



DRAFT TUAM LOCAL AREA PLAN 2011-2017



Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report



River Clare

*Version
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1. INTRODUCTION

Galway County Council intends to review the existing Local Area Plan (LAP) for Tuam and to create a new LAP for Tuam for the period 2011-2017 under the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2007. This is an SEA screening report; screening is defined as the '*process for deciding whether a particular plan, other than those for which SEA is mandatory, would be likely to have significant environmental effects, and would thus warrant SEA*' (Guidelines for Regional Authorities and Planning Authorities, 2004). Strategic Environmental Assessment is the formal, systematic evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of implementing a plan or programme before a decision is made to adopt the plan or programme. SEA screening leads to a determination as to whether the making and implementation of a particular plan, in this case, Tuam draft LAP, will or will not, lead to significant strategic environmental consequences for the plan area. Significance may be assessed in terms of the type/scale of development envisaged by the plan and the sensitivity/importance of the receiving environment (Guidelines for Regional Authorities and Planning Authorities, 2004). SEA screening also establishes whether or not a full SEA is required for the prospective LAP.

The assessment of this issue is based in the criteria set down in the SEA Guidelines and Annex II of the SEA Regulations (2004) for determining the likely significance of environmental effects. The guidelines require SEA Screening to be carried out for all Local Area Plans (LAP) where the population of an LAP is 10,000 or less. Where the population is 10,000 or more, a full SEA Environmental Report must be prepared. The existing population for Tuam is approx. 6,885 persons (based on the 2006 CSO figures of the number of existing households and number of persons per household). The estimated increase in population for the proposed LAP for Tuam is expected to be below the threshold of 10,000 according to DEHLG in 2009 and therefore a full SEA is not mandatory in this instance.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE LOCAL AREA PLAN

The Draft LAP consists of a written statement with associated maps which set out the framework for the sustainable planning and development of Tuam within a defined development boundary for a period of 6 years. The maps set out zoning objectives and also highlight the natural and built heritage of the area; whilst the written statement sets out objectives and policies to cater for future improvements and works in Tuam. The plan will be a statutory document and must be referred to in the assessment of any future planning applications.

The plan is set within the framework of the Galway County Development Plan 2009-2015 (hereinafter referred to as the GCDP); the policies and objectives of the Draft Plan are in line with those of the GCDP. The GCDP has been subjected to full SEA and the relevant mitigation and monitoring measures proposed in the SEA have been included within the GCDP to avoid and mitigate significant adverse effects on the environment.

3. MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS

Under the Regulations 2004 (S.I. No. 436 of 2004), where a Planning Authority proposes to make an LAP under Section 18, 19 and 20 of the Planning and Development Acts 2000 (as amended) it is a requirement under article 14A of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations to consider whether or not the proposed plan would be likely to have significant effects on the environment.

Section 6 below sets out the required report pursuant to Article 14A of the 2004 Regulations where the LAP has been screened under Schedule 2A of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations (S.I. No. 436 of 2004).

4. DESCRIPTION OF THE LANDS WITHIN THE TUAM LAP BOUNDARY

Tuam town is situated 32km north-east of Galway City. It is drained by the River Nanny, a tributary of the Clare River which flows south-westwards into Lough Corrib. Tuam is located on the N17 Galway to Sligo National Primary route. It is within close proximity to two regional airports, Galway Regional Airport and Ireland West International Airport at Knock. It is also strategically located on the future Atlantic Corridor (M18/17) and on the Atlantic Technology Corridor, both of which will play a major role in the future long term development of the town. Appendix 1 shows the proposed land use zones of the Draft Tuam LAP.

The current LAP (2005-2011) boundary is 1,845.57ha; of this 1064ha is zoned agricultural. The amount of zoned and undeveloped land within the LAP boundary is 1267.06ha which has been broken downs as follows per each zone within Table 1 and illustrated in Appendix 1.

Table 1: Capacity of zoned lands within the 2005-2011 Tuam LAP.

Land Use Zone	Zoned Land (Ha)	Undeveloped Land (Ha)
Residential	496	173
Commercial	52	12.39
Industrial	140	81
Industrial/Commercial	3.7	3.3
Community Facilities	49.4	29.6
Recreation and Amenity	40.5	22.3
Agricultural	1064	958

The Draft Regional Planning Guidelines (draft RPGs) population projections for Tuam to 2022 indicate that the total population for Tuam will grow from 6,885 in 2006 to 9,500 persons by 2022. This corresponds to an actual growth in population of 2,615 persons to 2022 as a minimum target. Table 2 shows the population targets produced for Tuam Hub by DEHLG in 2009 and is based on a low projection scenario.

Table 2: Minimum population targets for Tuam Hub 2002 to 2022 (DEHLG).

Hub	2002	2006	2010	2016	2022
Tuam	5,947	6,885 (1.67%)	7,600 (1.72% *)	8,600 (1.77% *)	9,500 (1.82% *)

The zoning proposed for the draft LAP is a continuation of the extent of current zoning provision which have been in place for at least the last six years. The zoning proposed in the draft LAP is in excess of the growth requirements for the 6 year plan. The undeveloped residential land within the existing Tuam LAP 2005-2009 has the potential to provide for a population increase of 11,264 persons. However, it is recognised that such a population increase was not achieved during the recent period of sustained population growth and therefore given the current economic environment such a population increase is unlikely to arise during the plan period. Therefore lands zoned as residential in the 2005-2011 will serve the needs of Tuam over the next six years and beyond.

The existing wastewater treatment plant has a spare capacity of 2,000 Population Equivalent (PE) and it is anticipated that with the separation of the surface water and the foul water network, an increased PE capacity will become available. Therefore, extra capacity is available for increased development during the next six years. In addition, Section 5.2.5 details the wastewater policies and objectives in relation to the future development of Tuam and its wastewater capacity specifically policy WS2.

In relation to other current services such as water supply that may be stressed during the future of the draft LAP detailed objectives and policies have been included in the draft plan to address the impacts that substantial zoning may have on these services. These measures are outlined below under sections 5.2.4, 5.2.5 and 5.2.6.

5. ASSESSMENT OF LIKELY SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

Criteria for determining the likely significant environmental impacts follow Schedule 2(a) of SEA Regulations (2004).

The Local Area Plan has been assessed with respect to the likely significant effects on the environment having regard to the following:

- The characteristics of the plan and
- The characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected.

5.1 Characteristics of the Plan

5.1.1 The degree, to which the plan sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources.

The Draft LAP would see a continuation of the extent of current zoning provisions which have been in place for the last 6 years; however, amendments have been put in place in order to achieve environmental objectives and to clarify through the zoning matrix the type of development permitted in each zone e.g. the zoning of lands subject or at risk of flooding. The LAP will form a statutory document, conforming to the policies and objectives set out in the GCDP and other relevant guidelines and documents. The LAP will identify the existing character of the area, set out a common vision for Tuam that is supported by the local community and that provides a positive means (via policies and objectives) to influence future development to create a sustainable environment.

The main role of the Tuam LAP is to interact with and complement the Gateway of Galway City, and drive sustainable development in rural north east Galway. The West Regional Authority Regional Planning Guidelines 2004-2016 underpin this role and describe the town of Tuam as “an important industrial and agricultural centre for mid-Connacht”.

The 2005 LAP zoned approximately 180 hectares for a mixture of land uses (Appendix 2); this included lands which were already developed and green-field sites. The plan boundary for the proposed LAP 2011-2017 is the same as that of the current 2005 LAP. The Draft LAP aims to keep the plan area congruent with the requirements of Tuam and to follow natural and physical boundaries wherever appropriate in order to provide for the foreseeable needs of the town in the lifetime of the plan and to avoid adverse and unsustainable growth.

5.1.2 The degree to which the plan influences other plans, including those in a hierarchy

The Draft LAP provides a land use framework for the sustainable development of Tuam and will not affect other plans. The policies and objectives of the LAP will be set within the context of the Galway County Council CDP (2009-2015) in accordance with Section 19 (2) of the Planning and Development Acts (2000-2007).

5.1.3 The relevance of the plan for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development.

The Draft Tuam LAP will be made pursuant to the provisions of the Planning and Development Acts 2000-2006 Sections 18-20. As such the plan will seek to achieve development in a sustainable manner, through the protection and enhancement of its natural, architectural and archaeological heritage. In its preparation, it will also have regard to other relevant planning and environmental policy and legislation including European Union directive, ministerial guidelines and other national, regional and county plans and policies.

5.2 Environmental problems relevant to the plan

There are no strategically significant environmental problems identified in relation to the Draft LAP. An overview of environmental issues pertaining to Tuam is detailed below. For each issue, the relevant policies and/or objectives from the Draft Tuam LAP have been included.

5.2.1 Natural Heritage

This section highlights proposed zones within the draft LAP that have could potentially have a negative impact on the cSAC and its qualifying interests and also highlights the appropriate measures to avoid or mitigate against such negative impacts.

Firstly, the Draft LAP includes four Industrial Zones (see Appendix 1, Zone I), three of which are located on the North West boundary of the plan area in close proximity to the River Clare at the following locations:

- Approximately 0.7km upstream of Weir Bridge on the east of the River Clare
- Immediately downstream of the Weir Bridge on east of the River Clare where the Industrial Zone extends to the cSAC boundary as there is no Environmental Management Area present
- Immediately downstream of the Weir Bridge on the west of the River Clare. This area is not within the cSAC boundary and has an Environmental Management Area incorporated between the Industrial Zone and the River Clare.

Further development within these industrial zones throughout the lifetime of the Draft LAP could potentially result in an indirect negative impact on the River Clare which is designated under the Lough Corrib cSAC – Special Area of Conservation (site code 000297) and its qualifying interests. The River Clare is also an important salmon and trout fishery.

Under Section 2.2.6.2 '*Detailed Zoning Provisions*' the proposed Industry Zone (Zone I) is defined as '*the use of land for industry/manufacturing, repairs, science and technology, warehousing, distribution, open-storage, waste material treatment and recovery and transport operating centres*'. The Draft LAP states that '*The development of inappropriate mixes of uses will not normally be encouraged*'.

Secondly, under Section 5.4.3 '*Employment and Economic Development*', objective EE10 aims to '*Facilitate the promotion and development of Competitive Sustainable Manufacturing (CSM) and including development and the implementation of the Factories of the Future Public-Private Partnership (FoF PPP) within appropriate lands*'. If such development was to occur within the Industrial Zones (Zone I) this may potentially impact the River Clare particularly downstream of the Weir Bridge, where the zoning is in close proximity to the SAC.

Thirdly, the draft LAP also includes a number of Residential Zones and of particular relevance are those residential zones which have been proposed along the River Nanny flood plain, immediately upstream of Tuam town and also along the River Clare flood plain in the North Western boundary of the LAP, upstream of Ballygaddy Bridge. Both of these residential zones have the potential to affect the cSAC by negatively impacting the River Nanny and the River Clare and their associated wildlife corridors.

The proposed Draft LAP has incorporated specific measures which allow for the protection of designated sites with respect to future development throughout the lifetime of the Draft LAP in the proposed zones highlighted above. These policies and objectives are outlined below and are considered quite adequate in order to protect the River Nanny and the designated River Clare.

Of particular relevance is the proposed creation of a 'buffer zone' along the River Clare and the River Nanny riparian corridor. The Draft LAP states under Section 2.2.6.2 that '*zoning shall establish an 'ecological corridor' along the River Clare, comprising of the SAC designated area together with a 20m wide buffer on either side of the River Clare where appropriate within the LAP area. This zoning will limit any new development potential within*

this area and will help promote 'ecological connectivity' whilst protecting the qualifying interests of the cSAC. This buffer area is referred to as the Environmental Zone Area (EM Zone) under Section 2.2.6.2. This zone will be required between all zoned lands and the SAC where this designated conservation site and the development lands of the LAP interface. Also under Section 2.2.6.2 the Draft LAP proposes 'to include an amenity corridor of up to 20m in width where appropriate along the River Nanny and to advance a river walkway/cycleway from Curraghreen in the east towards the Weir Road Bridge in the western aspect of the LAP area'.

In addition to the buffer zones proposed above, the Draft LAP also sets out stringent policies and objectives in relation to the protection of designated sites against future development throughout the lifetime of the Draft LAP, including measures for the protection of both the River Clare and the River Nanny and these are identified below.

Under Sections 9.1.10 '*Natural Heritage & Biodiversity Policies*' and under Section 9.1.11 '*Natural Heritage & Biodiversity Objectives*' the following are included:

Policies:

NH5: Implement the EU Directives and associated national legislation and directives with regard to the protection and enhancement of the natural environment, including the Birds Directive, Habitats Directive, Wildlife Act, Flora Protection Order, Ramsar Sites, Water Framework Directive and any other directives, Acts or Policies which may be issued during the lifetime of this plan.

NH14: It is the policy of Galway County Council to implement Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive, and to subject proposed projects likely to impact on Natura 2000 or European Sites (SAC's, SPA's), whether directly (in situ), indirectly (ex-situ) or in combination with other plans or projects, to an Appropriate Assessment/Screening in order to inform decision making.

NH15: Consult with the DEHLG in relation to proposed developments within or adjoining designated conservation sites.

NH17: Maintain protect and preserve the aesthetic value of all waterways and their corridors within the Plan area from the impacts of highly visible development and also protect their water quality.

NH25: Have regard to Guidance Documents by Inland Fisheries Ireland (Regional Fisheries Boards) which promote sustainable development within and adjacent to watercourses of fisheries importance.

