with regard to this zoning.
Transportation requirements	The material alteration to the Gort Plan land use zoning map identifies the Town Centre zoning. Transportation requirements are not considered to be an issue with regard to this zoning.
Describe any likely changes to the European (Natura 2000) site arising as a result of:	
Reduction of habitat area	There will be no direct loss of any Natura 2000 Site lands as a result of the adoption of the material alteration to the Gort LAP.

Assessment Criteria	
Disturbance of key species	Construction activity associated with new development in the proposed Town Centre zoning adjacent to the Gort/Cannahowna River has the potential to negatively affect key qualifying species that rely on good water quality. Any changes in the trophic status of the Gort/Cannahowna River could also lead to eutrophication effects in hydrologically connected sites such as Coole-Garryland. The eutrophication of these waterbodies could potentially interfere with the structure and function of these habitats resulting in negative impacts to the distribution or densities of qualifying species. Gort LAP has set out a number of policies and objectives, particularly Objective DS3, UI2, UI5, UI10, UI11, NH1, NH2, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7 and NH11 which seek ensure that negative impacts do not arise as a result of the construction of new developments.
Habitat or species fragmentation	The material alterations to the Gort LAP will not result in the fragmentation of qualifying habitats or the fragmentation of habitats upon which qualifying species of the European Sites under the sphere of influence of the Plan rely. Development adjacent to the Gort/Cannahowna River will be restricted by the zoning of an Environmental Management Buffer which will restrict development 10m from all watercourses.
Reduction in species density	Developments arising as a result of the material alteration to the Plan will have the potential to adversely affect water quality of the Gort/Cannahowna River. Poor construction practices during project-level developments could result in perturbations to the water quality of this watercourse. Any perturbation to the water quality of this river will have the potential to result in a reduction in key species densities occurring within hydrologically connected European Sites. Policies of the Plan which protect the water quality of the Gort/Cannahowna River and establish an Environmental Management Buffer along the river corridor adjacent to development land use zonings will ensure that such impacts are avoided to qualifying species.

Assessment Criteria	
Changes in key indicators of conservation status	The European Commission (2006) Explanatory Notes and Guidelines for the Assessment, Monitoring and Reporting under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive outlines key indicators for assessing the conservation status of designated sites. The key indicators for assessing the conservation status of Annex II qualifyingspecies are: *Range:* as outlined above the material alteration to the Gort LAP will not result in direct or indirect impacts to European Sites under consideration. Therefore the distribution of key species, for which these sites are designated, will not be altered by the proposed zoning variation in the new Plan. *Population:* Any new development resulting from the material alteration to the Gort LAP will not be granted planning permission should likely significant effects to populations of key species be identified. Therefore, as only projects which will not result in direct or indirect impacts to the SAC or SPA will be permitted, the populations of key species will not be affected as a result of the proposed zoning variation in the new Plan. *Habitat for the specie*s: The mitigation policies and objectives set out in the Plan will ensure that the conservation status of the habitats which support the qualifying species of the Natura 2000 sites is maintained *Future Prospects*: The mitigation policies and objectives of the Plan and the recommendations set out in this Assessment will ensure that the adoption of the Plan will not jeopardise the future prospects of qualifying species supported by Coole-Garryland and other Natura 2000 Sites. The key indicators for assessing the conservation status of Annex I qualifying habitats are: *Range:* Policies and objectives outlined in the Plan will ensure that the material alterations to the Plan do not represent a risk to the current range of qualifying habitats supported by European Sites. *Area covered by habitat type within range*: Area of qualifying habitats occurring within European Sites will not affected by the Plan. *Specific structures and functions:* Turloughs are the Annex I habitat most commonly designated as European sites within the sphere of influence of the Plan area. The structure of Turlough habitat and other hydrologically influenced habitats which are connected to the Plan area is dependent on the connectivity and quality of surface and groundwater systems. These habitats function as breeding and foraging habitats for a range of “key species”. This function is maintained by ensuring the hydrological integrity (which includes structure and water quality) of European Sites and their associated water bodies/features. Measures outlined in the Plan seek to ensure that the specific structure and function of these habitats and the European Sites as a whole are maintained however it is unclear as to the full potential for adverse impacts on structures and functions. *Future prospects*: The Plan policies and objectives and the approach of the Plan to ensuring adverse impacts to the environment are avoided will ensure that the material alterations to the Plan will not negatively influence the status of Annex 1 habitats which occur within hydrologically connected European Sites.
Climate change	There is currently insufficient information to predict the effects of climate change on Natura 2000 sites. It is predicted that on a national level winters will become wetter and summers drier but the effect on local precipitation is unknown.