NH26: Have regard to Guidance Documents

- *Fishery Guidelines for Local Authority Works* (DCENR, 2008) where relevant and appropriate. See: <http://www.nrfb.ie/environment/las.htm>
- *Guidelines on the Planning, Design, Construction & Operation of Small-Scale Hydro-Electric Schemes and Fisheries* (DCENR, 2007). See: <http://www.cfb.ie/publications/hydro.htm>
- Eastern Regional Fisheries Board Guidance Notes '*Requirements for the Protection of Fisheries Habitat during Construction and Development Works at River Sites*' (Eastern Regional Fisheries Board, 2006).
See: <http://www.fishingireland.net/environment/constructionanddevelopment.htm>

Maintenance and Protection of the Inland Fisheries Resource during Road Construction and Improvement Works - Requirements of the Southern Regional Fisheries Board (Southern Regional Fisheries Board, 2007).

Objectives:

NH1: Seek to protect the Clare River (SAC), Knockavanny Turlough (pNHA) and Killower Turlough (pNHA) and any future designated sites.

NH2: Liaise with the NPWS and the OPW regarding any enhancement/maintenance works along the River Nanny and River Clare.

NH3: Encourage and support in so far as is practicable the conservation, enhancement of, and access to, the geological and geo-morphological system, sites and features in Tuam and its environs and protect them from inappropriate development that would detract from their heritage value and interpretation.

NH4: Enhance biodiversity richness by protecting all rivers/streams and water bodies within the plan area by reserving riparian zones/ecological corridors, maintaining them free from inappropriate development

NH5: Ensure a minimum setback of 10 metres is maintained in any new development proposals along the Rivers Nanny/Clare and their tributaries.

NH6: Require screening for Appropriate Assessment and/or Appropriate Assessment with all applications where it is considered that the proposed development may impact (directly or indirectly), or in combination with other projects, on a Natura 2000 designated site i.e. a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) or a Special Protection Area (SPA) to inform decision making. A Natura Impact Statement will be required with all such applications in accordance with the Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland Guidance for Planning Authorities 2009. The need for an Appropriate Assessment should be discussed with the Planning Section of the Council prior to the submission of the application. The Appropriate Assessment shall be carried out in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and with Section 18 of the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1997 and shall identify and evaluate the direct and indirect effects, which the development would be likely to have upon the designated site.

NH7: Require an ecological assessment by a suitably qualified person, to inform decision making of all proposed significant planning applications, where it is considered that the proposed development may have an adverse impact on the environment or designated site. The need for an ecological assessment should be discussed with the Planning Section prior to the submission of an application and should include consideration of impacts in relation to biodiversity, ecological linkages, water quality and drainage. The Council will generally require ecological assessments for developments proposed within a zone between the boundary of a national designated site (i.e. NHA or pNHA) to the next field boundary or to a distance of 50 meters, whichever is greater.

NH8: Have regard to the recommendations of the DEHLG and any national guidance documents that are produced during the lifetime of this Plan, with respect to potential impacts on nature conservation, when considering development applications relating to activities on and/or adjoining sites of nature conservation importance.

NH14: Have regard to the recommendations of the DEHLG and any national guidance documents, which may come about during the lifetime of this plan, with respect to potential impacts on flood plains and flood risk areas, when considering new development applications or flood prevention measures.

NH16: Ensure that proposed developments do not adversely affect groundwater resources.

NH18: New developments proposals shall be required to conform with relevant regulatory provisions for the prevention of pollution, nuisance or other environmental effects likely to affect the status of the Natura 2000 site. i.e. Lough Corrib cSAC and/or protected habitats/protected species. If successful in receiving planning permission, development may be subject to stringent mitigation measures to protect the qualifying interests/status of the cSAC and to safeguard the protected habitats/protected species.

Other policies and objectives include Section 3.1.2 and 3.1.3 'Water Services'.

Policy:

WS3: Ensure that new developments are properly serviced with water, wastewater and surface water drainage infrastructure.

Objectives:

WS3, WS4 and WS6: These aim to ensure any proposed developments outside the public wastewater system are assessed in terms of site suitability, support the protection of groundwater and ensures that any development does not have an unacceptable impact on groundwater respectively

The policies and objectives proposed in the Draft LAP are considered to be sufficient to allow for the protection of the cSAC and its qualifying interests. The proposed increased in residential and industrial activity along the River Clare is not considered likely to result in

significant environmental effects on cSAC throughout the lifetime of the Draft LAP as long as due cognisance is given to the above measures.

On review of the Draft Tuam LAP, it is recommended that reference should be made to the National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) under Section 9.1.9.2 '*Natural Heritage & Biodiversity Policies*' under Policy NH19 as this centre and its database could be used as an invaluable tool throughout the lifetime of the Draft LAP, as it provides high quality information on all aspects of biodiversity and can improve decision making on various projects and developments throughout the lifetime of the plan, where ecological constraints are identifiable for the Tuam area.

The policy NH19 should be re-worded as follows "*Seek to identify, create and develop opportunities for the enhancement of natural heritage and biodiversity within the Tuam LAP area and have cognisance to the National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC) where high quality information on all aspects of biodiversity can be obtained*".

Recognition has been made in the Draft LAP as to the fisheries value of the River Clare and River Nanny under Section 9.1.4 'Ecological Networks'; however, it would also be recommended to incorporate the following guidance documents from the Regional Fishery Boards into the policies Section of 9.1.9.2 '*Natural Heritage & Biodiversity Policies*' as an additional policy NH24:

- *Fishery Guidelines for Local Authority Works* (DCENR, 2008) where relevant and appropriate. See: <http://www.nrfb.ie/environment/las.htm>
- *Guidelines on the Planning, Design, Construction & Operation of Small-Scale Hydro-Electric Schemes and Fisheries* (DCENR, 2007). See: <http://www.cfb.ie/publications/hydro.htm>
- Eastern Regional Fisheries Board Guidance Notes '*Requirements for the Protection of Fisheries Habitat during Construction and Development Works at River Sites*' (Eastern Regional Fisheries Board, 2006). See: <http://www.fishingireland.net/environment/constructionanddevelopment.htm>
- *Maintenance and Protection of the Inland Fisheries Resource during Road Construction and Improvement Works - Requirements of the Southern Regional Fisheries Board* (Southern Regional Fisheries Board, 2007).

It is recommended that the additional policy NH24 is read as follows: "*Have regard to Guidance Documents by Inland Fisheries Ireland (Regional Fisheries Boards) which promote sustainable development within and adjacent to watercourses of fisheries importance*".

The above guidelines provide for additional protection of the Rivers Clare and Nanny and their associated protected species against future development throughout the lifetime of the Draft LAP.

5.2.2 Flood Risk Assessment and Management

A review of the existing OPW Flood Maps and local information was carried out to identify if there are any flooding or surface water management issues in the plan area which may need further investigation. The draft LAP contains an Open Space, Amenity, Green Network & Flood Map located in Appendix 7. According to the OPW, recurring flood events and flood points have been recorded within the LAP boundary at the following areas:

- West of Tuam town a recurring flood point occurs at Airgloony and a flood point was also recorded at the Nanny Clare Weir Bridge in 1999.
- South of Tuam town and of the River Nanny, a recurring flood point has been recorded at the Townparks and further south east at Carrownagarraun.
- North east of Tuam town another recurring flood point has been recorded in the Townparks, north of the River Nanny.

The Industrial Zones proposed along the River Clare and the Residential Zones proposed upstream of Tuam town along the River Nanny, on its tributary to the North East and along the River Clare in the extreme North Western boundary of the LAP are all susceptible to flood risk due to the location on the flood plains of both of these watercourses.

The Draft LAP has given due consideration to the recently announced national guidelines entitled '*The Planning System and Flood Risk Management: Guidelines for Planning Authorities in (2009)*'. The Draft LAP has incorporated specific measures to address flood risk and management and these include the following:

- The areas at flood risk have been identified and mapped based on available data and this has been included within the LAP in the Flood Risk Map.
- The zoning of an amenity corridor along the River Clare and River Nanny, generally with a width of at least 20m outside the built envelope of the town and a narrower width within the built envelope of the town to reflect the existing river channels running through the town centre.
- No new zonings are included in the plan.
- A presumption against the development of lands identified as flood risk in the flood risk map unless and until it can be shown that development can take place through a full flood risk assessment.
- The inclusion of policies and objectives within the LAP to ensure that new development generally avoids areas of flood risk and that where there is a strategic case for allowing development in such areas, that these proposals be subject to the '**justification and sequential tests**' in the Flood Risk Management Guidelines and assessed to ensure that flood risk can be reduced and mitigated as appropriate.

Mitigation measures identified in the Draft Tuam LAP which address flood risk and ensure that risk can be avoided, reduced and mitigated against in accordance with the Flood Risk Management Guidelines are outlined below:

Section 3.2.2 '*Surface Water and Flooding*

Policies:

SW1: Support the provision of adequate surface water drainage infrastructure, promote the use of a sustainable drainage system (SuDS) approach and techniques and manage flood risk through the protection of natural drainage systems, the appropriate location and design of different types of development and the incorporation of flood risk assessments and works where necessary.

SW2: Support the implementation of the legislative requirements, policy guidance and development standards relevant to surface water drainage and flood risk management in carrying out County Council functions.

SW3: Protect, preserve and support the establishment of areas providing natural drainage, stormwater retention and water-retaining vegetation to help reduce the occurrence and extent of flooding.

SW4: Liaise and co-operate with the OPW in addressing flood risk, implementing the EU Flood Risk Directive (2007/60/EC) and developing any Catchment-based Flood Risk Management Plan (CFRAM) where these have relevance for Tuam. Have due regard to any relevant recommendations and outputs arising from the CFRAM.

SW5: Prepare a strategic flood risk assessment and stormwater management plan/ measures for Tuam within the lifetime of this LAP, as resources permit and more detailed information becomes available from the OPW and any other relevant sources. This shall incorporate measures to address the likely increased risk of flooding within the LAP area due to climate change.

SW6: Improve flood defences within the Tuam LAP area in conjunction with the OPW, if required

Section 3.2.3 'Surface Water and Flooding'

Objectives:

SW1: Ensure that the provisions of the DEHLG/OPW publication 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management: Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2009' are implemented in respect of the Council's functions, where relevant, including in the assessment of planning applications. Under this objective any proposed developments should be subjected to the 'justification and sequential test' as set out under the Flood Risk Guidelines.

SW2: Protect and maintain, where feasible, undeveloped riparian strips and natural floodplains along the Rivers Clare and Nanny and their tributaries, where appropriate.

SW3: Prevent the curtailment of natural drainage systems and in the case of development works, require the provision of acceptable mitigation measures in order to minimise the risk of flooding and negative impacts to water quality (run-off, erosion and sedimentation).

SW4: Ensure that development will only be authorised where it can be demonstrated that it does not significantly reduce, either individually or cumulatively, the flood storage capacity of the River Nanny, River Clare, their tributaries and all associated floodplains, or compromise safety standards.

SW5: Require all development proposals seeking to locate in an area, which the Planning Authority considers to be at potential risk from flooding, to adopt a Sequential Approach and Justification Test, as set out in the DEHLG publication 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management: Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2009' and include a Flood Risk Assessment and proposals for the sustainable storage or attenuation of runoff/discharges with any planning application.

SW7: Provide for the protection, management and as appropriate, enhancement of existing wetland habitats where flood protection/management measures are necessary.

Section 9.1.9.3 'Natural Heritage & Biodiversity' objectives

SW8: Ensure that screening for EIS/EIA, and full EIS/EIA where necessary, is an integral part of all planning applications in areas at risk of flooding.

Section 9.1.11 'Natural Heritage & Biodiversity'

Objectives:

NH2: Liaise with the NPWS and the OPW regarding any enhancement/ maintenance works along the River Nanny and River Clare.

NH5: Ensure a minimum setback of 10 metres is maintained in any new development proposals along the Rivers Nanny/Clare and their tributaries.

NH13: Ensure that where flood alleviation works take place the natural heritage and landscape character of rivers, streams and watercourses are protected and enhanced to the greatest extent possible.

NH14: Have regard to the recommendations of the DEHLG and any national guidance documents, which may come about during the lifetime of this plan, with respect to potential impacts on flood plains and flood risk areas, when considering new development applications or flood prevention measures.

NH17: Protect the River Clare/Nanny and associated floodplain(s), wetlands and natural drainage courses for reasons of flood control, and for reasons of biodiversity, natural heritage tourism/angling.

The policies, objectives and the specific measures outlined in the Draft LAP are in line with that of the Flood Risk Management and Assessment Objectives set out in the GCDP. The Flood Risk Management Guidelines recommend a Sequential Approach for taking account of flood risk. The sequential approach works by guiding development away from areas that have been identified through a flood risk assessment as being at risk from flooding.

According to the map '3A Open Space' the proposed industrial zones along the River Clare and the residential zones proposed along the River Nanny, its tributary to the North East and along the River Clare at the extreme north western boundary are all known flood areas. It is recommended that throughout the lifetime of the proposed Draft LAP that strict cognisance be made to objective SW1 under Section 3.2.3 'Surface Water and Flooding' which has been outlined above. Under this objective any proposed developments should be subjected to the

'justification and sequential test'. It is proposed that on failing this test, the zone in which the proposed development is located be re-zoned to a use more appropriate to its status.

5.2.3 Achievement of Water Framework Directive Targets by 2015

The Water Framework Directive establishes a framework for the protection of all waters including rivers, lakes, estuaries, coastal waters, groundwater, canals and other artificial bodies for the benefit of everyone. Good ecological and chemical status for all waters must be achieved by 2015 with no deterioration in existing status in the meantime. The Western Draft River Basin District Management Plan was published in December 2008.

The LAP area is located within the Corrib catchment (HA 30). The River Nanny flows through the town of Tuam from east to west and is a tributary of the River Clare. The River Clare is a tributary of Lough Corrib, a designated cSAC. The River Nanny (EPA code 30/N/01) was rated as Q3 'moderately polluted' in 2009 downstream of Tuam town at station 0300 which is located upstream of Weir Bridge. This corresponds to a WFD status of 'moderate'. The Western RBD Management Plan requires that the river achieves good status by 2021.