Assessment Criteria	
Describe any likely impacts on the Natura 2000 Site as a whole in terms of:	
Interference with key relationships that define the structure of the site	As mentioned above, the surface and groundwater influences of hydrologically connected sites and associated watercourses are the key features that define the structure Natura 2000 sites. Any impacts to qualifying habitats; instream habitats; or the connectivity of the freshwater ecosystems will have the potential to negatively impact on the structure of hydrologically connected European sites. For reasons outlined above it is considered thatmaterial alterations to the Plan will not result in adverse effects to the qualifying Annex 1 habitats or instream habitats; or interfere with the connectivity of Coole-Garryland and other hydrologically connected European sites.
Interference with key relationships that define the function of the site	Potential impacts which could result in adverse effects to the water quality of surface watercourses will in turn have the potential to negatively impact Annex 1 habitats and/or populations of qualifying species for European Sites. The relationship of species and habitats with the abiotic factors that determine the structure and function of aquatic European Sites are the key relationship that defines the function of the relevant European Sites. For reasons outlined above, the proposed material alterations to the Plan will not result in interference to these key relationships that define the function of the relevant Natura 2000 sites.
Describe from the above, the elements of the project or plan or combination of elements, where the above impacts are likely to be significant or where the scale of magnitude of impacts is not known:	
Potential impacts associated with the material alterations to the Gort LAP include the impact on water quality of the Gort/Cannahowna River and consequently Coole-Garryland cSAC and hydrologically connected water-dependent habitats of other Natura 2000 sites, should the Town Centre Zoning proposed in MA 2 proceed without any mitigation. The scale of magnitude of impacts to European, Natura 2000 Sites is currently unclear; **therefore a Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment with supporting Natura Impact Report (NIR) is required.**	

2.5 SCREENING CONCLUSIONS

The likely impacts that will arise from the material alterations to the Plan have been examined in the context of the key environmental factors that could potentially affect the integrity of the Natura 2000 network, e.g. disturbance, habitat loss, etc. and the results of the Screening Assessment, as presented in **Table 2.1**.

Following the screening stage of the process, the Coole-Garryland cSAC/SPA are the only Natura 2000 sites which have been brought forward for Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment and are considered under the Natura Impact Report.

3 STAGE 2 – NATURA IMPACT REPORT

This Addendum to the Natura Impact Report (NIR) records the assessment carried out on Material Alteration No. 2 (MA 2) to the Draft Gort Local Area Plan 2013-2019.

In all, one site was brought forward for Stage 2 – Appropriate Assessment and is therefore assessed in this Natura Impact Report. The proposed material alteration MA 2 was reviewed with respect to each identified Natura 2000 site and a determination was made as to whether there was potential for any aspect of MA 2 to impact on the integrity of the Natura 2000 site.

The qualifying habitats of Natura 2000 sites under consideration in this Addendum to the NIR considered most likely to be at risk are water-dependent habitats which are hydrologically connected to the Plan area and therefore have the possibility to be impacted by any development within lands identified as being within a high flood risk area.

3.1 DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE NATURA 2000 SITES

3.1.1 Detailed Description of Natura 2000 Sites

Site synopses for relevant Natura 2000 sites are provided in **Appendix D** to the original NIR while a more detailed description of Coole-Garryland cSAC/SPA is provided in **Section 3.1** of the original NIR.

3.2 EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

3.2.1 Introduction

A summary of relevant existing environmental information which relate to the Gort Local Area Plan are and its environs are included in **Section 3.2** of the original NIR.

3.3 HABITATS OF UNDEVELOPED LANDS AFFECTED BY THE MATERIAL ALTERATION TO THE PLAN

It is proposed that 1.414Ha of land within the Gort LAP which has been assigned a Flood Zone A status after a Stage 2 Flood Risk Assessment be rezoned from Open Space, Recreation and Amenity to Town Centre/Commercial zoning.

This land is currently used as agricultural land has an existing permission for a mixed use development, planning reference No. 05/3042 extended through planning reference No. 11/239 to April 2016

The area is characterised by improved agricultural grassland, dry calcareous and neutral grassland, dry meadows and grassy verges, hedgerows, broadleaved woodland, and scrub. The majority of these areas are underlain by karst geology with groundwater systems that directly influence the status of qualifying habitats e.g. turlough habitat in Coole-Garryland cSAC. Any development in these greenfield sites connected via surface watercourses or groundwater flows to Natura 2000 qualifying habitat such as Turlough will have the potential to negatively impact this habitat through the discharge of nutrient-enriched or contaminated water. Some of these areas have hedgerow networks and broadleaved woodland or scrub which may potentially be used by lesser horseshoe bat populations as migratory pathways or for foraging or temporary roosting habitat.

3.4 DETAILED CONSIDERATION OF MA 2, PROPSOED TOWN CENTRE ZONING

In general, undeveloped lands within the Plan area which are located within identified flood risk areas (in particular Flood Zones A and B) have been rezoned as Open Space in accordance with *The Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2009* in order to avoid inappropriate development in high to moderate flood risk areas and to address the potential impacts of climate change. The Plan also includes policies and objectives to ensure that the sensitivities of the various environmental and flood risk areas adequately considered, protected and managed as appropriate, in the development management process.

The application of a range of policies and objectives contained in the Draft LAP including Objective DS3 Natura 2000 Network and Habitats Directive Assessment and Objective DS4: Development Management Standards and Guidelines (amongst others) will assist in ensuring these issues are considered should development applications present for these areas.

The majority of areas identified as Flood Zones A or B under the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for County Galway are zoned 'Open Space' within the plan area (see Figure 3.2 and Figure 3.4 of the original NIR), thus avoiding incompatible uses and directing inappropriate development away from these zones. Limited uses are open for consideration for the open space zoning. Such developments would be assessed in accordance with the Planning System and Flood Risk Management Guidelines (2009). There are small numbers of existing developments that lie within Flood Zones A or B; again any redevelopment activities associated with these existing structures would also require application of the above guidelines.

The undeveloped land which is considered under MA 2 and proposed for Town Centre/Commercial zoning is located within Flood Zone A and totals 1.414Ha while the rest of the undeveloped Town Centre/Commercial zoning comprises of 12.80ha. The Town Centre/Commercial zoning proposed in the Draft Plan lay adjacent to the railway line thereby supporting the sequential and phased development of the town centre. For much of this zoning, the lands are established urban areas; the main undeveloped land zoned town centre/commercial, adjacent to the railway line, is composed of improved agricultural grassland, with some hedgerows, scrub, copses of mature broadleaved trees and scattered trees.

The land subject to MA 2 is also adjacent to the town centre and would naturally once have been considered to suitable for extension of the town centre. However a Stage 2 Flood Risk Assessment has been completed for the LAP area and these lands are now classified as being within Flood Zone A. There is an existing permission on the lands Pl. Ref. No. 11/239 for a mixed use development however in light of the up-to-date flood risk assessment it is considered that the potential exists for any development at this location to cause adverse environmental effects due to flooding.

3.4.1 Potential Impacts of Material Alteration

Flooding and Water Quality Impacts

Qualifying habitats and species sensitive to changes in water quality occur in hydrologically connected sites adjacent to the Plan area. Development within the Plan area which facilitates the increase of population to over the capacity of the WwTP could adversely affect water quality. The existence of inadequate wastewater treatment facilities for new developments could give rise to surface water and groundwater pollution resulting in downstream impacts to water-dependent qualifying habitats e.g. turloughs and species e.g. otter. Elevations in nutrient levels and eutrophication are likely to be the principal impacts arising from the discharge of inadequately treated wastewater arising from overcapacity of the WwTP due to new developments.

Any new water abstractions particularly from Lough Cutra or the Cannahowna/Gort River to service future development will require an Appropriate Assessment in advance of any additional abstractions. Although in the past Lough Cutra has been identified as a potential source for Gort's drinking water supply this scenario has been suggested in the current Draft LAP and is not listed on the Water Services Investment Programme for Galway County, 2010 – 2012 (which has been extended to 2013). As detailed plans for future changes to abstraction rates are not outlined in the LAP the potential effects of such abstractions cannot be assessed at this stage. Policies and objectives of the LAP (i.e. Policy NH1 etc.) and CDP will ensure that any future plans or projects detailing proposals to a new abstraction from Lough Cutra will undergo Appropriate Assessment Screening and full Appropriate Assessment if necessary and will only take place where a risk of likely significant effects does not arise.

3.4.2 Mitigation Measures

The preferred development strategy option is for a Local Area Plan that is informed by Environmental Assessment and Development Strategy Objective DS 3 sets out the intention of the Plan to protect Natura 2000 Sites. This Objective sets out a firm commitment to ensure that the provisions of Article 6 of the EU Habitats Directive are fully implemented.

Section 3.9 of the Draft Plan sets out a number of Objectives that further reinforces the approach of the Plan to protect Natura 2000 Sites. These Objectives will ensure that all plans or projects that have the potential, either alone or in combination with other plans and project, to result in likely significant effects on Natura 2000 Sites and on natural heritage in general will undergo assessment.