The River Clare (EPA code 30/C/01) was rated as Q4 'unpolluted' in 2009 at station 0500 which is located at Ballygaddy Bridge. This is located approximately 1km upstream of the River Nanny confluence and north of Tuam town. In the same period, the River Clare was rated Q3-4 'moderately polluted' at station 0650 located 100m downstream of Weir Bridge. The corresponding WFD status is 'high' upstream of Weir Bridge and 'moderate' downstream of Weir Bridge. The Western RBD Management Plan requires that the river achieves good status downstream by 2021 with no deterioration from high status upstream.

Section 3.1.2 and 3.1.3 under 'Water Services' sets out policies and objectives in relation to the Water Framework Directive.

Policy:

WS4: Protect and improve water quality, in conjunction with other agencies and stakeholders, in accordance with the EU Water Framework Directive and the Western River Basin District Management Plan.

Objective:

WS8: Support the implementation of the relevant recommendations and measures as outlined in the Western River Basin District Management Plan

In addition Section 9.1.10 under '*Natural Heritage & Biodiversity Policies*'

Policy:

NH5: Implement the EU Directives and associated national legislation and directives with regard to the protection and enhancement of the natural environment, including the Birds Directive, Habitats Directive, Wildlife Act, Flora Protection Order, Ramsar Sites Water Framework Directive and any other directives, Acts or Policies which may be issued during the lifetime of this plan.

Policies which relate to water quality in general are also set out in Section 3.1.2 'Water Services':

Policy:

WS9: Implement and enforce, where appropriate, relevant national legislation in relation to water services and quality, including the provisions of Water Pollution Legislation, the European Communities (Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters) Regulations 2009, the European Communities (Drinking Water) (No. 2) Regulations 2007.

The above policies and objectives are likely to protect the high status waters within the Tuam LAP boundary and ensure no further deterioration of water quality in areas of moderate status. Objective WS8 aims to improve the water quality of the River Clare downstream of Weir Bridge to 'at least' good status by 2015. It is therefore considered that the Tuam LAP will not have significant negative effects on the water quality in the area. It is likely that through the implementation of the above measures that the Tuam LAP will have a positive effect on water quality in the Tuam area throughout the lifetime of the draft LAP.

5.2.4 Groundwater Protection

According to the Western River Basin District – Draft River Basin Management Plan, the area underlying Tuam has been assigned poor status. The objective of the WRBD Management Plan is to 'improve chemical quality and quantity where appropriate to achieve good status' and 'reverse increasing pollution trends' by 2015.

According to the Tuam LAP, the Tuam area is located above an aquifer of medium vulnerability. Areas to the northwest, south and south east of the River Nanny are low to medium vulnerability and an area to the north east being of high vulnerability. It is anticipated that the delivery of the Tuam Drainage Scheme will have a positive contribution to water quality status in the LAP area.

Under Section 3.1.2 'Water Services Policies' the following policies were outlined in the Draft Tuam LAP:

Policies:

WS3: Ensure that new developments are properly serviced with water, wastewater and surface water drainage infrastructure.

WS4: Protect and improve water quality, in conjunction with other agencies and stakeholders, in accordance with the EU Water Framework Directive and the Western River Basin District Management Plan.

Under Section 3.1.3 'Water Services Objectives' the following objectives were outlined in the Draft Tuam LAP:

Objectives:

WS2: Extend and improve both foul and storm water sewer collection networks in accordance with the Tuam Drainage Scheme.

WS3: Ensure that any proposed developments outside the public wastewater system are assessed in terms of site suitability and, if suitable, are serviced by an appropriate wastewater treatment system, correctly sited and designed in accordance with the EPA Wastewater Manuals and Code of Practice.

WS4: Support the protection of groundwater resources and associated habitats and species in accordance with the Groundwater Directive 2006/118/EC and by having regard to any groundwater protection schemes and groundwater protection zones data made available at the Geological Survey of Ireland.

WS6: Ensure any development that would have an unacceptable impact on the water environment, including drinking water, surface water and groundwater quality and quantity, river corridors and associated wetlands will not be permitted.

WS8: Support the implementation of the relevant recommendations and measures as outlined in the Western River Basin District Management Plan.

It is recommended to incorporate the Irish transposition of the Groundwater Directive 2006/118/EC which is the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations, 2010 (S.I. No. 9 of 2010) into Objective 'WS4' which has been outlined above. Therefore objective WS4 should read as follows:

"Support the protection of groundwater resources and associated habitats and species in accordance with the Groundwater Directive 2006/118/EC and the European Communities

Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations, 2010 (S.I. No. 9 of 2010) and have regard to any groundwater protection schemes and groundwater protection zones where data has been made available by the Geological Survey of Ireland.”

Under Section 9.1.11' *Natural Heritage & Biodiversity objectives*' the following objectives are outlined:

Objective:

NH16: Ensure that proposed developments do not adversely affect groundwater resources.

Under Section 9.4.5 Open Space, Amenity & Green Network the following policies are outlined:

Policy:

OAG5: Ensure that all areas within the floodplain of the Rivers Clare/Nanny and their tributaries are protected from inappropriate development, so as to maintain the river's natural course, surface and groundwater, associated wetlands and preserve the biodiversity, habitats and species found within this area.

According to the WRBD Management plan, the groundwater bodies underlying the eastern section of the western river basin district (from Castlebar in Co. Mayo to Gort in Co. Galway including Tuam) are currently classified as being of “poor status” and “at risk” of failing the WFD objectives by 2015. The LAP area is classified as being “at risk”.

The draft LAP requires that appropriate wastewater and surface water infrastructure accompanies any proposed development throughout the lifetime of the draft plan. The future development of Tuam is not anticipated to have an adverse negative effect on the groundwater quality of the Tuam area due to the incorporation of the above policies and objectives. It is anticipated that the Tuam LAP will actually have a positive effect on groundwater quality by having cognisance to the Groundwater Directive 2006/118/EC, the EC Environmental Objectives (Groundwater) Regulations, 2010 (S.I. No. 9 of 2010) and the requirements of the WRBD Management Plan.

The Tuam main drainage scheme commenced in April of 2010 and as outlined the implementation of this scheme is anticipated to have an overall positive effect on water status and therefore subsequently the groundwater status of the Tuam area.

5.2.5 Drinking Water Supply and Waste Water Treatment

The Galway County Council has provided Tuam with a substantial water supply from a Lough Corrib source at Luimnagh.

The following are policies and objectives outlined in Section 3.1.2 'Water Services' within the Draft LAP which relate to Drinking Water, Water supply, Water Conservation and Drainage Maintenance:

5.2.5.1 Drinking Water and Water Supply

Policies:

WS2: Continue to develop and expand, in a sustainable manner and as resources permit, the public wastewater and water supply systems for the town in order to facilitate the supply of serviced land for residential, commercial and industrial development.

WS3: Ensure that new developments are properly serviced with water, wastewater and surface water drainage infrastructure.

WS5: Achieve and maintain required standards for drinking water in Tuam

WS6: Encourage and support measures that promote water conservation and reduce water wastage.

WS7: Continue to improve and upgrade water supplies within the LAP area and implement as appropriate the relevant recommendations set out in The Provision and Quality of Drinking Water in Ireland for the Years 2007-2008 (Office of Environment Enforcement – EPA, 2009).

WS8: Promote and make available to the public the EPA Advice Notes which cover lead compliance, e-coli in drinking water, disinfection by-products in drinking water, turbidity in drinking water and restoring public water supplies affected by flooding.

WS9: Implement and enforce, where appropriate, relevant national legislation in relation to water services and quality, including the provisions of Water Pollution Legislation, the European Communities (Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters) Regulations 2009, the European Communities (Drinking Water) (No. 2) Regulations 2007.

Objectives:

WS1: Provide and/or facilitate where appropriate the refurbishment and or upgrading of water and wastewater treatment schemes.

WS2: Extend and improve both foul and storm water sewer collection networks in accordance with the Tuam Drainage Scheme.

WS6: Ensure any development that would have an unacceptable impact on the water environment, including drinking water, surface water and groundwater quality and quantity, river corridors and associated wetlands will not be permitted.

WS7: Implement the Water Services Investment Programme 2007-2009, and any subsequent Water Service Investment Programme of works relating to Tuam town over the lifetime of the Tuam LAP.

WS9: Require, where it is deemed necessary, contributions from developers for the upgrading of the water supply and/or wastewater disposal infrastructure to accommodate their developments.

As outlined above in Section 4, the draft Regional Planning Guidelines population projections for Tuam to 2022 indicate that the total population for Tuam will grow from 6,885 in 2006 to 9,500 persons by 2022.

The current water supply servicing Tuam town has a 10,000m³/day spare capacity at present. In addition the Tuam Drainage Scheme which commenced in April 2010 aims to significantly enhance water infrastructure and support the growth and development of Tuam. The Scheme will replace the existing water mains network and aims to reduce leakage and increase security of water supply to Tuam town. Therefore it is anticipated that the water supply to Tuam town will be improved throughout the lifetime of the draft LAP. It is therefore considered that increased water demand is not considered likely to result in significant negative environmental effects.

5.2.5.2 Waste Water Treatment

The existing Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) at Tuam discharges to the River Clare in the townland of Cloonfush, 0.5km northwest of the treatment plant. The design criterion includes secondary and tertiary treatment. In June of 2009, McCarthy Keville O' Sullivan Ltd undertook an Appropriate Assessment of Tuam WWTP Discharge licence to determine any impacts on the River Clare.

It was concluded that there were no significant impacts on water quality of the River Clare as a result of the operation of Tuam WWTP either in its own capacity or in combination with the anticipated operation of proposed WWTPs at Milltown and Claregalway (McCarthy Keville O'Sullivan Ltd, 2009). On inspection of the report by Hydro-G, Hydrological and Hydrogeological Consultants (2008), it was found that the results (outlined in Table 3 below) of the existing treated effluent discharged from the WWTP exceeded the European Communities Environmental Objectives (Surface Waters) Regulations, 2009 (S.I. No. 272 of 2009). Total Ammonia (mg N/l) was above the 'good status' limit of ≤ 0.140 at 95%ile flows and ortho-phosphate also exceeded the 'good' status limit of ≤ 0.075 at 95%ile flows. However, it is noted that the background concentration of ortho-phosphate in the River Clare was slightly elevated at 0.031mg/l but remained with the 'good' status limit at mean flows under the regulations outlined above. The nearest EPA monitoring station to the Tuam WWTP discharge

point is at Curraghmore Bridge (station 1300). This station was rated Q4-5 in 2009. However it should be noted that this station is approximately 5km downstream of the discharge point where the watercourse upstream is sluggish with significant macrophyte growth. The draft LAP outlines a specific objective under Section 3.1.3 'Water Services' which aims to 'Provide and/or facilitate where appropriate the refurbishment and or upgrading of water and wastewater treatment schemes'. It is recommended that specific cognisance be made to this objective throughout the lifetime of the draft LAP in order to protect the River Clare and its qualifying interests.

Table 3: Assimilative capacity simulation results for the Clare River resulting from the existing treated effluent discharge from WWTP at Tuam (discharge volume of 4470 m³/day) (adopted Hydro-G, 2008).

Parameter	Discharge Conc. (mg/l)	Upstream River conc. Median 2008 (mg/l)	Simulated concentration Clare River Mean flow 10.63 (m ³ /day)	Simulated concentration Clare river 95%tile flow 1.34 (m ³ /day)	Simulated concentration Clare river 99%tile flow 0.77 (m ³ /day)	Actual downstream river Conc. Median 2008 (mg/l)
MRP (mg p/l)	1.7	0.031	0.039	0.09	0.136	0.034
BOD	17	0.8	0.88	1.4	1.82	0.8
NH ₄ -N	10	0.025	0.073	0.4	0.65	0.03

Other policies and objectives outlined in Section 3.1.2 'Water Services Policies' and Section 3.1.3 'Water Services Objectives' within the Draft LAP which relate to Wastewater Treatment and Disposal are as follows:

Policies:

WS1: Ensure that the provision of water and wastewater treatment facilities is undertaken in accordance with EU policies and Directives, relevant national legislation and national/regional policies and guidelines and delivered through the Water Services Investment Programme.

WS2: Continue to develop and expand, in a sustainable manner and as resources permit, the public wastewater and water supply systems for the town in order to facilitate the supply of serviced land for residential, commercial and industrial development.

Objectives:

WS3: Ensure that any proposed developments outside the public wastewater system are assessed in terms of site suitability and, if suitable, are serviced by an appropriate wastewater treatment system, correctly sited, installed and maintained in accordance with the EPA Wastewater Manuals and Code of Practice.

WS5: Provide and protect a 100m buffer around the Wastewater Treatment Plant site and appropriate buffer zones around any other treatment plant.

WS9: Require, where it is deemed necessary, contributions from developers for the upgrading of the water supply and/or wastewater disposal infrastructure to accommodate their developments.

According to the LAP, Tuam WWTP has a spare capacity of 2,000 Population Equivalent (PE) and it is deemed likely that the separation of the surface water and the foul network will result in an increased PE capacity. The Main Drainage Scheme that has recently commenced will also ensure that the wastewater infrastructure will be significantly enhanced. A 100m buffer is also in place around the WWTP site. In addition, a new NUI Galway Research facility has been officially opened on the site of the Tuam Waste Water Treatment Plant and this includes a full-scale test-bed for novel waste water and water treatment technologies. This facility uses influent taken from Tuam town waste water to be used in research to evaluate novel technologies under realistic conditions. The effluent from the research facility is being returned to the main Tuam WWTP ensuring there is no risk to the environment from the development work. The draft LAP for Tuam is not considered likely to result in significant negative environmental effects instead it is anticipated that positive effects may occur due to the development of new technologies and tighter control measures on discharge from the treatment plant which in turn could act positively on the water quality of the River Clare.