In addition to these overarching Objectives, which aim to protect Natura 2000 Sites and implement the provisions of the EU Habitats Directive, a number of specific Policies and Objectives are included within the Plan to ensure that the Plan affords protection to Natura 2000 Sites. In addition to this, recommendations to strengthen the wording of a number of objectives are outlined in **Table 3.3** of the original NIR. This precautionary approach to development within this zoning in conjunction with the mitigatory objectives of the Plan will ensure that likely significant effects arising from development within this zoning are avoided.

3.4.3 Mitigatory Policies and Objectives in the Plan

The existing mitigatory policies and objectives of the Plan are outlined in **Table 3.3**of the original NIR. An assessment of how these Policies and Objectives will ensure the protection of Natura 2000 Sites is provided and where necessary additional recommendations to strengthen these measures to further protect the integrity of Natura 2000 Sites are also outlined. Recommendations to reword a number of specific Policies/Objectives with the potential to result in negative impacts are provided in **Table 3.4** of the original NIR which seek to specifically target and annul their potential negative environmental implications. A full list of all potentially negative Policies/Objectives is contained within **Appendix A**of the original NIR.

3.5 ADDITIONAL MITIGATION MEASURES REALTING TO MATERIAL ALTERATION NO. 2

A precautionary approach to developments relating to particular land use zonings (i.e. residential or business andenterprise) or Specific Objectives of the Plan has been promoted by the Gort LAP.

Any new plans or projects proposed on the lands under consideration for Material Alteration No. 2 will require detailed hydrological and hydrogeological assessments in order to establish the nature of surface water and groundwater flows, drainage and flooding patterns and how the proposed development might impact on water quality and consequently Coole-Garryland cSAC/SPA and their qualifying interests. These assessments will also establish how groundwater pathways occurring within proposed development site have the potential to impact upon groundwater quality in the area and thereby establish the potential for pollution of water-dependent habitats such Turloughs.The inclusion of Objectives NH6 and NH9within the Plan will ensure that that any potential impacts to karst formations and their resultant direct or indirect impacts to the environment in general and Natura 2000 Sites will be identified in advance of the commencement of new developments.

It is acknowledged that there is an existing permission on the lands under consideration for Material Alteration No. 2, Planning References 05/3042 and 11/239 for a mixed-use development, and that a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment has been carried out as part of that planning application.

Galway County Council's Flood Risk Consultants shall review any updated Site Specifc Flood Risk Assessment as part of submissions received on the proposed Material Alterations in accordance with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009 which may include the undertaking of a site specific hydrological impact study.

In order to mitigate for any extension of the current planning permission on the site or new application for permission on the site will be subject to **Objective UI8– Flood Risk Management and Assessment (refer to Maps 3A/3B)** which states:

Ensure the implementation of the DEHLG/OPW publication Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009 (or any updated/superseding document) in relation to flood risk management within the Plan Area. This will include the following:

a) Avoid, reduce and/or mitigate, as appropriate in accordance with the Flood Risk management Guidelines 2009, the risk of flooding within the flood risk areas indicated on Maps 3A/3B – Flood Risk Management, including fluvial, coastal/tidal, pluvial and groundwater flooding, and any other flood risk areas that may be identified during the period of the Plan or in relation to a planning application.

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 Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009 (or any superseding document). Any flood risk assessment should include an assessment of the potential impacts of climate change, such as an increase in the extent or probability of flooding, and any associated measures necessary to address these impacts.

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) Where certain measures proposed to mitigate or manage the risk of flooding associated with new developments are likely to result in significant effects to the environment or European sites that form part of the Natura 2000 network downstream, such measures will undergo environmental assessment and Habitats Directive Assessment, as appropriate.

Any recommendations arising from the Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment which is currently being prepared for the site should be in accordance with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines 2009 and should also be subject to Screening for Appropriate Assessment and if necessary full Appropriate Assessment. Appropriate Assessment of any additional flood mitigation measures arising from the Site Specific Flood Risk Assessment will ensure that any potential impacts on Coole-Garryland cSAC/SPA and their qualifying interests will be adequately assessed. It is considered that adequate mitigation is provided in point d) of Objective UI8 for any mitigation arising from the Stage 3 Flood Risk Assessment.

Any proposed development with the potential to result in adverse impacts to Natura 2000 Sites will be required to undertake an appropriate level of baseline investigations to establish how Natura 2000 Sites and their qualifying interests could be affected. This recommended approach is in line with objectives labelled NH1 and NH4 in **Table 3.3** above. Baseline investigations may include (but are not necessarily limited to):

- Hydrological, hydrogeological and geophysical assessments (as outlined above);
- Noise assessments (to determine the effects of noise disturbance (should this occur) to qualifying species);
- Visual assessments (to determine the effects of visual intrusions (should they occur) on qualifying species);
- Air quality assessments (to determine the effects of air emissions (should they occur) on qualifying habitats); and
- Ecological assessments, which may include botanical surveys and surveys for qualifying species likely to be impacted by a proposed plan or project.