5.2.6 Roads and Traffic

The Draft LAP includes policies to develop a number road schemes within the Tuam area which include the following:

- **M18/M17 Gort to Tuam (Motorway):** Work on the proposed M17 from Gort to the south of Tuam is due to commence in November 2010 with an anticipated completion date in 2014. It is proposed to identify and protect the route of this road within the area covered by this plan. A building set back of 90m minimum shall be required on each side of the route edge for the M17 Gort to Tuam route in areas of >50Kph.
- **N17 Tuam Bypass (Type 2 Dual Carriageway):** The provision of the N17 Tuam Bypass in Tuam is supported by the Roads and Transportation Objectives of the Galway County Development Plan 2009-2015. It is proposed to identify and protect the route of this road within the area covered by this plan. A building set back of 35m minimum shall be required on each side of the route edge for the N17 Tuam Bypass route in areas >50Kph.
- **N17 Tuam Claremorris (National Route):** Galway County Council is currently at Emerging Preferred Route Stage for a new national primary route between Tuam and Claremorris as part of the Atlantic Corridor. It is proposed to protect the route of this road within the area covered by this plan. The Emerging Preferred Route corridor shall be reserved free of development until such time as the road is completed, at which stage a minimum building set back of 35m on either side of the road shall apply.
- **Tuam proposed Inner Relief Roads/Streets (Local Routes):** The radial nature of the street pattern and its focus on narrow streets leading to the town square has lead to a history of traffic congestion. In order to address this, a number of schemes have been proposed including the delivery of the Inner Relief Roads/Streets within Tuam town which have been adopted under Part 8 planning process (LA 08/08). The Tuam Relief Roads/Streets included in the 3 Year Roads Capital Programme and was adopted in the Galway County Council Budget 2008. This plan shall seek to prohibit development on lands which are reserved for the provision of the Inner Relief Road/Streets where development would affect the route, line, level or layout of the new roads.
 - A building set back of 25m minimum shall be required on each side of the route edge for the Inner Relief Roads/Streets in areas of >50Kph.
 - No specified minimum building set back shall be required on the Inner Relief Road/Streets in areas of 50kph or less, in order to allow for a more flexible, context sensitive approach that will enable the development of urban streetscapes at appropriate locations.

The Draft LAP also outlines objectives to improve bridges, culverts and roadside drainage and also aims to facilitate the NRA and OPW to improve bridges, culverts and drainage works. The road schemes outlined above in addition to the proposed OPW and NRA works could potentially negatively affect the River Nanny and subsequently the River Clare and their associated wildlife corridors.

Under Section 9.1.10 '*Natural Heritage & Biodiversity Policies*' and under Section 9.1.11 '*Natural Heritage & Biodiversity Objectives*' the Draft LAP outlines a number of policies and objectives which aim to ensure mitigation against such impacts. These have been included in the plan as follows:

Policies:

NH5: Implement the EU Directives and associated national legislation and directives with regard to the protection and enhancement of the natural environment, including the Birds Directive, Habitats Directive, Wildlife Act, Flora Protection Order, Ramsar Sites, Water Framework Directive and any other directives, Acts or Policies which may be issued during the lifetime of this plan

NH13: Seek to prevent and promote measures to prevent the spread of invasive and alien invasive species. Require a landscaping plan to be produced for developments near water bodies and ensure that such plans do not include alien invasive species.

NH14: It is the policy of Galway County Council to implement Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive, and to subject proposed projects likely to impact on Natura 2000 or European Sites (SAC's, SPA's), whether directly (in situ), indirectly (ex-situ) or in combination with other plans or projects, to an Appropriate Assessment/Screening in order to inform decision making.

NH15: Consult with the DEHLG in relation to proposed developments within or adjoining designated conservation sites.

NH17: Maintain protect and preserve the aesthetic value of all waterways and their corridors within the Plan area from the impacts of highly visible development and also protect their water quality.

Objectives:

NH1: Seek to protect the Clare River (SAC), Knockavanny Turlough (pNHA) and Killower Turlough (pNHA) and any future designated sites.

NH2: Liaise with the NPWS and the OPW regarding any enhancement/ maintenance works along the River Nanny and River Clare.

NH4: Enhance biodiversity richness by protecting all rivers/streams and water bodies within the plan area by reserving riparian zones/ecological corridors, maintaining them free from inappropriate development

NH5: Ensure a minimum setback of 10 metres is maintained in any new development proposals along the Rivers Nanny/Clare and their tributaries.

NH6: Require screening for Appropriate Assessment and/or Appropriate Assessment with all applications where it is considered that the proposed development may impact (directly or indirectly), or in combination with other projects, on a Natura 2000 designated site i.e. a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) or a Special Protection Area (SPA) to inform decision making. A Natura Impact Statement will be required with all such applications in accordance with the Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland Guidance for Planning Authorities 2009. The need for an Appropriate Assessment should be discussed with the Planning Section of the Council prior to the submission of the application. The Appropriate Assessment shall be carried out in accordance with Article 6 of the Habitats Directive and with Section 18 of the European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1997 and shall identify and evaluate the direct and indirect effects, which the development would be likely to have upon the designated site.

NH7: Require an ecological assessment by a suitably qualified person, to inform decision making of all proposed significant planning applications, where it is considered that the proposed development may have an adverse impact on the environment or designated site. The need for an ecological assessment should be discussed with the Planning Section prior to the submission of an application and should include consideration of impacts in relation to biodiversity, ecological linkages, water quality and drainage. The Council will generally require ecological assessments for developments proposed within a zone between the boundary of a national designated site (i.e. NHA or pNHA) to the next field boundary or to a distance of 50 meters, whichever is greater.

NH8: Have regard to the recommendations of the DEHLG and any national guidance documents that are produced during the lifetime of this Plan, with respect to potential impacts on nature conservation, when considering development applications relating to activities on and/or adjoining sites of nature conservation importance.

NH9: Minimise disturbance to wildlife, including fish, birds and bats, by reducing external lighting, and prevent spotlighting of trees, rivers, or other features of ecological significance.

The anticipated growth of Tuam town over the next 6 years will inevitably increase traffic volumes as a result of the proposed development with the LAP boundary. The new road networks outlined above will contribute positively to the Tuam LAP as it is anticipated to alleviate the traffic congestion problem that already exists in Tuam town. It is anticipated that with due cognisance to the above measures throughout the lifetime of the draft LAP, that significant environmental effects on designated watercourses and areas are not likely to occur during the development of the road schemes outlined and the proposed bridge repair works.

5.2.7 Landscape and Visual Amenities

Under the Draft LAP, a number of projects for the future development of the town are being proposed which includes amongst other a high speed broadband facility. Tuam has been selected as a project town with a 3 year lead time for Zapa Technology - Near Field Communication which is a short range high frequency communication technology which enables exchange of data between devices. This type of development could result in a negative impact on the surrounding landscape by means of increased mast proliferation.

The following avoidance/mitigations measures have been proposed under Section 3.5.2 'Information and Communication Technology Polices' and under Section 3.5.3 "Information and Communication Technology Objectives".

Policies:

IT2: Ensure that developers of masts facilitate the co-location of antennae with other operators in order to avoid an unnecessary proliferation of masts. Where this is not possible, operators will be encouraged to co-locate so that masts and antennae may be clustered.

Objective:

IT2: Have regard to the following in considering proposals for the development of telecommunications masts, antennae and ancillary equipment:

- a) The visual impact of the proposed equipment on the natural, built and historic environment;
- b) The removal or modification of features of architectural importance;
- c) The impact any such development may have on protected structures or their setting;
- d) The potential for co-location of equipment on existing masts.
- e) The DEHLG publication entitled "Guidelines for Planning Authorities" (July 1996), or any superseding version of this document over the lifetime of the LAP.

IT4: Ensure, by way of planning condition, that telecommunications infrastructure is adequately screened, integrated and/or landscaped, so as to minimise adverse visual impacts on the environment where practicable.

The co-location of antennae and the adequate screening of telecommunication infrastructure are deemed appropriate to mitigate against adverse environmental impacts on the landscape during the six years of the draft LAP. Therefore, it is considered that any proposed development that may occur throughout the lifetime of the draft LAP will not result in any significant environmental effects in terms of landscape and visual amenities.

5.2.8 Archaeological Heritage

The archaeological heritage of Tuam includes structures, constructions, group's of buildings, developed sites, all recorded monuments as well as their contexts. It also includes movable objects, situated both on land and underwater. These are protected under the National Monuments Acts 1930-2004 and under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994. The Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government is responsible for the protection of our archaeological heritage, including the licensing of archaeological excavations under the National Monuments Acts 1930-2004. Tuam town is classified as a monastic town and is a recorded monument (GA029:199). The town has developed a special historical archaeological interest especially with regard to its medieval importance and the fact that it is a strategically important ecclesiastical centre. The Draft LAP includes a 'Sites and Monuments' map which incorporates a Zone of Archaeological Protection (ZAP) around archaeological sites where there is possibility of further archaeological remains. In advance of any new development on a site of archaeological significance or within a ZAP there is a requirement for consultation with the Monument Service of the DEHLG. Therefore, it is considered that proposed development will not result in any significant environmental effects in terms of archaeological heritage.

5.2.9 Human Health

Human health has the potential to be impacted upon by environmental vectors including water, soil and air. Hazards or nuisances to human health can arise as a result of exposure to these vectors arising from incompatible adjacent land uses. The EPA plays a health protection role by licensing large scale/complex industrial activities and all waste activities to prevent or reduce emissions to air, water and land. There are currently no IPPC licensed facilities with the Tuam LAP boundary which could cause emissions to air, land or water problems.

The EPA has invested heavily in improving drinking water. The EPA highlight that a primary cause of outdoor air pollution is now motor vehicle emissions and that increased development brings intensified impacts on the environment and subsequently impacts on human health.

The delivery of the Tuam LAP is anticipated to improve both air quality and noise quality by delivery of the Tuam N17 Bypass, through the review of the Tuam Traffic Management Plan, the introduction of proposed pedestrianisation of the Town Centre and the re-opening of the Western Rail Corridor to Tuam and through implementation of the following policies and objectives:

Under Section 9.3.2 and 9.3.3 'Air Quality and Noise' the following policies and objectives aim to improve the living environment of Tuam through protecting air quality and reducing noise disturbance.

Policies:

NH29: Maintain good air quality and acceptable noise levels within the town.

NH30: Implement the provisions of National legislation and EU Directives on air and noise pollution in conjunction with other agencies as appropriate.

NH31: Facilitate the minimization of emissions of greenhouse gases to the air in order to contribute to a reduction and avoidance of human induced climate change in accordance with the Kyoto Protocol, any subsequent international agreements, and the National Climate Change Strategy.

NH32: Support any initiatives taken to provide for more sustainable forms of energy use, including the implementation the provisions of the Government's Energy White Paper 'Delivering a Sustainable Energy Future for Ireland' The Energy Policy Framework 2007-2020 (DCMNR, 2007), and any other document that may supersede it during the lifetime of the Plan.

NH33: Protect and enhance the natural heritage of the town, in particular trees and other vegetation, as a means of air purification, the filtering of suspended particles and the improvement of the town's micro-climate.

NH35: Support public transport and non-motorised transportation as a key measure to reduce locally generated air pollutants.

Objectives:

NH26: Ensure that all significant development proposals comply with UK standard BS5228:1997 and to the EPA Draft Guidance notes on limiting noise emissions. Condition planning applications for construction works to be limited to between 8.30 and 18.00 Monday–Saturday and by any other methods as deemed appropriate.

NH27: Encourage landscaping and tree planting as a means of air purification, the filtering of suspended particles and the improvement of the town's micro-climate

Under Section 3.1.2 'Water Services' policies and Section 3.1.3 'Water Services' objectives the following aim to protect water quality:

Policies:

WS3: Ensure that new developments are properly serviced with water, wastewater and surface water drainage infrastructure.

WS7: Continue to improve and upgrade water supplies within the LAP area and implement as appropriate the relevant recommendations set out in The Provision and Quality of Drinking Water in Ireland for the Years 2007-2008 (Office of Environment Enforcement – EPA, 2009).

WS9: Implement and enforce, where appropriate, relevant national legislation in relation to water services and quality, including the provisions of Water Pollution Legislation, the European Communities (Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters) Regulations 2009, the European Communities (Drinking Water) (No. 2) Regulations 2007.

Objectives:

WS6: Ensure that any development that would have an unacceptable impact on the water environment, including drinking water, surface water and groundwater quality and quantity, river corridors and associated wetlands will not be permitted.

Other measures included are outlined in Section 3.3.2 'Waste Management' policies and under Section 3.3.3 'Waste Management' objectives:

Policies:

WM2: Ensure that the following priorities are applied in relation to waste management:

- (a) To prevent and minimise the harmful effects of waste;
- (b) To encourage and support the recycling and recovery of waste including green, organic and construction and demolition waste and the recovery of energy from waste;
- (c) To ensure that waste that cannot be prevented, recycled or recovered is disposed of without causing environmental pollution;
- (d) To ensure that effect is given as far as possible to the polluter pays principle.

Objectives:

WM6: Ensure that planning proposals on contaminated lands include appropriate remediation measures.

Section 4.1.2 'Sustainable Transport' policies and Section 4.1.3 'Sustainable Transport' objectives:

Policies:

ST4: Ensure the integration of land use and transportation planning, which ensures a phased approach to new development, encourages higher densities proximate to public transport options, minimising environmental impacts and placing a strong emphasis on the use of public transportation and walking and cycling.

ST5: Promote the location of employment centres, residential developments, neighbourhood centres, local centres and community facilities in proximity to each other, in order to reduce the demand for travel and car reliance and to encourage sustainable transport modes such as public transport, walking and cycling.

ST6: Support the principles and actions set out in the Department of Transport's 'Smarter Travel A Sustainable Transport Future 2009-2020' document and any other national policy documents relating to sustainable transportation or smarter travel.

ST7: Seek to promote modal shift from the private motor vehicle towards more sustainable forms of transport through encouraging the provision of sustainable transport initiatives such as use of electric vehicles, car pooling, car sharing, park 'n stride, mobility management plans, school travel plans and safe routes to school in the plan area.

ST8: Seek to facilitate and encourage walking and cycling as a more convenient, popular and safer method of transport. Promote connectivity, permeability and accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists in all new developments and connect new developments to existing linkages as appropriate.

ST9: Encourage and support the establishment of public transport initiatives within the plan area and work with public transport providers to improve the public transport system in Tuam.

ST10: Encourage the development and early delivery of an integrated bus/rail public transportation facility within Tuam with required ancillary services.

Objectives:

ST2: Facilitate the provision of park and ride schemes at strategic locations on approach roads to Tuam and at key modal change locations.

ST3: Promote and facilitate provision of rail transport in particular Phase 2 of the WRC and make provision for the integration of rail with bus and other transport modes.

ST7: Support the recommendations as set out within The Department of Transport (DoT) document *Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future 2009-2020* and prepare a Smarter Travel Strategy for Tuam during the lifetime of the Tuam LAP, as resources permit, and seek to establish Tuam as a Smarter Travel destination.

ST8: Facilitate footpaths and cycle routes in new housing developments as well as linkages between estates, community facilities (especially schools), significant retail areas in the town and transport nodes as per the Smarter Travel agenda.

ST9: Continue to develop and extend the River Nanny pedestrian way/'greenway' from the railway line bridge in the west of the town to Parkmore in the east.

ST10: Require mobility management plans to be submitted for medium to large scale residential, commercial or industrial developments, as appropriate.

ST11: Require new developments, in particular commercial or industrial developments, to provide for sustainable travel facilities such as shower rooms and dry rooms, as appropriate.

Section 4.2.2 'Road and Traffic Management' policies further measures are incorporated to reduce emissions to air as a result of increase development:

Policies:

RT11: Promote traffic management measures to reduce the potential for traffic congestion and associated vehicular emissions within the Plan area.

Due to the lack of IPPC licensed facilities in the Tuam area and due to the incorporation of a number of substantial sustainable measures to protect human health against emissions to air, water and land, it is considered that existing and proposed development uses will not have significant environmental effects on human health throughout the lifetime of the draft LAP.

Localised environmental effects (e.g. in relation to available serviced areas and capacity, the promotion of unsustainable car travel and emissions) as a result of any proposed development carried out on the land within the proposed residential and commercial areas located on the periphery of the boundary of the draft LAP plan area will be dealt with through the assessment of individual planning applications. It is proposed that on failing such applications, the zone in which the proposed development is located be re-zoned to a use more appropriate to its status. The draft LAP contains numerous measures which protect against unsustainable travel (Section 4.1), increased emissions (Section 9.3) and promote the availability of services with increased development throughout the lifetime of the draft LAP (Sections 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.5, 4.1 and 4.2). It is therefore considered that the proposed development of lands on the periphery of the LAP boundary will not have any significant environmental effects throughout the lifetime of the draft LAP.

5.3 The relevance of the plan for implementation of European Union legislation on the environment (e.g. plans linked to waste management or water protection)

The proposed Draft Tuam LAP is considered under the overarching policies and objectives of the Galway County Development Plan (2009-2015). The Draft LAP will have no adverse effect on the implementation of the European Union legislation. The policies and objectives outlined under Water Services, Surface Water and Flooding and Natural Heritage & Biodiversity are

likely to have a positive effect on the implementation of European Union legislation on the environment.

6. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EFFECTS AND OF THE AREA LIKELY TO BE AFFECTED

6.1 The probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects

The development of land in the Draft LAP area may potentially result in minor impacts on the environment (e.g. as result of possible development on flood plains and/or proposed development near or adjacent to designated areas which could potentially affect the qualifying interests of the cSAC).

The Draft Tuam LAP proposes significant mitigation measures to avoid adverse impacts arising from further development affecting flood plains and designated conservation sites. Furthermore it includes stringent mitigation measures in relation to any proposed developments within the boundary of the LAP. It is therefore considered that there will be no significant negative effects from the implementation of the Draft LAP.

Instead, it is considered that the probability of positive effects is quite high. The land use zoning outlined in the Draft LAP could have an overall positive impact on the cSAC and other areas of natural importance by confining future development within zones designated as Industrial, Business and Enterprise, Business and Technology, Commercial/Mixed Use and Town Centre/Commercial and avoiding areas such as flood plains and areas of ecological importance. In addition, policies within the Draft Plan, with respect to the Galway County Development Plan (2009), will have a positive effect with regard to issues pertaining to sustainable development; with particular cognisance of the protection of floodplains and the provisions of the DoEHLG '*Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas*' (2009).

It is expected that these positive effects will be permanent and therefore, irreversible, until such time that any new policies and /or objectives are identified in a revised LAP and/or CDP.

6.2 The cumulative nature of effects

No cumulative negative effects are anticipated, given that the LAP will focus on the principles of sustainable development. It is considered that the cumulative effects on the environment will be positive overall; with subsequent and cumulative development within the Tuam Local Area resulting in an improved physical, natural and aesthetic environment.

6.3 The trans-boundary nature of the effects

The LAP will have no national or regional effects. However there will be a positive inter-county trans-boundary effect with the future development of the Atlantic Corridor which will run from Letterkenny to Waterford via Sligo, Tuam, Ennis, Limerick, Mallow and Cork (N15, M17, N17, M18, N18, N20 & N25). The upgrading of this route is intended to improve access to and between the major towns and cities it serves, or passes close to, and their respective hinterlands.

6.4 The risks to human health of the environment

The implementation of the Local Area Plan will not result in any risks to human health. Any future development in the area will conform to the Draft LAP, of which the fundamental essence is to create a healthy environment in which people can live, work and spend leisure time. There are no designated SEVESO sites within the proposed plan area.

6.5 The magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of population likely to be affected)

The plan boundary for the Draft LAP (2011-2017) is the same as that of the current LAP boundary. The amount of land area zoned within the LAP boundary is 1,845.57ha, of which 1267.06ha has been developed.

The population of Tuam town was 2,997 in 2006 according to the Census of Population, 2006 with the overall population (Tuam town and environs) reaching a population of 6,885. The Draft Regional Planning Guidelines population projections for Tuam to 2022 indicate that the total population for Tuam will grow from 6,885 in 2006 to 9,500 persons by 2022. This corresponds to an actual growth in population of 2,615 persons to 2022 as a minimum target.

6.6 The value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:

6.6.1 *Special natural characteristics or cultural heritage*

6.6.1.1 *EU Protected Habitats and Species*

The River Clare flows to the west of the Tuam LAP Boundary and is included within the boundary of the Draft Plan downstream of Weir Bridge. This watercourse is designed under the Lough Corrib cSAC 000297 (candidate Special Area of Conservation). A separate Appropriate Assessment Screening will be carried out in accordance with the requirements of Article 6(3) of the EU Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC). The Draft LAP includes measures which allow for the protection of designated sites and species within the plan boundary. These are set out in Section 9.1.10 and 9.1.11 under Natural Heritage & Biodiversity Policies (NH5, NH12, NH14, NH15, NH17, NH25, NH26) and Natural Heritage & Biodiversity objectives (NH1, NH4, NH5, NH6, NH7, NH8, NH9, NH13, NH14, NH16, NH17, NH18) respectively.

6.6.1.2 *Archaeological Heritage*

The Tuam LAP lands have important archaeological heritage as outlined above in Section 5.2.6. The Draft LAP includes appropriate policies and objectives which ensure that any planning applications which may have implications for archaeological heritage are subjected to archaeological testing and monitoring. These are set out in Section 8.3.2 and 8.3.3 under Archaeological Heritage Policies (AH1, AH3, AH5, and AH6) and Archaeological Heritage objectives (AH1, AH2, AH5, AH6, and AH7) respectively.

It is not anticipated that the value and vulnerability of the special natural characteristics or cultural heritage of Tuam will be negatively affected through implementation of the Plan, given their status and protection at both national level, in the GCDP and now also in the Draft LAP. The Draft LAP ensures that any development proposals in the vicinity of these areas where adverse impacts on the natural or cultural heritage would occur are avoided or mitigated against using appropriate measures.

6.6.2 *Exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values*

Environmental policies and objectives contained within the Draft LAP will ensure that the impact of any proposed developments on existing habitats, species and the value of the existing landscape are kept to a minimum. Development proposals within the Draft LAP development boundary will be subject to assessment as part of a planning application and will also be required to demonstrate compliance with the relevant legislation and environmental quality, standards and limits.

6.6.3 *Intensive Land Use*

It is not proposed that the LAP will increase the amount of residential zoned land available for development within Tuam from that zoned in the current LAP 2005-2011. It is considered

likely that the future developments resulting from the new zoning will not intensify land uses within the LAP area to a degree that would adversely impact upon the existing natural and built environment. Quality design standards and guidelines are provided in the Draft LAP with appropriate policies and objectives which seek to reduce the potentially negative impact of the increased land uses within the area.

6.7 The effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, European Union or international protection status

There are no landscapes of national, European or International protection status within or affected by the proposed LAP. There are a number of Protected Structures and Monuments in the Tuam LAP boundary which have been outlined in Map 4B 'Draft Recorded Sites & Monuments & Zone of Archaeological Importance' and in Map 5A 'Record of Protected Structures (RPS) & Architectural Conservation Area (ACA)' in the Draft LAP and included as Appendices 4 and 5 to this report.

The River Clare forms part of Lough Corrib cSAC (site code 000297).

The Draft Tuam LAP and the Galway CDP (of which the Tuam LAP forms a sub-set), recognises the importance of sites with national and European designations, and sets out policies and objectives for their protection, as detailed in preceding sections. It is not anticipated that the implementation of the Draft LAP would have any significant adverse impacts on structures, monuments or areas of recognised national, European or international protection status.

7. STATUTORY CONSULTATION

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (DoEHLG) within the National Parks and Wildlife Services (NPWS) Development Applications Unit (DAU) have been consulted by Galway County Council under Article 14A (4) and 13A (4) of the Regulations. Appendix 3 contains the letter of correspondence from the EPA and the NPWS DAU.

8. CONCLUSION OF THE SEA SCREENING DOCUMENT

It is anticipated that the Draft Tuam LAP is not likely to have significant Strategic Environmental effects on the environment. It is therefore considered that a full Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required in respect of the proposed Draft Tuam LAP. Localised environmental effects as a result of any proposed development carried out on the land within the plan area can be dealt with through the assessment of individual planning applications. The recommendations outlined in the SEA Screening have been incorporated into the Draft LAP.

Following the appropriate consultation period, the Planning Authority shall determine whether the implementation of the proposed Tuam LAP would be likely to have significant effects on the environment. Further consultation with the statutory agencies (National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Environmental Protection Agency) is recommended at the final draft stage of the LAP; prior to the approval of the Plan by Galway County Council.

REFERENCES

DCENR (2007) *Guidelines on the Planning, Design, Construction & Operation of Small-Scale Hydro-Electric Schemes and Fisheries*. See: <http://www.cfb.ie/publication/hydro.htm>

DCENR (2008) *Fishery Guidelines for Local Authority Works*.
See: <http://www.nrfb.ie/environmental/las.htm>

Eastern Regional Fisheries Board (2006) *Requirements for the Protection of Fisheries Habitat during Construction and Development Works at River Sites* Eastern Regional Fisheries Board Guidance Notes.
See: <http://www.fishingireland.net/environment/constructionanddevelopment.htm>

Government of Ireland (2004) *Implementation of SEA Directive (2001/42/EC): Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment*. Guidelines for Regional Authorities and Planning Authorities

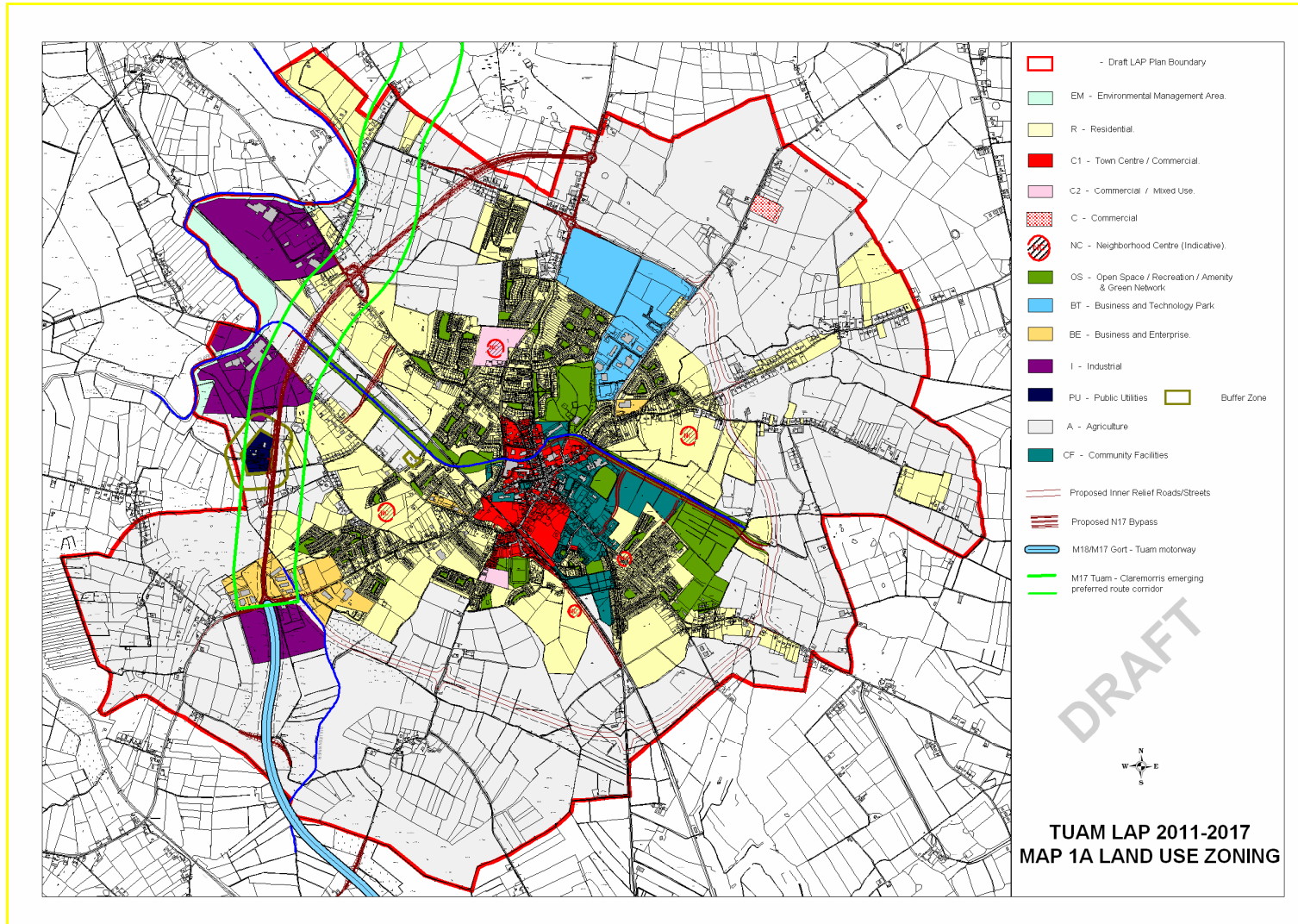
Hydro-G (2008) *Assessment of the Potential Cumulative Impact on the Clare River, Co. Galway, of Wastewater Discharges from Wastewater Treatment Plants in Milltown, Tuam and Claregalway*.