The objectives CF10and TI15 include examples of potential developments that will be required to undergo some or all of the above assessments. Currently the Plan seeks to encourage the development of such facilities but it recognises the potential implications such developments will have to the conservation status of Natura 2000 sites. Hence the Plans commitment to only encourage such developments where it can be shown, upon assessment of a detailed development design, that no negative implications will arise to Natura 2000 Sites or the environment in general.

This is the approach that will be adopted for any new development within the Plan area with the potential to result in negative impacts to Natura 2000 Sites. Furthermore any such developments will be required to be assessed for its potential to result in cumulative impacts in combination with other existing or proposed developments. This approach is in line with Objective DS3 and Objective NH1 of the Plan.

Mitigatory Policies and Objectives of the Plan in combinations with the recommended policies and objectives outlined in this NIR will ensure the implementation of the Plan will avoid likely significant effects to Natura 2000 Sites.

4 APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT CONCLUSION

This Addendum to the NIR has reviewed the impacts arising from the material alterations to the Plan and found following a Stage 1 Screening Assessment that, without the implementation of mitigation measures, significant effects are considered likely on Natura 2000 sites as a result of one of the material alterations to the Plan.

These potential impacts have been outlined in detail in the Natura Impact Report along with the commitments within the Plan that aim to ensure these potential impacts are avoided.

The requirement of the Gort LAP2013-2019 to ensure Appropriate Assessment Screening and where necessary Appropriate Assessment of any future Plans or Projects which, alone or in combination with other plans and project, are likely to have a significant direct or indirect impact on any Natura 2000 Sites will protect these Sites from potential adverse impacts.

Measures and requirements for all new developments with the potential to adversely affect Natura 2000 Sites to undertake thorough assessments will inform the conclusions of any Appropriate Assessment. This will ensure adverse impacts to the integrity of these Natura 2000 Sites will be identified in advance of receiving planning permission. Such developments will only be permitted where it can be shown that such adverse impacts can be mitigated or minimised so that likely significant effects will be avoided.

In summary and having regard to the following;

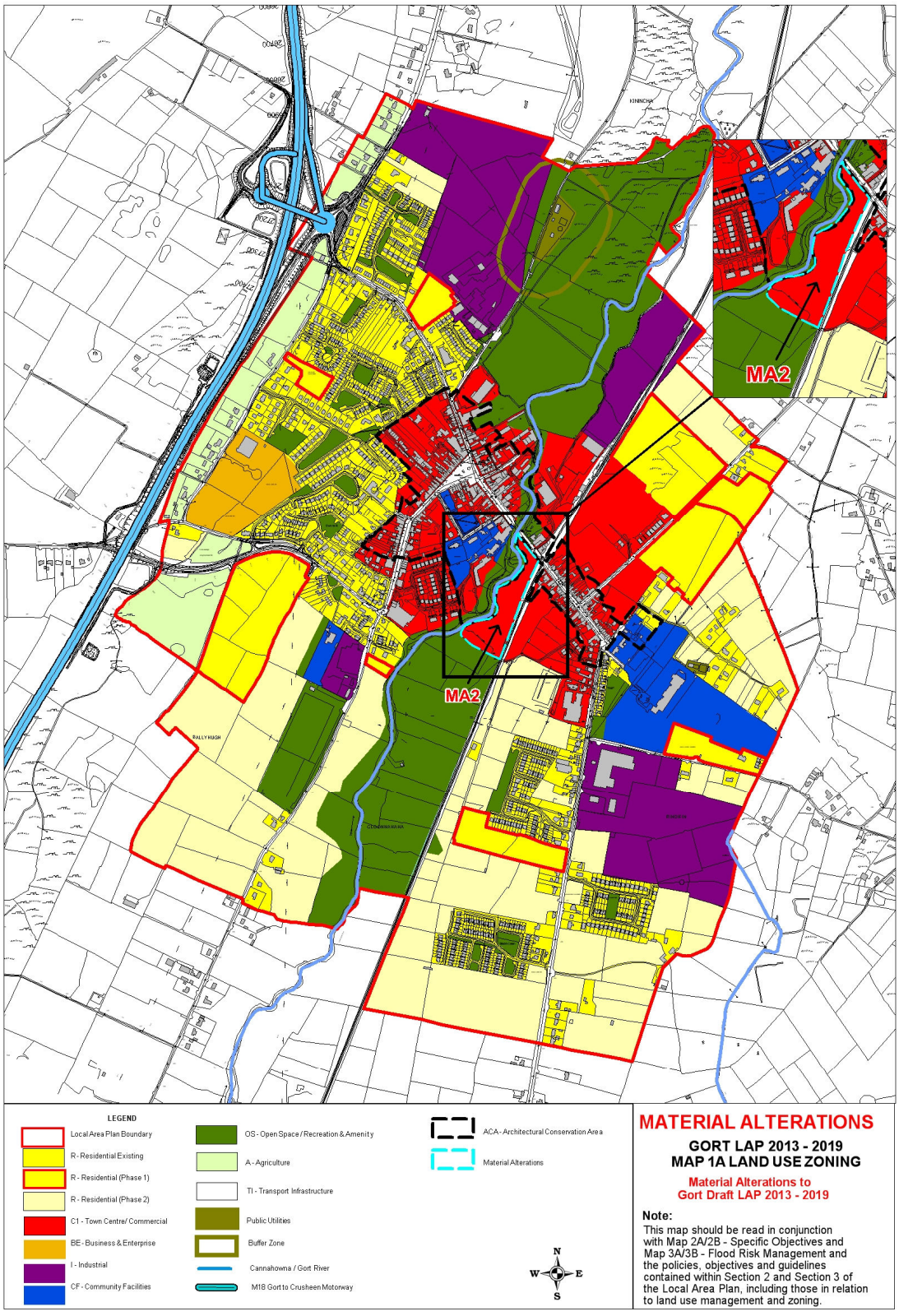
- Requirement as set out in Objectives DS 3 and NH1 to undertake project-level AA wherever the possibility of likely significant effects cannot be excluded; and

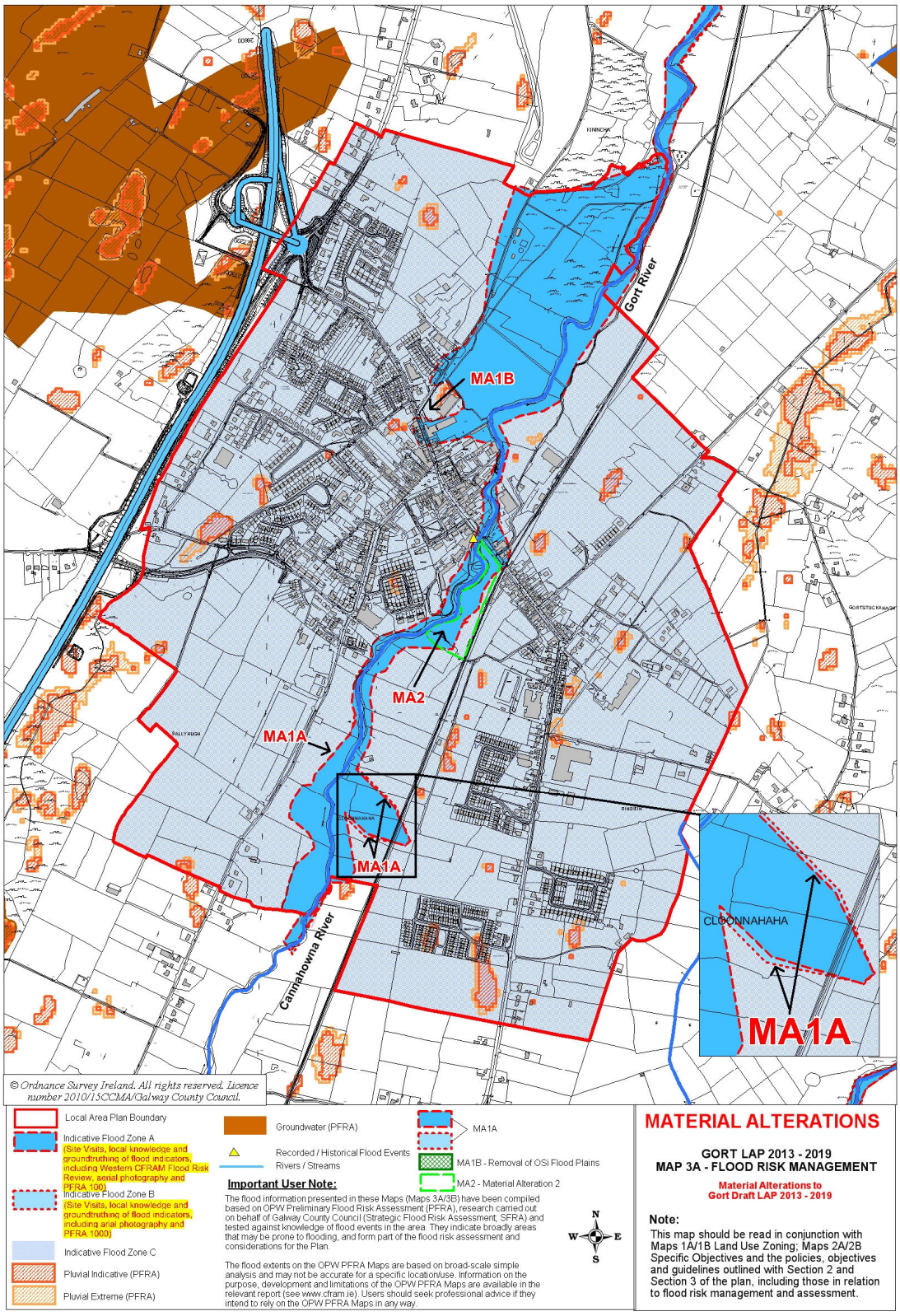
- Plan-level mitigation measures as outlined in **Table 3.3**and **Table 3.4** of the original NIR and incorporated into the LAP.