McCarthy Keville O'Sullivan Ltd. (2009) *RH Tuam WWTP Discharge Licence Report, Appropriate Assessment*, Source: Environmental Protection Agency, Licensing & Permitting, Waste Water Discharge Authorisations, *Regulation 18(3) (b) reply*
See: <http://www.epa.ie/terminalfour/wwda/wwda-view-filter.jsp?regno=D0031-01&filter=b&docfilter=go>

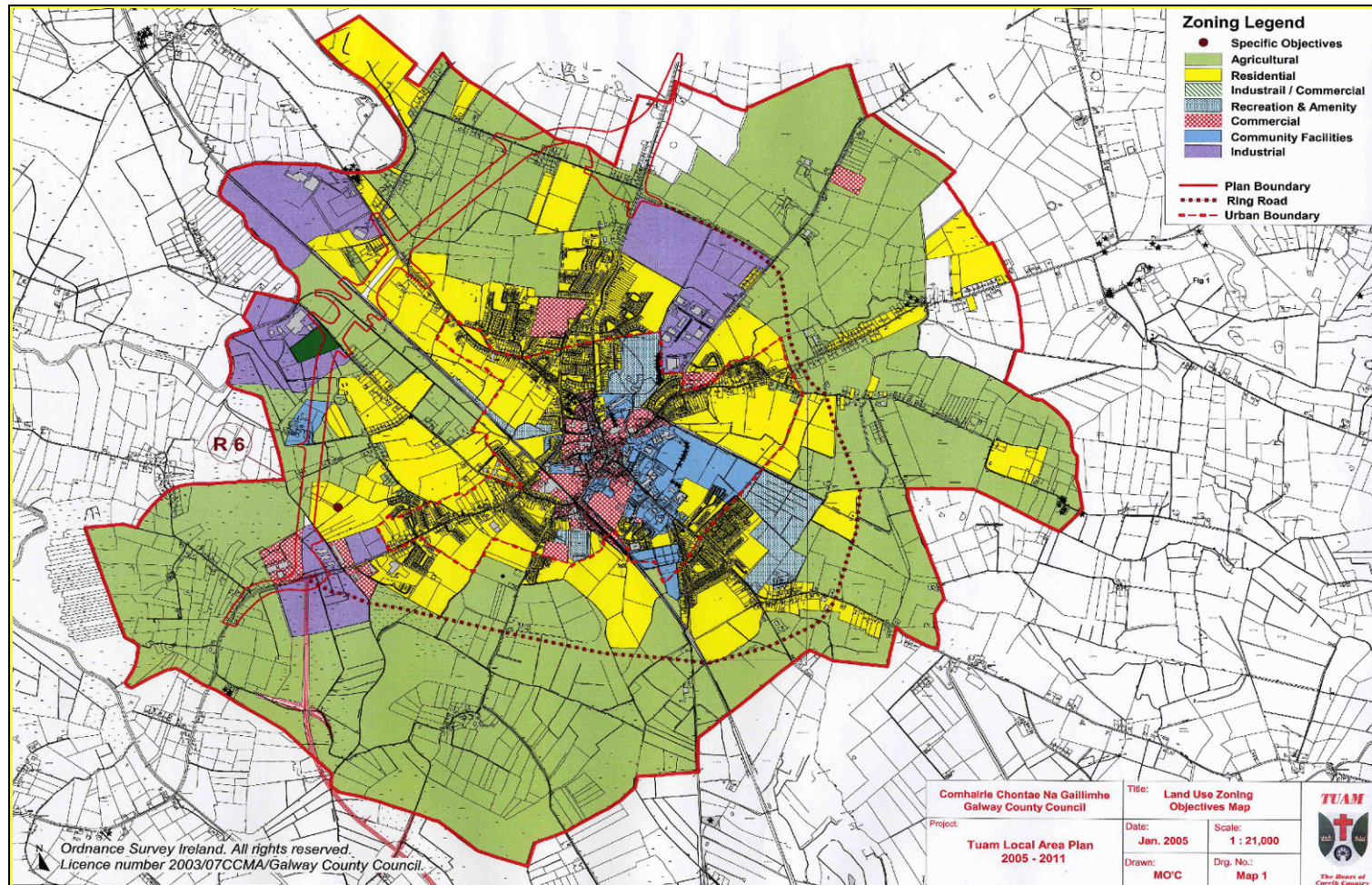
Southern Regional Fisheries Board (2007) *Maintenance and Protection of the Inland Fisheries Resource during Road Construction and Improvement Works - Requirements of the Southern Regional Fisheries Board*.
See: <http://www.srfb.ie/about/roads/html>

Western River Basin District (2008) *Water Matters "Help us plan"* Draft River Basin Management Plan

APPENDIX 1 MAP 1A LAND USE ZONING



APPENDIX 2 LAND USE ZONING MAP 2005-2011



APPENDIX 3 Statutory Consultation

A3.1 EPA Consultation (14th April 2010)

Ms Máire McGrath
Senior Staff Officer
Planning Section
Galway County Council
Aras an Chontae
Prospect Hill
Co. Galway

14th April 2010

Our Ref: 100303.1

Re. Tuam Local Area Plan Screening Report

Dear Ms McGrath,

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) acknowledges your notice, dated 02/03/10, regarding the above and notes its contents.

SEA Determination

Your position with regard to the need for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Plan is noted. During preparation of the Plan, where relevant and appropriate, the guidance document (see Appendix) should be taken into account.

Tuam is a key hub town of regional importance catering for a dispersed population of approximately 27,000 people, and with regionally important infrastructure projects such as the Western Rail Corridor to Tuam, and the Tuam By-Pass being under development during the lifetime of this Plan, it is considered that there is potential for likely significant effects in the context of the following:

- Appropriate Assessment
- Cumulative Effects / In-Combination Effects of other Plans / Programmes / Projects
- Biodiversity
- Noise and Traffic Management
- Groundwater Protection
- Flood Risk Assessment and Management
- Landscape Character Assessment
- Achievement of Water Framework Directive Targets by 2015.

It is also brought to your attention, that the regionally important hub towns, as referred to in this Plan, namely Mallow and Ennis, have undertaken a full Strategic Environmental Assessment. In this context, it is also considered there would be merits in undertaking a full SEA for Tuam also.

Amendments to the Draft Plan

You are reminded that it is a matter for Galway County Council to determine whether or not any future proposed Amendments would be likely to have significant effects on the environment. This assessment should take account of the SEA Regulations Schedule 2A Criteria (S.I. No. 436 of 2004) and should be subject to the same method of assessment as undertaken in the “environmental assessment” of the Draft Plan.

Infrastructure Planning

In proposing the Plan, and any related amendments, variations etc. of the Plan and in implementing the Plan, adequate and appropriate infrastructure should be in place, or required to be put in place, to service any development proposed and authorised during the lifetime of the particular Plan.

In particular, adequate and appropriate wastewater treatment, water supply, surface and storm water drainage, transport, waste management, community services and amenities etc. should be planned and phased to address any current problems or deficits and to reflect predicted increases in population.

Obligations with respect to National Plans and Policies and EU Environmental Legislation

You are referred to your responsibilities and obligations in accordance with all national and EU environmental legislation. It is a matter for Galway County Council to ensure that, when undertaking and fulfilling their statutory responsibilities; they are at all times compliant with the requirements of national and EU environmental legislation.

The Plan should provide for the inclusion, where appropriate, of the Policies and recommendations of the following:

- Galway County Development Plan (and associated SEA and Appropriate Assessment).
- Draft Western Regional Planning Guidelines
- Western River Basin Management Plan

Environmental Authorities

You are reminded of the requirement, where appropriate under the SEA Regulations, to give notice to the following:

- The Minister for the Environment, Heritage & Local Government where it appears to the Planning Authority that the proposed Plan might have significant effects in relation to architectural or archaeological heritage or to nature conservation, and
- The Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resource (formerly Communications, Marine and Natural Resource), where it appears to the Planning Authority that the proposed Plan might have significant effects on fisheries or the marine environment.

You are further reminded that a copy of your decision regarding the determination should be made available for public inspection at your offices and should also be notified to any Environmental Authorities already consulted.

Appropriate Assessment

You are referred to the requirements of Article 6 of *Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora*, the Habitats Directive. Appropriate Assessment, in accordance with the Directive, is required for:

“Any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site (Natura 2000 sites) but likely to have significant effect thereon, either individually or in combination with other plans or projects, shall be subject to Appropriate Assessment of its implications for the site in view of the sites conservation Objectives...”

Galway County Council should consult with the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) with regard to screening of the Plan for Appropriate Assessment. Where Appropriate Assessment is required, any findings or recommendations should be incorporated into the Plan, as appropriate.

In order to determine the requirement for an Appropriate Assessment the following Guidance is referenced.

- *European Commission, 2000. Managing Natura 2000 Sites – The provisions of Article 6 of the ‘Habitats’ Directive 92/43/EEC*
- *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*
- *National Parks and Wildlife Service, 2009. Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland*
- *National Parks and Wildlife Service, Natura 2000 Screening Protocol – Water Service Plans and Projects*

Should you have any queries or require further information in relation to the above please contact the undersigned.

Yours sincerely,

Tadhg O’Mahony

Senior Scientific Officer

SEA Section

Office of Environmental Assessment

Environmental Protection Agency

Regional Inspectorate

Inniscarra, County Cork email: t.omahony@epa.ie

A3.1 NPWS Consultation (19th April 2010)

19th April 2010

Máire McGrath,
Senior Staff Officer,
Planning Department,
Galway County Council,
Áras an Chontae,
Prospect Hill,
Galway

Our Ref: G2010/126

Re: Strategic Environmental Assessment Screening Report for the preparation of a new Local Area Plan for Tuam

A chara,

I refer to your correspondence of 12th March seeking the observations of this Department, in relation to the above-mentioned SEA Screening report. Outlined below are the architectural heritage and nature conservation observations of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

Architectural Heritage

Setting out a new local area plan for Tuam could have a significant effect on the architectural heritage of the locality.

A new local area plan for Tuam will have a 6-year duration. Of its nature a new plan will intend to develop, improve and bring forward the physical environment of the town and the immediate area in a way that is in keeping with its existing character.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is intended to bring about improved decision making and have a positive effect when plans and programmes are being developed. The development of a plan, and associated decision-making, continues until a plan or programme is formally adopted. However, until that time options are available to be decided upon and therefore subject to SEA. Such options may well relate to the treatment of the architectural heritage of the town.

The present built and natural environment is the point of departure in formulating any new plan. The recent past has been a time of unprecedented expansion and change in most areas of Ireland, including Tuam. The rapid change which has taken place has in some instances diluted established character or has begun to establish new local identities. The opportunity exists in making a new plan to consolidate the built form of Tuam and reinforce its sense of place and identity within the county at large.

New development should enhance the local environment and, in so doing, contribute to creating a place of distinction. In that regard there is a need to develop an architectural framework for Tuam which will guide development within the town and ensure good quality urban design which will enhance the public realm.

The contribution of the built heritage of the town to its sense of place and identity may assist in this. The new plan should attempt to make use of all features of built heritage merit in the locality to engender an evolving new identity as a familiar and recognisable of place to trade and reside. It should also attempt to integrate the disparate parts of the town into a single entity.

This goes beyond simply giving protection to the architectural heritage of the locality or the simple preservation of the character of the town as ends in themselves.

It should be noted it is 'architectural heritage' which is specified by regulation to be taken into account in SEA rather than 'protected structures'.

The term "architectural heritage" is defined in the Architectural Heritage (National Inventory) & Historic Monuments Act, 1999, as meaning "all

- (a) structures and buildings together with their settings and attendant grounds, fixtures and fittings,
 - (b) groups of such structures and buildings, and
 - (c) sites,
- which are of architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest”.

For guidance on what is encompassed by the term “architectural heritage”, it is recommended that reference is made to Section 2.5 of the “Architectural Heritage Protection, Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2004” issued by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. While Section 2.5 relates to protected structures, it illustrates the range of structures which should be taken into account when assessing architectural heritage.