It is considered that the adoption of the material alterations to the Gort LAP2013-2019 will not result in likely significant effects to the conservation management or integrity of Natura 2000 Sites, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects.

APPENDIX A

MATERIAL ALTERATIONS MAPS


MA2
MA2
LEGEND
Local Area Plan Boundary
R - Residential Existing
R - Residential (Phase 1)
R - Residential (Phase 2)
C1 - Town Centre/ Commercial
BE - Business & Enterprise
I - Industrial
CF - Community Facilities
OS - Open Space / Recreation & Amenity
A - Agriculture
TI - Transport Infrastructure
Public Utilities
Buffer Zone
Cannahowna / Gort River
M18 Gort to Crusheen Motorway
ACA - Architectural Conservation Area
Material Alterations
N
W
E
S
MATERIAL ALTERATIONS
GORT LAP 2013 - 2019
MAP 1A LAND USE ZONING
Material Alterations to
Gort Draft LAP 2013 - 2019
Note:
This map should be read in conjunction with Map 2A/2B - Specific Objectives and Map 3A/3B - Flood Risk Management and the policies, objectives and guidelines contained within Section 2 and Section 3 of the Local Area Plan, including those in relation to land use management and zoning.


MA1B
MA2
MA1A
MA1A
Gort River
Cannahowna River
CLOONNAHAHA
MA1A
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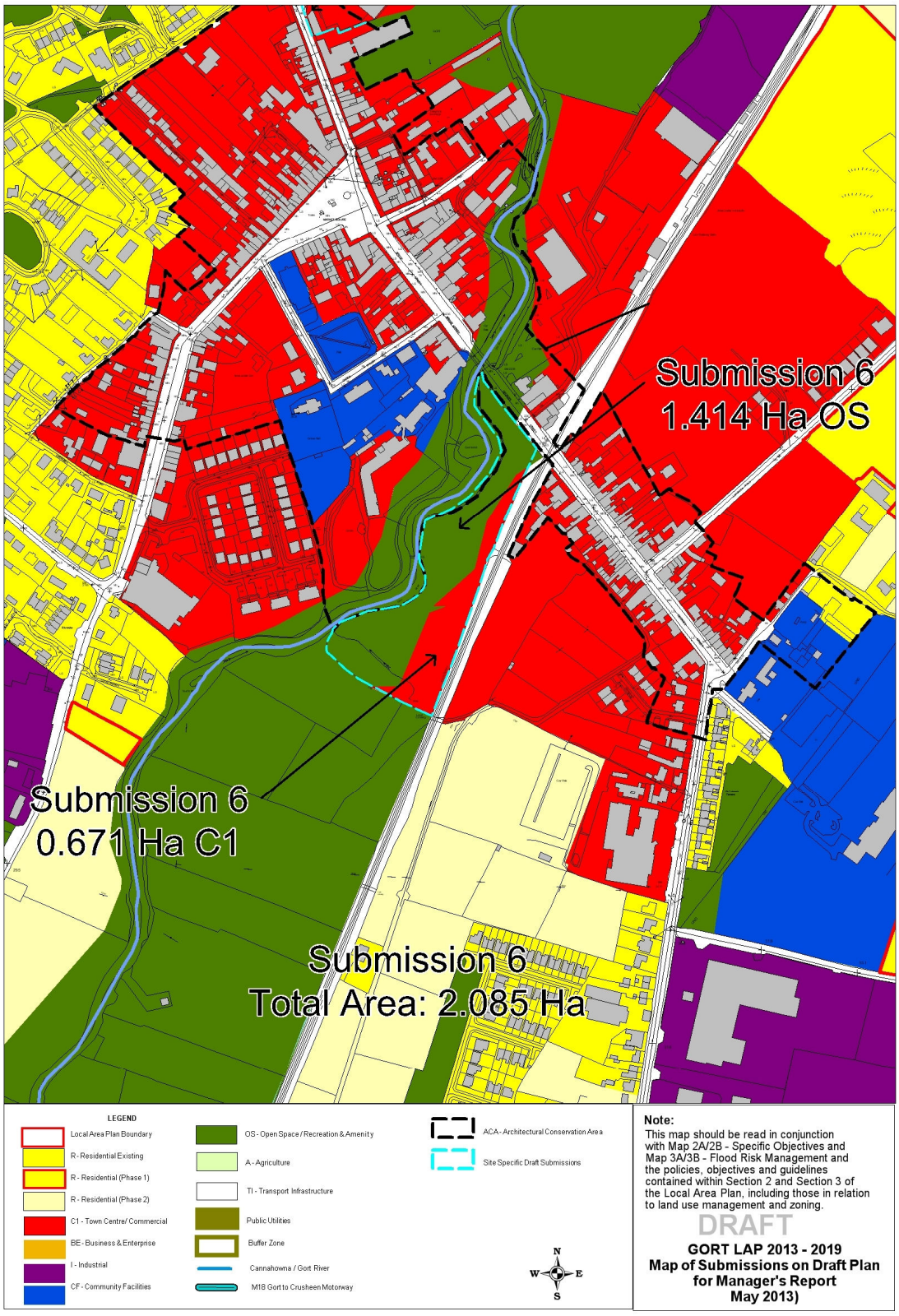
Local Area Plan Boundary
Indicative Flood Zone A
(Site Visits, local knowledge and groundtruthing of flood indicators, including Western CFRAM Flood Risk Review, aerial photography and PFRA 100)
Indicative Flood Zone B
(Site Visits, local knowledge and groundtruthing of flood indicators, including arial photography and PFRA 1000)
Indicative Flood Zone C
Pluvial Indicative (PFRA)
Pluvial Extreme (PFRA)
Groundwater (PFRA)
Recorded / Historical Flood Events
Rivers / Streams
MA1A
MA1B - Removal of OSi Flood Plains
MA2 - Material Alteration 2
Important User Note:
The flood information presented in these Maps (Maps 3A/3B) have been compiled based on OPW Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA), research carried out on behalf of Galway County Council (Strategic Flood Risk Assessment; SFRA) and tested against knowledge of flood events in the area. They indicate broadly areas that may be prone to flooding, and form part of the flood risk assessment and considerations for the Plan.
The flood extents on the OPW PFRA Maps are based on broad-scale simple analysis and may not be accurate for a specific location/use. Information on the purpose, development and limitations of the OPW PFRA Maps are available in the relevant report (see www.cfram.ie). Users should seek professional advice if they intend to rely on the OPW PFRA Maps in any way.
N
W
E
S
MATERIAL ALTERATIONS
GORT LAP 2013 - 2019
MAP 3A - FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT
Material Alterations to Gort Draft LAP 2013 - 2019
Note:
This map should be read in conjunction with Maps 1A/1B Land Use Zoning; Maps 2A/2B Specific Objectives and the policies, objectives and guidelines outlined with Section 2 and Section 3 of the plan, including those in relation to flood risk management and assessment.


Submission 6
1.414 Ha OS
Submission 6
0.671 Ha C1
Submission 6
Total Area: 2.085 Ha
LEGEND
Local Area Plan Boundary
R - Residential Existing
R - Residential (Phase 1)
R - Residential (Phase 2)
C1 - Town Centre/ Commercial
BE - Business & Enterprise
I - Industrial
CF - Community Facilities
OS - Open Space / Recreation & Amenity
A - Agriculture
TI - Transport Infrastructure
Public Utilities
Buffer Zone
Cannahowna / Gort River
M18 Gort to Crusheen Motorway
ACA - Architectural Conservation Area
Site Specific Draft Submissions
N
W
E
S
Note:
This map should be read in conjunction with Map 2A/2B - Specific Objectives and Map 3A/3B - Flood Risk Management and the policies, objectives and guidelines contained within Section 2 and Section 3 of the Local Area Plan, including those in relation to land use management and zoning.
DRAFT
GORT LAP 2013 - 2019
Map of Submissions on Draft Plan
for Manager's Report
May 2013)