Local identity gives a sense of association and attachment. A significant part of local identity is the existence of built heritage features which provide a sense of the familiar. These features, both large and small, can be used as focal points to incrementally build an identity within the changed setting of recent development.

The present built form and open spaces within the proposed plan area is the context within which new development will take place. In order to enhance local distinctiveness new development needs to respond to local character and respect the visual context of the plan area.

If the town is seen as an attractive place to trade or reside, it will encourage inward investment in terms of commercial, manufacturing, retail and service industries, even of a low-key nature.

To that end the existing built heritage will need to be enhanced and protected. Collating a new local area plan for Tuam presents an opportunity to review the architectural heritage content of the town and give a greater degree of protection. It should be a direct intention on the part of the planning authority that a new LAP for Tuam should formulate policies and objectives in this regard.

As stated above, this should not be seen just as an end itself but as a foundation for giving a truly distinctive sense of place and identity to the town.

The opportunity exists in collating the LAP to determine if other structures of architectural heritage merit exist beyond those already included in the Record of Protected Structures.

It should be recognised that structures of architectural heritage merit, though not put forward for inclusion in the Record of Protected Structures, may still contribute to the identity of a locality. This should be taken into account in the LAP.

The built environment of Tuam has its own particular form and character. The contribution of all of those features which give identity to and enhance the town should be given recognition in the LAP, and those features should be utilised to encourage its further development.

It should be noted that the statement in Section 2.2.6 of the SEA Screening Report contains a number of typographical errors which render the text, in part, meaningless and also misleading.

One example of the latter case is where it is stated that "In an ACA, protection is placed on the external appearance of such areas or structures ...". As set out in Chapter II of Part IV of the 2000 Planning and Development Act, ACA status relates to the preservation of the character of an area. Consequently, planning permission is required where proposed works would materially affect that character.

It is recommended that the text in this Section is reviewed and revised in order to give a greater clarification to the points being made in it.

Nature Conservation

The draft LAP does not exceed the thresholds for SEA, nor are there any nature conservation issues in the plan other than ones related to Special Areas of Conservation. (SAC) The SAC issues are the water quality in the River Clare and these are being addressed through the updating of the related water treatment works.

Please be advised as of 26th April 2010 the new postal address for all correspondence to the Development Applications Unit is:

The Manager,
Development Applications Unit,
Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government,
Newtown Road,
Wexford.

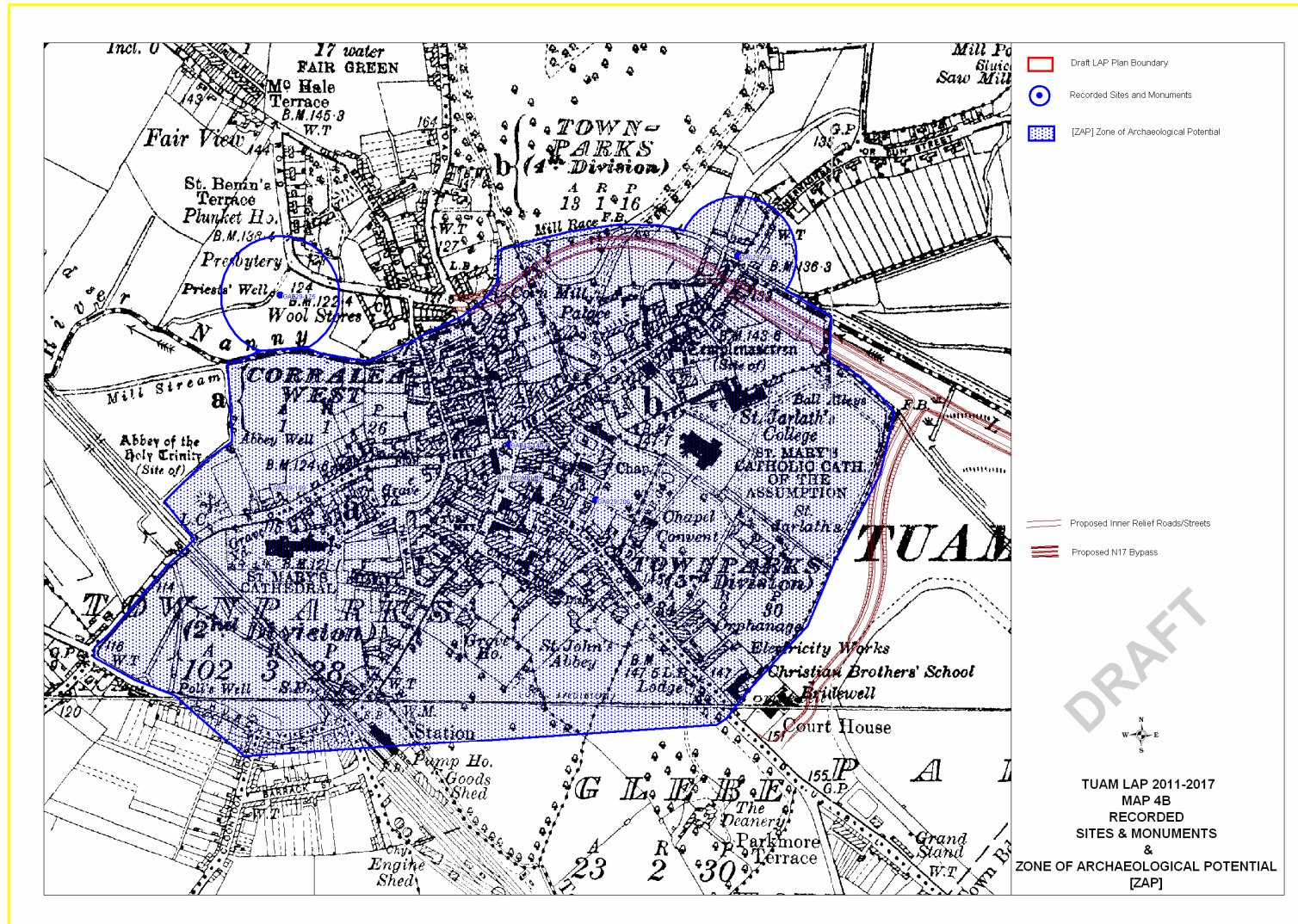
Please ensure all correspondence, for the attention of DAU, is forwarded to this address from the
aforementioned date.

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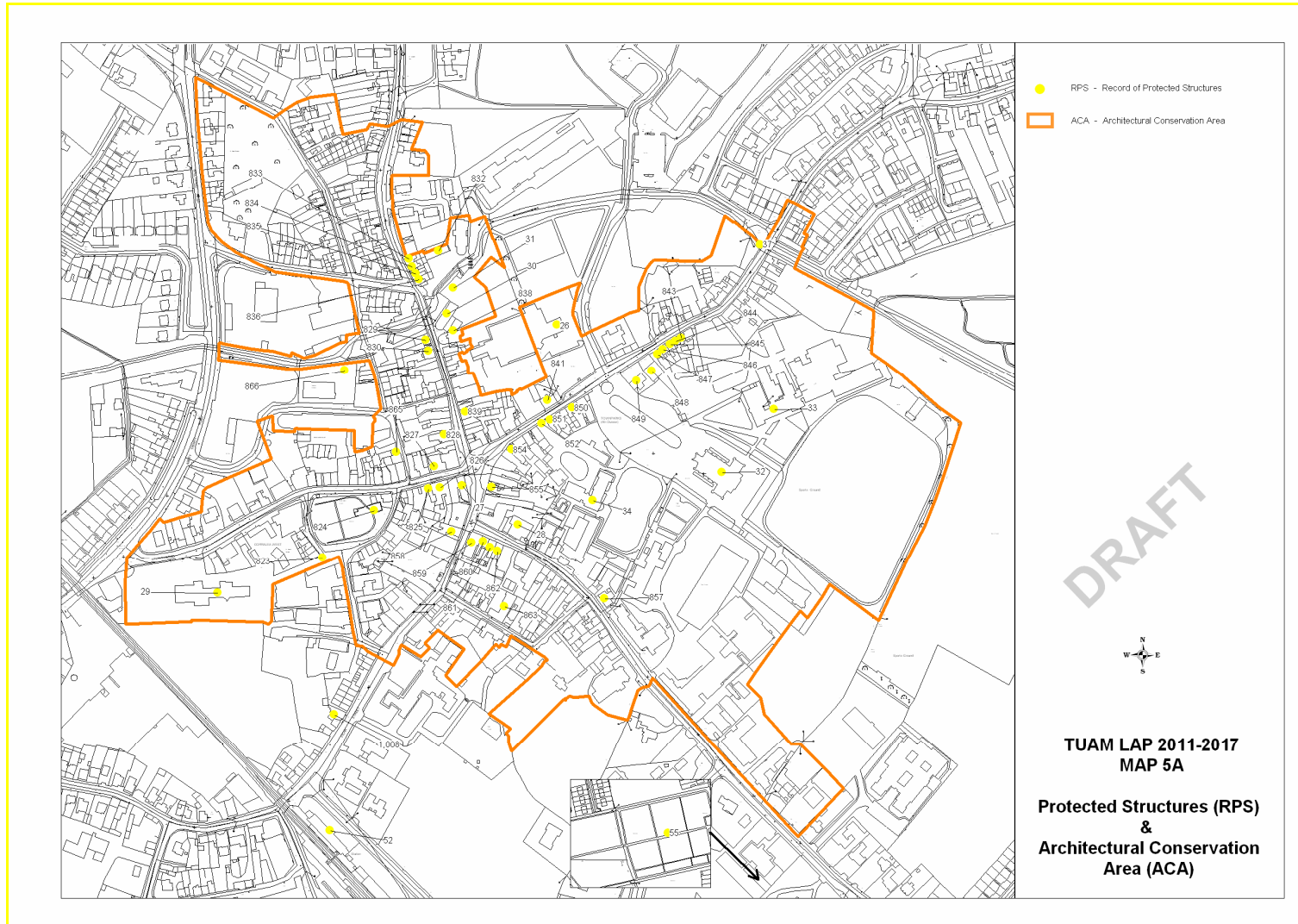
A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'David Tuohy', written over a horizontal line.

David Tuohy
Development Applications Unit
01 8883183
David.tuohy@environ.ie

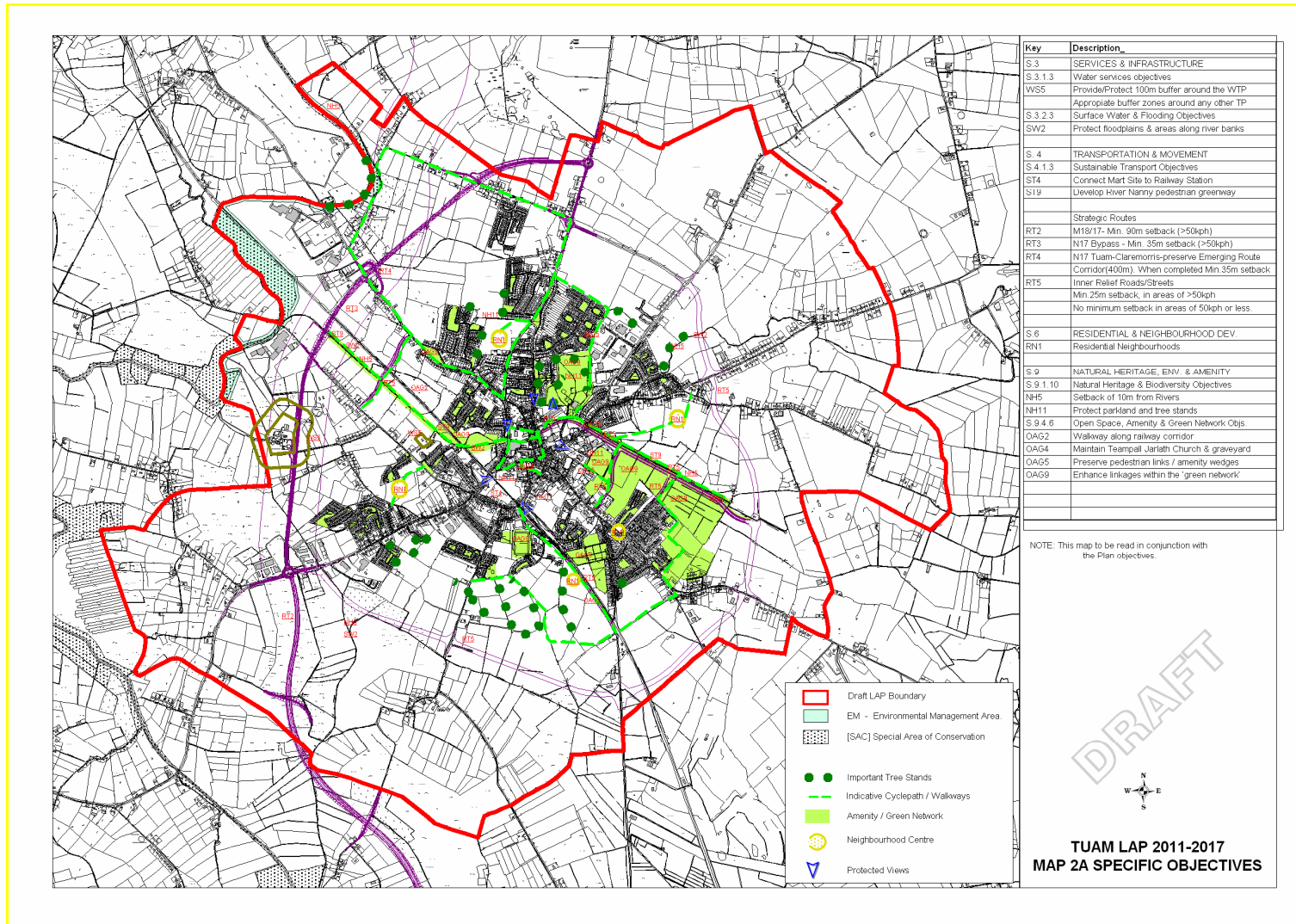
APPENDIX 4 MAP 4B SITES & MONUMENTS (ZAP)



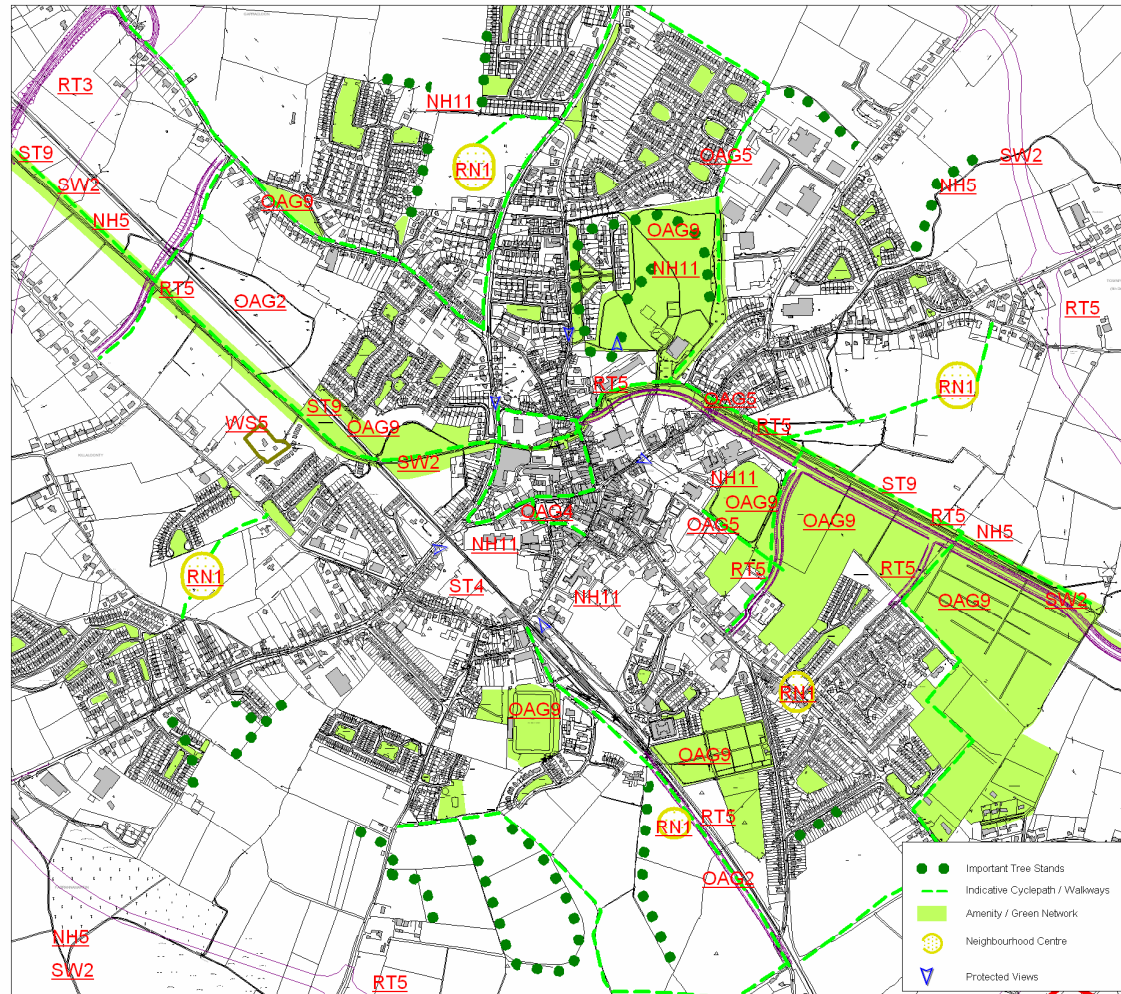
APPENDIX 5 MAP 5A PROTECTED STRUCTURE & ACA



APPENDIX 6 MAP 2A SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES MAP



APPENDIX 7 MAP 2B SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES MAP



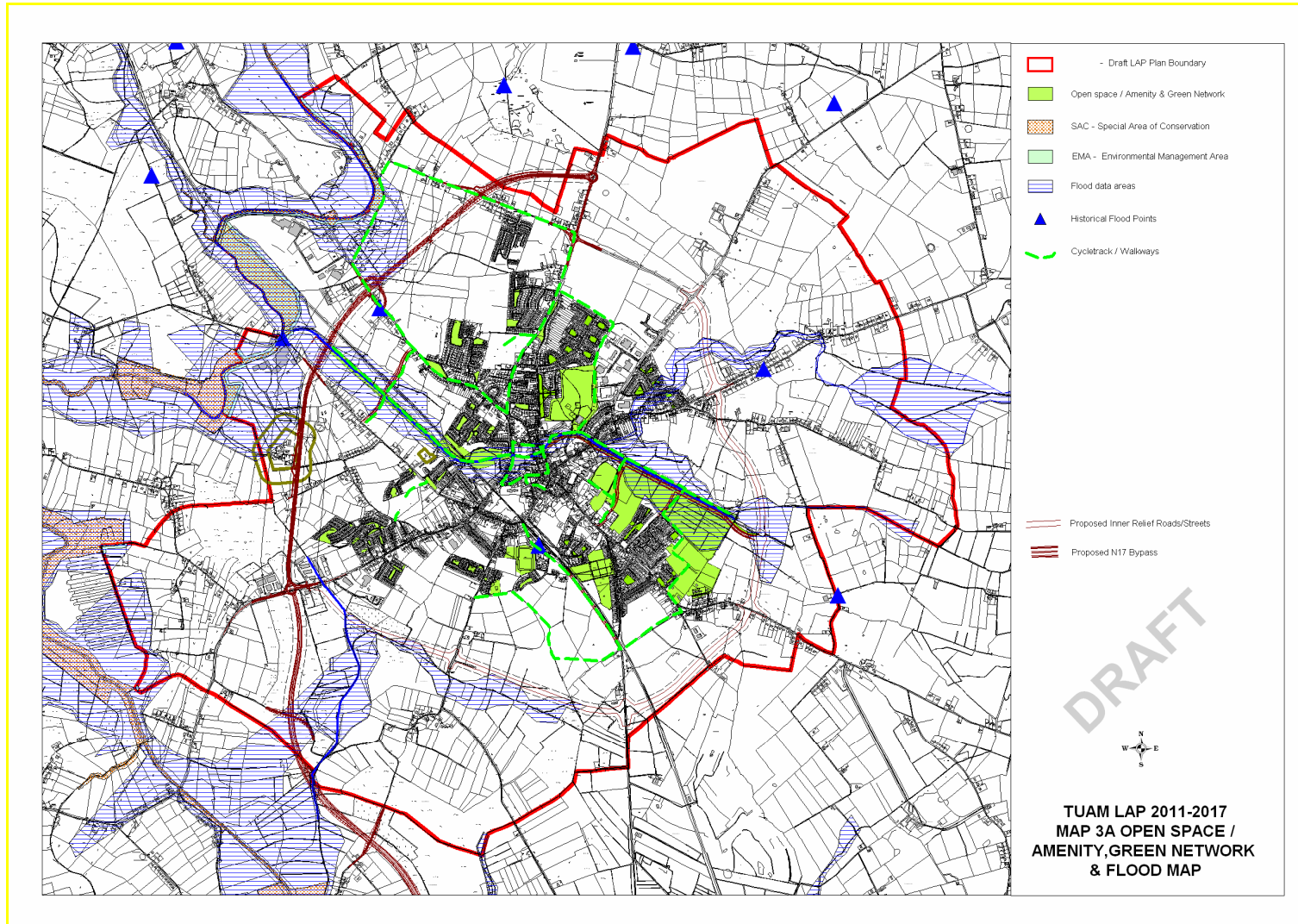
Key	Description
S.3	SERVICES & INFRASTRUCTURE
S.3.1.3	Water services objectives
WS5	Provide/Protect 100m buffer around the WTP
	Appropriate buffer zones around any other TP
S.3.2.3	Surface Water & Flooding Objectives
SW2	Protect floodplains & areas along river banks
S.4	TRANSPORTATION & MOVEMENT
S.4.1.3	Sustainable Transport Objectives
ST4	Connect Mart Site to Railway Station
ST9	Develop River Nanny pedestrian greenway
	Strategic Routes:
RT2	M15/17- Min. 90m setback (>50kph)
RT3	N17 Bypass - Min. 35m setback (>50kph)
RT4	N17 Tuam-Claremorris-preserve Emerging Route Corridor(400m). When completed Min.35m setback
RT5	Inner Relief Roads/Streets
	Min 25m setback, in areas of >50kph
	No minimum setback in areas of 50kph or less.
S.6	RESIDENTIAL & NEIGHBOURHOOD DEV.
RN1	Residential Neighbourhoods
S.9	NATURAL HERITAGE, ENV. & AMENITY
S.9.1.10	Natural Heritage & Biodiversity Objectives
NH5	Setback of 10m from Rivers
NH11	Protect parkland and tree stands
S.9.4.6	Open Space, Amenity & Green Network Objs.
OAG2	Wallway along railway corridor
OAG4	Marian Teampall, Jarlath Church & graveyard
OAG5	Preserve pedestrian links / amenity wedges
OAG9	Enhance linkages within the 'green network'

NOTE: This map to be read in conjunction with the Plan objectives.

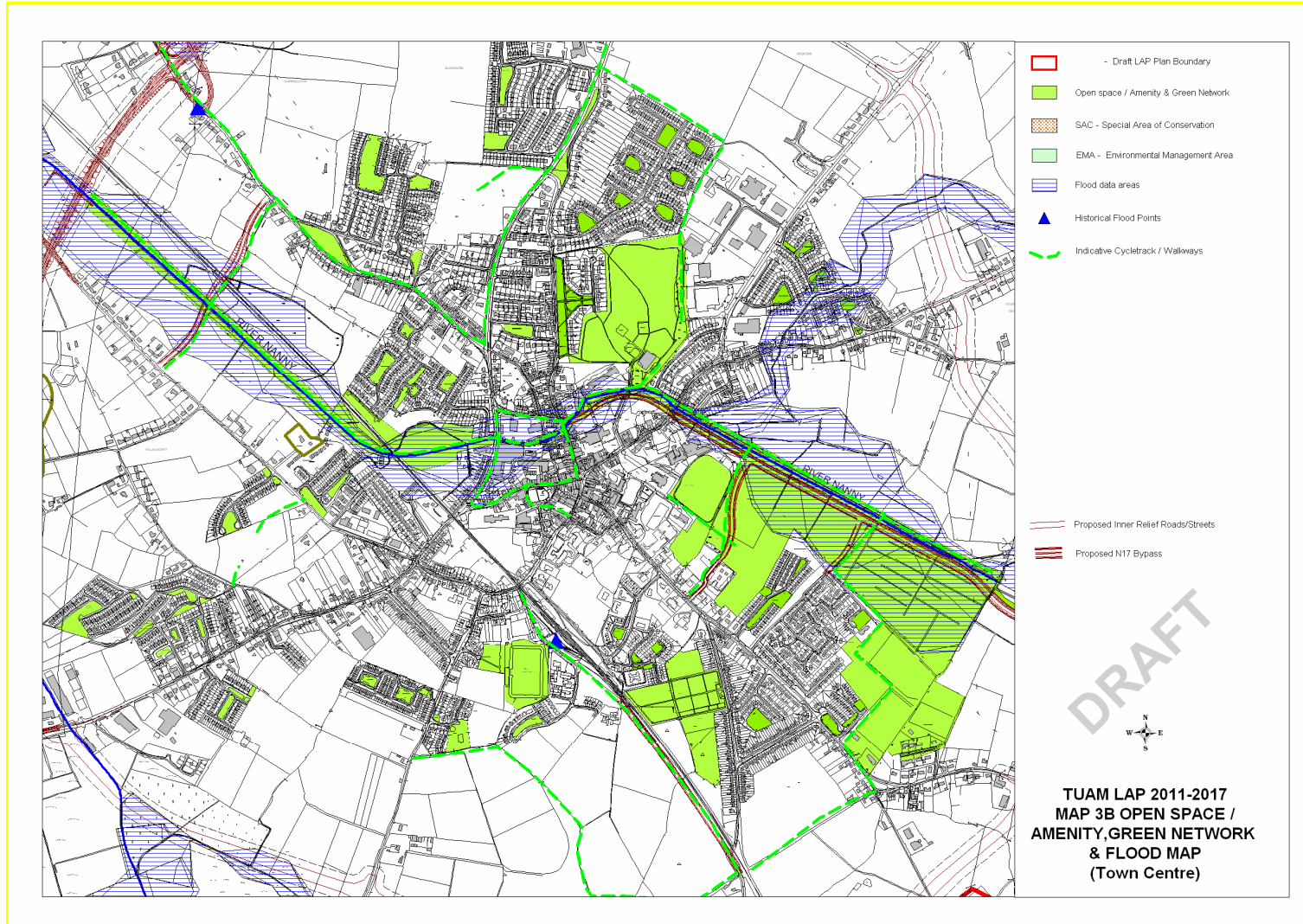


**TUAM LAP 2011-2017
MAP 2B SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES
(Town Centre)**

APPENDIX 8 MAP 3A OPEN SPACE / AMENITY, GREEN NETWORK & FLOOD MAP



APPENDIX 9 MAP 3B OPEN SPACE / AMENITY, GREEN NETWORK & FLOOD MAP



APPENDIX 10 MAP OF PROTECTED AREAS IN RELATION TO THE TUAM LAP BOUNDARY

